
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION OF 1976-81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11th January, 1977.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.10 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, (Speaker); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Labour, Welfare, Youth Affairs and Sport); Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, M.A., (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning); Dr. R. B. CADDLE; Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, LL.M.; Hon. B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Health and National Insurance); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of Communications and Works); Mr. J. G. ODLE, (Chairman of Committees); Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Caribbean Affairs, External Trade, Industry and Tourism and Leader of the House); Mr. V. L. JOHNSON, B.A., M.A.; Mr. B. M. TAITT, M.A.; Hon. L. R. TULL, M.A., (Minister of Education and Community Development); Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW; and His Honour E. E. ALLEYNE, LL.B., LL.M., (Deputy Speaker).

Prayers were read.

Mr. GREAVES entered the Chamber and took his seat.

MINUTES

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of 14th December, 1976 be taken as read.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, just before the Minutes are confirmed, I would like to draw to the attention of the Chamber that there seems to be an omission from page 7. My understanding is that the members of the Opposition walked out on the day in question but it is not recorded in the Minutes, and I think that it should come

somewhere towards the bottom of page 7. It is not recorded there and I thought I should draw it to your attention.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I have been in here for ten years and this is really strange to me. I have had many walk-outs on that side and I have never seen them recorded in the Minutes, and I believe if you look through the Minutes from yesteryear you will never see it recorded. If the hon. member would like to know it is recorded he can walk out again today and ask the Advocate to record it for him.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: I beg to move that the Minutes be taken as read.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that I have received from His Lordship the Chief Justice the results of the election petitions in respect of Suit No. 617 of 1976 in the matter of D. H. G. Hunte versus G. A. Moe and R. L. Cheltenham. Similarly the report in respect of Suit No. 616 of 1976, Warrick Franklyn versus G. A. J. Moseley and D. A. C. Simmons, and the report will be laid and circulated.

I have also received the Auditor General's Report entitled "The Annual Audit Report on the Examination of the Accounts of the Island for the year 1975-76".

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the 24th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Natural Gas Corporation for the period 1st April, 1974 to 31st March, 1975, and

the 25th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Natural Gas Corporation for the period 1st April, 1975 to 31st March, 1976.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the International Labour Organisation Convention 144 and Recommendation 152.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the sale or lease by Government of the former official residence of the Barbados High Commissioner to Canada situated at 2060 Chalmers Road, Ottawa, Canada.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Lucy, his question relating to a documentary film on acupuncture.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the Clerk just now that I do not intend asking this question at this time, and I want to ask the other question which I have.
12.20 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Lucy — his question re the potential for development of the Spring Hall group of estates.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker: Is the Minister aware that the Spring Hall group of estates which are now owned by the Barbados Government have a number of tenancies attached to them?

And is the Minister aware that there is considerable potential for the development of these tenancies into model rural housing developments?

Will the Minister therefore have a survey carried out to determine

- (a) the existing number of tenancies on the estates?
- (b) the areas which can be used for housing projects?

And will the Minister state the Government's policy on rural development, especially in the areas which form part of the Spring Hall group of estates?

REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Chairman of the Debates

Committee I beg to lay a special report of the Debates Committee of the meeting of Monday, 3rd January, 1977.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that the Hon. Leader of the House bears in mind that the Debates Committee is not a Select Committee as such, but that this being the most convenient time for the laying of the special report, he is taking the opportunity to do so.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: That is the position, Sir.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, with the consent of the Cabinet I wish to ask leave to make the following statement:—

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ON CHINA ON 11TH JANUARY, 1977

Barbados has maintained diplomatic relations with the Republic of China, commonly known as Taiwan, since September 4, 1967. A Taiwanese Embassy was established in Barbados in 1968, but a Barbados Ambassador has never been accredited to Taiwan. On the occasion of the United Nations debate on the admission of the People's Republic of China to that body, the Barbados delegation expressed the hope that a compromise formula would have been found to have enabled the Government at Taiwan to reach an accommodation with the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Neither Taiwan nor the People's Republic of China has, however, been willing to reach this accommodation or to accept the principle of the existence of "two Chinas".

On October 25, 1971, the United Nations overwhelmingly decided "to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and to recognise its representatives as the only legitimate representatives of China."

In the circumstances the Government of Barbados considers that it can no longer validly treat the Government at Taiwan as the Government of all China. The Government at Taiwan has therefore been officially informed that, as from today, it will no longer be recognised by the Government of Barbados as the Government of China. I believe, and the Government believes, that failure to take this position would be to turn a blind eye to the realities of the international situation and be contrary to our best interests.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker I beg to give notice that oral reply to parliamentary question No. 7 asked by the hon. member for St. Michael South Central, and Leader of the Opposition, is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I am asking leave to give notice of the following Resolution:—

Resolved that this House takes note of the contents of the report of the Debates Committee and requests that a Special joint meeting of both Houses be summoned for the purpose of discussing the recommendations of the Committee and that the Clerk should be invited to attend the said joint meeting to show cause why he ought not to be removed from office in accordance with the provisions of the Parliament (Debates and Establishment) Act, Cap. 10, Section 4(4).

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr. SANDIFORD entered the House and took his seat.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering a number of Money Resolutions.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976–77,
NO. 26

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is a composite Resolution seeking to supplement Head 2, Parliament, Head 5, Cabinet Office, Head 15(5), Welfare and Head 15(2), Queen Elizabeth Hospital. As far as Head 2 is concerned, this is a very simple and straight forward matter which has been made more complicated by events of four weeks and a day ago and by more recent events in the Debates

Committee. This supplement is to accommodate the increase in salaries of members of the staff of Parliament, the staff of the Leader of the Opposition and persons whose personal emoluments are met from Head 2, Items 2, 4 and 11.

I do not wish Sir, to go over the ground that has been covered before or to anticipate ground yet to be covered in other circumstances. Sufficient to say that members of the staff of Parliament have had their increases and I believe that it was enough to enable the staff to enjoy as happy a Christmas as possible within the financial constraints which the Government is experiencing at present.

12.30 p.m.

However, these sums which amount in total to \$41,417 need to be supplemented.

I beg to move that Head 2 stand part.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 2 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

CABINET OFFICE

HEAD 5(1) – CABINET OFFICE

Head 5(1) – Cabinet Office – Item 13 – Compensation – \$2,000 – was called.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Sir, in the Estimates under Head 5(1), there is an item, Item 13, under the title “Compensation”, which provides such compensation for damage or injury to property, clothing, or the person, in cases where Government considers it equitable that some payment should be made. It is only a very small vote for \$5,000, but up to the 18th November, 1976, \$4,720.93 of this had been spent and, indeed, since then, I believe, that another \$257.37 has been paid out, and the balance in the vote is only around \$20. We are, therefore, asking for \$2,000 to supplement what is really a contingency head for the remaining three months of the financial year.

I beg to move that Head 5(1) stand part.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Head 15(5) — Ministry of Health and Welfare — Item 10 — Grants to individuals — \$1,680,000 — was called.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Sir, in the absence of the Minister of Welfare, I would ask leave to deal with this matter until he comes. The object of this is to supplement the provision to permit the Government to honour a commitment it made to reduce the qualifying age from 68 to 65 years. The notes, which have been circulated, are full and ample and they disclose that the roll to date is approximately 16,500. It is anticipated that, with the reduction of the age from 68 to 65, from December 13, 1976, an additional 4,000 people will come on to the pension roll. As a result, supplementary provision will be required in the sum of \$832,000.

I beg to move that Head 15(5) stand part.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that, and reserve my right to speak at a later stage.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the House has indicated that this particular measure is in fulfilment of the Government's pledge to reduce the qualifying age for the payment of old age pensions from 68 years to 65 and, as such, as an honour to a pledge given, no doubt, it is right that the measure should come before this Honourable Chamber. What I want to address my mind to, however, before getting back to the question of the reduction of the age from 68 to 65 — I would like to say that this is a reduction and no one would quarrel with the reduction of the qualifying age for the payment of old age pensions from 68 to 65, or to 61 for that matter, or whatever age may be considered appropriate.

One is always mindful of the fact that when one reaches years of seniority, as we call it, one becomes a senior citizen and then the problems of living become more difficult. Those who have retired from work, whether they are drawing a Government pension for which they may have been said to contribute over the years of their working life, or whether as in the case of old age pensions paid through the Ministry responsible for Welfare, it is a noncontributory pension, or whether it relates to those who, under the National Insurance Scheme, are paid old age pensions, whatever the source of those pensions or the source of those incomes, most of those who reach that age find themselves having to cope with the problems of life and the problems of the cost of living on a fixed income.

In these days when the cost of living keeps going up, when the ravages of inflation place a heavy burden even on those who are in their working life and are drawing a salary, how much more is the problem magnified for those who are on a fixed pension and are, therefore, called upon to meet the cost of living and those problems. The reduction of the age from 68 years to 65 is nothing we will quarrel with on this side. In fact, we are very glad to note that the Government is able — able in spite of the empty Treasury, in spite of all the talk about the lack of funds — to find the funds to reduce the age. That is a question, of course, for assessment by the Government and, in particular, by the Minister of Finance and, as a result of that assessment, they feel that the age can be reduced. We are not quarrelling with that. We welcome the fact that more old age pensioners, or more persons, will be brought on to the roll of old age pensions and we, therefore, hope that this will be some contribution towards helping those new persons between the ages of 65 years and 68 — some contribution towards assisting them in meeting the problems of living and dealing with the rising cost of living.

However, I should like to draw to the attention of this Honourable Chamber the fact that, for those who are 68 years old and over, there is a massive unfulfilled promise on the part of the Government to increase the amounts paid to those persons and the figure has varied. While in opposition, the Barbados Labour Party made statements from the floor of this Honourable Chamber and elsewhere to the effect that the amount paid to the old age pensioners is too low, it is scandalously low, and it is ridiculous.
12.40 p.m.

When the Democratic Labour Party Government in fulfilment of a promise to increase the rate of pension from \$10 to \$13 there were many comments, scathing remarks and outright criticism of the position taken by the Democratic Labour Party Government on this particular matter.

I do not wish to spend much time on this particular matter because the comments of the members who spoke in that particular debate on this matter are well known and are recorded in the debates of this Hon. Chamber. The Minister responsible for welfare, of course, at that time was the chief spokesman for the Opposition on welfare matters, and he was tireless in drawing to the attention of this Chamber the inadequacy of the amount that was being paid to the old age pensioners, that is, those who qualified already under the Regulations, that is, those who have

reached the age of 68, and I would just like to refer to something which he said on one occasion. He said:

"Since 1974," — this is in a speech to this Hon. Chamber — "not an election year, I came in here and begged the Government to give old age pensioners not less than \$25 per week."

And he went on to indicate other ways in which their burdens could be relieved, such as exemption from the payment of water rates and free medical attention and so on.

I do not wish to deal with those other aspects, but I want to deal with the question of the payment to those persons who now qualify under the regime for those who reach the age of 68 and over. I want to deal with those because the member then, the member for St. James, was arguing that that sum should be \$25 per week or more. And there were of course other contributions to that particular debate. Now that the member has responsibility for that particular subject, one would have thought that the first action to be taken would have been to implement those statements and those arguments concerning the inadequacy of the existing rate of payment to the old age pensioners. Instead of that all that we have is honouring of the proposals made by the previous Government to raise the pension from \$10 to \$13 with a further increase of \$3 later during this calendar year, but nothing of putting into effect those statements about a very inadequate rate of pension for these persons who have made their contribution and have reached the age of 68. Nothing at all about that, instead of that we have additional persons being brought on to the register with no improvement in terms of the promises made, in terms of the claims made, in terms of the urgings of the then Government that the increase from \$10 to \$13 was inadequate. The member wanted it raised to \$25 or more, and we will await, inasmuch as we would have thought that this was one of the first things that they would come with in view of the very scathing remarks that were made, but then again nothing has been done on this particular score, we have a different tact, the bringing on of additional pensioners between the ages of 65 and 68.

As I have said, we have no quarrel and we are not opposing the lowering of the age to 65, that is an assessment that has to be done by those who are responsible for the management of the economy. The lowering of the age, as I have said, whatever may be the qualifying age is a matter for determination, the main question is whether the economy can afford to pay pensions

to those who are 68, 65, 61 or 55. That is a question of the capacity of the economy to meet those demands, and as I have stated, I am very pleased to hear that in spite of the talk of the empty Treasury, in spite of the talk that there was no money available and that even some persons were unable to be paid because of this empty Treasury, that this particular provision can be made.

I would also like to draw to the attention of this Hon. Chamber another category of persons. Before doing that, I would like to make a reference to this whole question of the means test, because this is an area which is also a very important and a very crucial one, because even though under the previous qualifying age of 68 there were a large number of persons who because of the way in which that test is administered — and I am not here in any way questioning the administration of the test by the public officers, they have to administer the regulations as they are and I know that they have tried with sympathy and understanding to administer what is written into the Act and the Regulations — but we have the problem of persons who if their income is \$15 or more — I believe that is the figure — they are not entitled even though they have reached the qualifying age of 68 to an old age pension, they are disqualified simply because they have an income of \$15. I would urge the Government to look at this particular matter and to have it reviewed, because in our view that ceiling is too low and it excludes a large number of persons who should be eligible for the payment of old age pensions, but because out of their thrift or because of some other form of income they are able to provide for themselves up to \$15 or above they are not entitled to draw old age pensions, and there are many persons — I am certain each one of us as representatives of constituencies can point to cases where that particular ceiling operates a hardship on a person who would otherwise have been entitled to a pension.

12.50 p.m.

In as much as funds cannot be found for lowering the age below 65 and carrying out other promises, I will urge the Minister and the Government to give early sympathetic consideration of this question of a review of the ceiling of the means test so that this can be raised and that more people can therefore qualify who are finding it difficult to meet the problems of living today.

Then there is another category of persons under this general question of national assistance, those who may be blind, mute or handicapped

otherwise. Certain payments are made to them, and the rates that are payable are also in our view in need of review.

With these few points I would like again to urge that consideration be given to raising the ceiling of the means test so that a large number of persons can qualify for receipt of old age pensions. I say this in full knowledge of the fact that even those who draw a salary still have to seek other forms of employment to meet the problems of living.

I am sure that more severe would be the problems of old age pensioners or persons who would hope to qualify for old age pensions and who, if they have an income of \$15 a week will not be entitled to draw old age pension.

I do not think that I wish to make any further contribution to this particular subject, but for those persons who will qualify I welcome the lowering of the age to 65 because any expansion of assistance to those who are in need is a development on humanitarian grounds; but we would like to draw to the attention of the Government the plight of those persons with the present means test we have to meet the qualifying age — whether it is 68 or 65 — are not entitled to draw old age pensions because they may have a small sum of money, a pittance on the bank or may be drawing \$15 a week from some particular source.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Chairman, I represent workers in the rural areas of this country; and it is through these people that I am a member of this Hon. House of Assembly. Consequently you would expect me to have their interest at heart. I want to associate myself fully with all that has been said by the previous speaker in dealing with the means test. This test presents with difficulties a certain category of workers, and especially agricultural labourers, who in many cases do not even have closets at their homes; and it is those people who are not eligible for old age pensions who really need the help, having contributed to the economy of this country.

Therefore I believe that to tell an agricultural labourer that he is receiving \$15 a week from National Insurance as a pension and that he is not entitled for old age pension is to me, I think, what I would call an abominable sin. The time has come when we have to think about that means test and bring about certain changes to suit certain categories of workers. In many cases you get peasants who own approximately two or three acres of land. It may be rab land, but because of the acreage they are not entitled to this pension.

We, as members of the former Government, did our utmost at all times, and on numerous occasions I have drawn this matter which I consider of vital importance to the interests of these workers to the attention of the former Government; and I have no doubt that if we were not given the boot this matter would have been given top priority during this session.

You get, Sir, some agricultural labourers whose homes are in a very, very bad condition; and because they are receiving \$15 a week from the National Insurance they cannot be given a pension. We are appealing to you who have the reins in hand to consider this matter.

I want to associate myself and to say how happy I am that the age limit has been reduced; but I want you to know that there are people around who since the age limit has been reduced and have applied for this old age pension just cannot receive it. Therefore I can only appeal to you honourable gentlemen to do everything possible to alleviate the hardships which these poor people suffer at this particular time, and especially now that the age limit has been reduced.

1. p.m.

I do hope that the present Government will give favourable consideration to increasing the means test and by so doing, I can assure you that you will be assisting those who have contributed in the past to the economy of this country.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I shall not be very long because, as my colleague the hon. member for St. Michael South has clearly pointed out, this side cannot quarrel with an increase in pensions, nor can we quarrel with the reduction of the age of those entitled to pensions. That is common sense; it is humanitarian, and there is no magic about that. If the economy could afford to reduce it to 55, the Democratic Labour Party would support it. If you could make it \$100 a week, we would support it, not only on the grounds of common sense, but on the grounds of humanity. There can be no argument with a Resolution like this. The only argument I am going to point out is that there is a great deal of hypocrisy about it.

For the last 10 years, when the Democratic Labour Party was in power, we have always given to old age pensioners, at independence, a small pittance. This year is the first year that they did not get a cent. Of course, the Treasury is empty. We are tired hearing that the Treasury

is empty; yet today on the Order Paper alone is \$4 million to be spent, apart from what we have voted since Parliament began on the 6th October! But not one cent was given to the old age pensioners on the tenth year of independence — ostensibly because the Treasury is empty. We can always get Resolutions for \$1 million and \$½ million, but we cannot get Resolutions to give to old age pensioners at the tenth year of independence one cent, although this Government, that you have said mismanaged the economy, has always managed, not only to lend people money at Christmas, but to give something to old age pensioners. That is the price they will have to pay. They should now know who their friends are and who their enemies are.

Be that as it may, the Prime Minister goes on T.V. to make a big announcement. The Prime Minister says: "I am instructed by my Cabinet to say that we are going to reduce the age to 65, and from the 1st April we are going to give you \$3 more." The member for St. John, as Minister of Finance, had said that on the 22nd June. This is no magic. Why was he not honest and not hypocritical and say that he intends to honour the promise made by the Democratic Labour Party?

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I would ask that the Leader of the Opposition withdraw the word "honest".

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw it, but what I am saying is that, if the Prime Minister did not want to mislead the old age pensioners in this country, he would have told them that the Minister of Finance in June had promised them the exact thing he was promising them. I am going to read from the Debates recorded in the Session 1971-76, Tuesday, 22nd June, when the Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW was speaking. It states:

"In conclusion I would like to say that I shall be introducing later on today orders in respect of old age pensions to increase old age pensions this year by \$3 and next year by another \$3 bringing them up to \$16 a week."

The Democratic Labour Party had said that on the 22nd June, so what is the magic of the Prime Minister going on T.V. to fool people, or to pretend to people that he was giving them a big increase, when he did not give them 1¢ at independence? You have to remind people of these things, and that is why they will all be tricked and fooled. (*Asides.*) He must remember that. He has the files and he reads them.

Now listen to what the Democratic Labour Party said in its Manifesto when we got it. I am reading from the Manifesto, which is a document of the House already. This is what we said:

"Over the past years we have been able on a planned basis to bring assistance to deprived individuals. For instance, in 1961, the former Government paid old age pensioners a meagre \$2.15 a week. Today, as a result of no less than six increases, the Democratic Labour Party Government is providing assistance to these pensioners at the rate of \$13 per week, and in six months' time...."

This is the Manifesto we went to the electors with, Mr. Chairman. When the present Prime Minister made his announcement in November, he did not say anything new. We said:

"and in six months' time this will be increased to \$16 per week. Our Government has further expressed its care and concern for the aged by paying a pension to them by cheque in a pilot scheme."

This is what we said and which you have adopted. Look at what you said when you tried to get votes. You did not give them one cent, and you are right. They ran and voted for you expecting \$20 a week, and you gave them what we, realistically, told them was sufficient for them.

Listen to what you have said on Welfare. We told them what we could afford. You promised them \$20, and in the first year of your Government you are adopting exactly what we told them that the economy could afford. You are right because they voted for you. Let me read what they said about Welfare:

"The BLP believes that some sacrifice must be made by Barbadians to take care of old age pensioners through the years until National Insurance Schemes take up the main burden of looking after our senior citizens. The BLP parliamentarians have repeatedly taken up this theme in the House of Assembly and calls for a pension increase to at least \$20 a week."

Where is the \$20 in this Resolution? That is exactly what the DLP Government told the public at election time that the economy could stand, and you are giving it to them now. You did not mention \$16 at all. You said that the

minimum would be \$20. Take out your Manifesto and see if I am misreading it. I am accustomed quoting law to Judges, and I have to be accurate. I cannot mislead the courts now. The Manifesto says:

"The Party will willingly reduce the age of qualification to 65 years."

Now, it was particularly pointed out by the Prime Minister that 4,000 persons would be involved, but I have no faith in that. He cannot prove it, it is not accurate; it is a guesstimate, and he may be right or wrong. He does not know. He knows that the people who get \$15 now from National Insurance, as my colleague has pointed out, do not qualify for an old age pension. If the Prime Minister and the Government were really champions of old people, and they wanted to help old people they would have acted differently. Do you know that anybody getting \$16 a week or \$64 a month does not qualify for a pension? What is the difference between sixty and sixty-four? The man with sixty-four cannot get a pension, because the means test is \$15. The Prime Minister comes into the House now pretending he is going to give what we give, except that you have lowered the age, and you are making no attempt to help the people that really need help by increasing the means test to about \$40 or \$45 a week in the present economy of the country.

Now, a man who goes to Country Road who is getting \$16 a week or \$64 a month cannot get a pension, but the man who is getting \$56 can get one. I do not know what the difference of \$8 could buy. If you are really trying to stop poor people from dying from starvation, then increase the means test and that will be more relevant. Let the people get a reasonable pension on which to live. I am going to quote what the hon. member for the City said until my time is up. When we introduced the \$13.16. I will remind you of what you told the public about us. We were a wicked bunch of people, and we were out to make old people die from starvation.

1.10 p.m.

That is what you said, you start out at \$20 and nowhere in this Resolution do you approach it. I go further—

"The Party will accordingly reduce the age of qualification to 65 years and increase the Old Age Pension to this level with provision for further periodic increases.

The Party will keep these pensions under constant review with the aim of eventually reducing the age of qualification to 60 years....."

and I will keep you on your toes as long as I have the honour to sit in the House, whether I sit as Leader of the Opposition or not. You have to honour them, you got into power on them and you are not going to be able to sleep on them as long as I am sitting in here. This is one of the last acts of my parliamentary life, to see that you keep the promises that you falsely got into power on. And then you go on —

".....and providing for annual periodic reviews of the weekly amount of pensions which will take account of periodic increases in the cost of living."

If the public were discerning, they would have noticed that nowhere in your Manifesto, unlike the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, do you make any promises to move the means test, so that you have a bunch of a huge number of people getting \$64, because they are getting one more than \$16 they cannot get a pension, and the minimum for the National Health Service is \$15, so they do not get a pension. Where is all this big four thousand number? Do you think unemployment wise these are just at home? Where are you going to get four thousand people from?

As I said, my colleague who was then Minister of Health, in introducing the Resolution repeated it in the first statement he made to the House, so it is nothing new, this \$13 to \$16, but when this speech was made what did we hear from the various members of the Opposition? What did we hear them telling the Government? I think I should read what the present Minister of Health had to say, and the member for St. James who will visit old people every week on their graves when he is doing nothing to increase their lot. He is going to meet with them every week when they are only getting the \$13 that the Democratic Labour Party promised them? I used to hear him as soon as he hit the chair in here talking as if the Minister of Finance must work magic, he had all this feeling in his heart for poor people and for old age pensioners, but where has the blood gone to now that he has taken up office? Is it not beating in his heart any longer? Is he drained of it? Has he come in here now to justify this when at no time has he reached \$16 in his talk in here on the Opposition benches? He is a \$25 a week man, a \$30 a week man, he is not a \$13, \$15 or \$16 a week man, but

now you are in power and realities are hitting you in the face you realise that running a Government is not like running a motor car, you now realise that you have to understand what is going on. Let me look here for the passage in this debate.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, while the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is looking for the part, I just want to draw to your attention that when he started his speech he said he would not be long, Sir; he has been very long so far.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Even before the Chief Justice I can look in the law books, why can't I look in them in here before a Chairman of Committees?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have about three minutes to finish.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Just a short note of what the hon. member for the City said, Mr. Chairman. "I say that it is indefensible and it is shocking that these men were born of women....." — I do not know of whom they were born now, they are doing the same thing we did, and when we introduced the \$13 to \$16 the member for the City could get up and say, Mr. Chairman, it really makes sweet reading. Politics is the greatest game of hypocrisy anybody could get into. Every day I am finding this out, honestly:

"Mr. Chairman, it is indefensible and it is shocking that these men were born of women. They have mothers, some of them are the age of old age pensioners, and they seek to defend \$13 a week in 1976."

and you are now trying to defend it in 1977. So what, are you eating and swallowing your own words?

The empty Treasury. I know the excuse, I heard the Minister of Finance. "We found so many millions missing, stolen, lost, cannot be accounted for, empty Treasury, but next year we are going to give them something." That defence is stale. Now we hear the Minister of Welfare and Sport, the Sports man. "I have not seen the Resolution, I am dealing with pensions, this is a financial Resolution, I can deal with 'Ding Ding's' pension, let us get that very clear. After ten years in here I think that I have been able to understand some of the things, if not all of the things, in this human institution. No Government, if it is a just Government, can feel deep within itself that \$10 a week is good

enough for pensioners. I in 1968 brought a Resolution in here....." 1968, you know, eight years ago, "..... two years after I was elected to Parliament asking Government at that time to increase the old age pension from what it was then to \$15....." The member for St. James, in 1968 asked for this and in 1977 he and his Government are defending \$13 going to \$16. Do you see politics? And there are gullible people who will swallow this talk about an empty Treasury, the Treasury has no money, you can find some, mismanagement — mismanagement? That will recoil on you too — "I came back, Sir, in 1970," says the member for St. James, "and in 1972 the Government stuck on a two dollar bill," but you have not stuck on anything, we promised them that. You have not even stuck on a dollar bill on this, because we had promised them \$13 to \$16, and if you say \$14 to \$17, at least in the words of the member for St. James you would have stuck on a dollar bill, but you have not stuck on cent one.

"In 1974 again I brought a Resolution in here and the Government agreed with the Resolution, asking the Government to review all categories of Government pensioners and old age pensioners. The Government agreed with it and that glorified, political, parliamentary humbug" — I believe that is your humble servant, I haven't read enough yet, but let me read it to see — "who sat down not too long ago said that the Barbados Labour Party did nothing and did not know about anything they had to do until they came into power." This is where the similar accusation arises too. "Now I am going to give the Government this credit. The Government built Parliament, etc. etc." But let us go on, this is really funny in truth.

The member for St. Philip North had a taste of the action too, and it was a big taste. Listen to what the Prime Minister said now.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: There are two points. One is you are doing exactly what we intended to do, you have given the old age pensioners no hope, you haven't given them a cent more, it is true you have done a little by reducing the age to 65, but what is vital, you must give us an assurance in the House today that the means test will be raised to at least \$35 a week or \$50 so that more people can get benefits, rather than people who are just getting a mere \$60 a month who can't get a pension any more, and that is the whole point.

The Prime Minister tried to hoodwink people by going on television pretending he is offering them something. He did not give them a cent for Independence, he is giving them nothing out of his own Government's thinking, because that is what we said on 22nd June, and this last minute 65 is something which the Opposition welcomes.

1.20 p.m.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I must say that for an hon. member who says how carefully he read the debate and with what interest he followed it, the hon. member who has just sat down seems to be remarkably unfamiliar with his material. If he reads the Law Reports with the same basis of familiarity and the same quality of...

Hon. F. G. SMITH: On a point of explanation. This Resolution was laid in this House. Do not worry about me and Law Reports.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please be seated. I wish to draw the attention of this Committee to the conduct of the hon. member for St. Michael South Central and ask him to desist from this type of behaviour. The Hon. Prime Minister may continue.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The hon. member was in such a good mood when he was speaking. It is always great to be amused by your own remarks. I really appreciated seeing a man full of humour and enjoying his own jokes vastly to the extent that he hardly made sense. He was laughing at himself almost as much as hon. members on his side laughed at him. (*Asides*).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, if you ask me to behave myself I am not going to sit down here and hear that man, the Prime Minister, abuse me or belittle me in this House. I am not standing for that from him or anybody like him. I want that to be clear. If I am to behave myself, see that he sticks to the debate and leave me out or..... (*Aside: Walk out*). I reserve to myself the right..... (*Asides*).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Be seated please.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am accused of not being honest, pretending, fooling and hoodwinking the people, and I sat down and smiled; and when I comment on some of the things that the hon. member has said, he cannot

take it. He should have learned after all these years in politics of which he boasts so often, that one of the first things is that you have to take licks as well as give them. He is talking about 13 to 16 and 14 to 17. What he really has to understand is 7 to 17. Let him understand that. He has to understand that he cannot come here and bully the presiding officers.

Now, I know of no rule of ethic, morality, and politics as practised by anybody which says that every time you make a speech you have to research the origin of your ideas and put them either as an appendix or footnote. At no time have I ever denied or sought to conceal any given statement about old age pensioners; and nobody on this side, when the then Prime Minister, the hon. member for St. John raised the old age pension — nobody on this side as far as I recall, told him that he was wicked because he did not admit his debt to the hon. member for St. James.

Everyone knows that the spearhead for the last 11 years in this House for raising the old age pension has been the hon. member for St. James. Every move to raise old age pension has come from the hon. member for St. James. There is nobody on this side whose level of logic has sunk to the point that we found it necessary to attack the hon. member for St. John because, I think, in the course of a budget speech on the 2nd June, 1968, he did not pick out the hon. member for St. James as saying that we should raise old age pension to \$15 a week, but I cannot make it \$15; I can only make it \$13. That would have been the same type of nonsensical attack that was made today.

There is no compulsion on any holder of a ministerial office to say that he has searched through the files of the year 1961 and that Mr. M. E. Cox recommended so and so. We have heard the hon. member quote from the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party for 1976. You could ask the hon. member for St. Michael South, who is somewhat of a scholarly man, to go and look — I am not referring to the hon. member for St. Michael South Central. If he did not wave his hand I would not have made such a mistake. I am referring to the hon. member for St. Michael South. If he looks at the health proposals in the DLP Manifesto for 1976 he will find that they are all similar to those of the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto for 1961. Let him make a check of the two. We do not say that there should be a footnote at the bottom of the DLP Manifesto saying acknowledgement to the BLP Manifesto of 1961.

Ideas come and they roll off and they develop. In fact very little has been done to move away from the concept of the health services offered from 1961. The only serious thing was the National Health Service which was one of the ideas in the manifesto of the DLP. The same sort of policy was followed all along; but it is no ground for criticising a policy that the other party put it forward before.

I really began to think that we were being criticised for paying \$13 a week for old age pension because that was what was being paid under the Democratic Labour Party. These people were getting \$13 a week as a result of a decision by the Minister of Finance, and we are being flayed and quarrelled with. Members on the other side are saying that the Barbados Labour Party was put into power because they could do more than the Democratic Labour Party? If it is that, they might as well go out of business.

The \$13 a week pension was accepted on all sides, but we find ourselves at this time being able to raise it to \$16 a week. We have broken no promises. It will be raised to \$20. We have been in power for four months. If we cannot raise it to \$20 in four months we cannot raise it to \$20 in four months.

We have lowered the age to 65. We took a conscious decision whether to give relief to more people or to give a little more to those who already have; and just as our general policy in the line of employment will be to spread employment more widely rather than to pay more to those who already have so our policy for the pensioners was to spread the pension a little more widely rather than to give more to those who already have.

At a time when the financial constraints of Government were such that we could not afford to raise the \$20 to \$25 as indeed I have heard the member for St. James call for, we cannot afford this at the present time. All of them talk about the Treasury being empty. Of all the speeches made in here and of all the speakers, the person who has dealt more with the empty treasury is the member for St. Michael South. (*Asides*).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: He has dwelt on it incessantly. He has asked how can you do this? You must have a budget and tell the people how you are going to pay for it. There was an empty treasury in September. It is not

empty now because the shrewd financial management during the last three or four months has managed to keep our ways and means advances down. (*Asides*).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Are hon. members of the Opposition angry because the Treasury is not empty? Do they really want a politics of distress? I am not saying that the Treasury has a lot of money, but we are managing to float without an emergency budget. 1.30 p.m.

Anyway, if I may have said that the Treasury is not empty now, that should not allow any hon. member on this side, especially members of the Cabinet, to... (*Asides*.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you keep less noise!

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, there is a difference between money being available for extravagance, such as was indulged in by the Ministers of the previous Government, and money being available for the day-to-day administration of the Government. We are no longer in the position of having to run about looking for Euro-dollar loans, and stretching and cannot pay the cheques of payable orders in the Treasury, as happened even in September and has happened even on earlier occasions under the other Government. That is what I mean by saying that we are managing to float. (*Asides*.)

Now, where has the blood gone from the hon. member of St. James? He is asking the wrong question when he talks of the draining of blood. The life blood of this country, which is needed to pay the \$20 a week pension, he has to tell the public about it in the fullness of time, because he, at least, has said he would co-operate with the Commission of Inquiry. He has to tell the public of this Island where the blood has gone, and not anybody on this side. We did not have the pumping in hand at the time when it was being drained. We did not have to worry about that. (*Asides*.) I would be glad to give evidence before the Commission of Inquiry. I see here that politics is the greatest — the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has discovered that politics is the greatest game of hypocrisy, and he is now finding it out. (*Asides*.) He must find it out when they have made him Leader of the Opposition in September, and made it clear that they do not want him in October, November, December, or January! The Hon. Leader of the Opposition is now placed where he will know what hypocrisy is. He will now go down in his

office and learn about hypocrisy. He is only talking big in here because the hon. member for St. John is not in here. He knows that quite well. He came back from New York last night. You must have been too sorry to hear the news. You must have been too frightened that he would come in here today. I do not believe, if the hon. member for St. John was in here, you would have been getting the assistance of the hon. members on your left, pointing out the parts of the Debates you could not find and prodding you and telling you what to say when you were on your feet making a speech.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Why should there be all of this sneering?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Will you tell us what the point of order is?

Hon. F. G. SMITH: The Minister is talking absolute nonsense and foolishness.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You are now being out of order. Will you please take your seat? Please continue.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: If he sneers at me, you will get bad behaviour in here. I am not just going to sit down here and take it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you please take your seat? No point of order! Please continue.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: If he sneers at me, I do not have to take...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Hon. Leader of the Opposition take his seat? I have already called the attention of this Committee to the conduct which is deplorable. Please continue.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I understand what the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is getting at. He does not have to take any sneers from me, or anybody, but he is not talking about me. He is not talking about anybody on this side, and I understand what he means. I will give him a break; he has enough difficulties already with his own side. If he is begging that we do not put too many difficulties on him from this side, then we will go along with him at the present time, but he must keep his temper and know his place at certain times.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Know my place to you about what! Tom Adams you do not employ me!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what are you standing? A point of order?

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Do not mind all of that. Sir, I am not the Minister replying to this Resolution. I do not know how I have got so involved in it. The simple fact is that the Barbados Labour Party made certain promises in its Manifesto. We made no promise about a means test, and we do not have to give any assurance about it. I believe the responsible Minister, the Hon. Member for St. James, is looking at the means test, but that is up to him. We made no promise about it, and we have to give no assurance about it. We made a promise to reduce the age to 65, and we have fulfilled it in three months. I am sorry if hon. members are angry at that, and think that they have to carry on a long debate about it. I know that they were not accustomed, in their dispensation, to taking decisions and seeing them carried out in two months or three months. We are. When we promise something, and we want it done, we will do it.

Now, we decided the age would go down to 65 just as we decided the school-leaving age would go to 16. We decided on it, and we did it. We are not yet in a financial position to carry out the other branch of the promise, which is to raise the pension to \$20 a week, but it will be done and that will be an end to the matter. No amount of heckling, of ill-humoured interruptions, threats to walk out, petulance, childishness, carping, attacking the people for not putting you back in power, public expressions of hatred, or trying to drag down the country — none of that will divert us from carrying out the policies which we have been elected to carry out.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I listened to the three speeches so far made by hon. members of the Opposition, and, if I did not keep my sense of time about me, I would believe that we were four months away from a new General Election rather than four months after the completion of a General Election in which the Opposition has been completely demoralised. What is their argument? It has been put at its highest by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. This is what he says: "You are doing exactly what we intended to — giving the old people no hope." That is what he says verbatim. I would like to say, positively, on behalf of the Government and the Barbados Labour Party that we do not follow the intentions of the Democratic Labour Party. We have set out on a policy of reconstruction — reconstruction of the economy, reconstruction of the moral standards in public affairs, so that having started the course which will lead to greater prosperity we can carry out as many of the promises in our Manifesto as

this country can, humanly, afford in terms of financial and human resources within the next five years.

We do intend to give the old people hope, contrary to what the hon. member has said. What is this Resolution about? The Resolution is simply that within four months of becoming the Government of this country we are able to ask Parliament to vote an additional \$1.68 million to include some 4,000 additional people in the Welfare Services of the Island. No amount of carping, no amount of misrepresentation can move those two facts. Had the Democratic Labour Party remained in the Government, their intention was not to have voted that additional money, or to have included those additional persons. Let us get that straight. No amount of fancy talk and trying to be frivolous about this matter can gainsay those two facts. Of course, the Minister responsible for this subject and the Minister of Finance should be complimented, in tight economic circumstances, in being able to bring into the net of people entitled to Government assistance another 4,000 people, and being able to make some of the people of this country, who can afford it, pay for the upkeep of those who cannot afford it.

1.40 p.m.

I am not going to accept at all that carping criticism of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, that the Minister of Finance is pulling statistics that he cannot rely on. If you look at the speech of the hon. member for St. Michael South when we discussed the Estimates on this matter and the Budget Resolution earlier in the year, he himself admitted that the number of old age pensioners was increasing rather than decreasing, and indeed I have heard the hon. member for St. Michael North Central himself say from time to time that if the age was lowered to 65 you would expect some four to five thousand people to come on the roll. Now memory has a short way of dealing with some people. I expect an Opposition to try to score a political point by saying why don't you bring it to \$20 today, but they are today talking to an intelligent group of people who must recognise that when you take over an economy under straits as we have taken over, where you are liable to get something like — I think they forecasted at the time — \$38 or \$45 million in deficit on current account under the Democratic Labour Party, not under us, you are asking us to be more than wizards within four months to put the economy right, go on a massive welfare programme willy nilly and satisfy our election pledges in four months.

The Opposition must stop believing that the people of this country are so foolish that on

every aspect of the Manifesto they are going to ask us in four months whether we have achieved everything we said we would achieve in that period of time. All except one member on the Opposition bench have been Ministers of Government. First they must know that in terms of human resources and the Civil Service set-up and in terms of time, it will take time to formulate plans in any event, they must know that. Secondly, they must know that when they left the Treasury the whole argument that they had against putting up the amount, the whole argument about increasing the numbers was that the economy was in a bad state. That was their argument. If they bring the argument at the end of the five year period, given no worsening economic circumstances in this country, then their credibility will be accepted by the public at large, but I am appalled that they should conduct this debate simply on the basis that "you said in your Manifesto you are going to give \$20, you haven't given it in four months' time, therefore you have let the people down." That is the most illogical argument that could have been advanced in such a short space of time.

Now the problem of poverty in this country, as I said in that debate, is a very serious problem, and the Government's intention has been clearly stated since 1971. You misrepresented it then, but you will never ever be able to misrepresent us again. On this side we have better debaters than you, more logical thinkers than you, and people who are not afraid to stand up to you at any time at all, so get that straight. We said then that there was a minimum standard of living below which no person in this country should be asked to live. You said that we wanted to bring people down to a minimum standard of living; a complete misrepresentation in those days, and this Government intends to see that no Barbadian will live below that minimum standard of living, or below the poverty line. We know we are confronted with difficult circumstances, but we have not lost our cool, we have been confronted with Cubana, we have been confronted with the challenges of Sidney Alleyne and the plot to overthrow this country, we have been confronted with a Treasury that has been scandalously short of money, we have been confronted by your excesses of Government and wasteful spending, we have been confronted by the low morality of public life that you introduced in this country, but by our holding together, by the help of the people of Barbados and their ability to produce more and to work harder, by the constraints that we will put on people who have been made millionaires under your Government, too many of them made millions while too many others suffered, and by the help of God we will succeed

and put this country not only on the road to economic recovery, but in the position where it will again be the leader among the Caribbean nations, and every person will have a decent standard of living.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, I want to make my quota to this debate today. I sat here and listened to the hon. member for St. Michael South, and it was amazing to hear him accuse this Government stating that we claimed repeatedly that the Treasury was empty. I want him to hear today what he had to say in writing under a column "In Perspective". It was he who said "their needs are many but the resources are few." It is he who said that there was no money in the Treasury, yet he comes here today stating that we were the ones who claimed that the Treasury was empty. This is the sort of double dealing, the sort of cheap politics that the hon. members of the Opposition come with day after day, Tuesday after Tuesday, before this Hon. House of Assembly. They claim that they cared about the old age pensioners. I would like the hon. members now in Opposition to tell the people of this country why it is that they could have taken a half million dollars in July of last year which was allocated to assisting the same old age pensioners, and within a matter of six weeks they dispensed with every red cent.

I must say this. I feel that they have ill-treated and unfairly treated the old age pensioners of this country. They stand condemned. Just because of politics, just because an election was around the corner, they took \$500,000 and licked it left, right and centre in order to retain power, but thank God the people of this country realised it and cast them out on September 2.

Turning to this question of the means test, I want this Hon. House to understand today that I drafted just last night a Resolution which was to go before my Party's Conference later this month, and this is the Resolution I have here, I did not write it, it says:

"Whereas the means test has no longer a reasonable and appropriate criterion;

And Whereas the Government has shown its concern for the plight of old age pensioners by its increase in weekly pension;

Be It Resolved that this Government increase the means test from the present \$15 to \$30."

That was my Resolution, so what is he going to come here today to say? That we have not

thought in terms of the means test? We on this side know that the means test needs to be removed, but as the hon. member for Christ Church West has rightly said, we cannot achieve all in one day, Rome at least was not built in a day, and I want them to understand that today.

Mr. Chairman, the hard facts are there. We have by this Resolution today sought to bring more people in line with having to qualify for old age pensions. It was never their intention during their tenure of office to do justice to these old age pensioners. I do not want to be long because I know the hon. member for St. James can take care of them adequately, and that is my quota. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. R. B. CADDLE: Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of points which have been brought to my attention with which I would like to deal briefly. The first point really does not deal specifically with the Resolution before us, but the hon. member for St. Thomas did say in his reply to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is his intention to spread employment as far as possible while it is possible rather than increasing the wages of those who already have employment. I take him quite seriously and I hope that he will begin with the people in the House of Assembly, because there are some of us in this Hon. Chamber who draw money from more than one source, and there are many other people on the outside who could do with some of those jobs, which could be made vacant if he applies his principle as enunciated here today, but that is not the important thing. We get caught up very often in this House of Assembly about old age pensioners and the money we pay to them, and there is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that this seems to be a political football which is being kicked about by both sides over and over again because people seem to think that they get some political advantage by kicking this ball to and fro.

1.50 p.m.

While we are expressing our views forcibly on what should or should not be done for old age pensioners, we are overlooking a very important aspect of the whole issue; and that aspect which I want to draw to the attention of hon. members of this Chamber is that we have suggested over and over again that it is the role of Government, and only the role of Government to cater for people in that age group. I do not make that mistake, and that is where I differ from most of the people who get up and talk about help for old age pensioners.

The Government has a role to play, some sort of assistance to give; but it is also the

responsibility of their children and their relatives and the society or community in which they live to make their contribution. It is not only the Government that has benefitted — if we can say that the Government has benefitted by the work or productivity of these people. Very often it is their close relatives — their sons, cousins, nieces who have benefitted more intimately than Government.

Rather than getting there and creating the type of air about what is not being done for old age pensioners, we should be awakening the social conscience of the people of this country to come forward and assist the Government in assisting them; because what we seem to be advocating in Barbados over and over again is that we are reaching the stage where we get total handouts by Government for everybody.

Some of us, due to our political programme, are advocating it so strongly that we are not aware of the pitfalls which may very well result as we go on creating the impression over and over again that all people have to do is to stretch out their hands to Government and Government will put all these things into their hands. It is fallacious and it is not going to do the country any good.

I admit and accept that the Government has a part to play in the assistance not only of old age pensioners, but of every section of the community; and this must bear a true relationship to what the Government can afford, and a relationship to what other sections of the community need to have done; and so we have to appeal to the people of this country to do something for their old folk. Many of the older folk about whom we are grumbling today have sons and daughters who are well off and who do not look after them at all; or they have other relatives who do not assist them.

We are overlooking that because we seek to make political capital out of the situation; and this is unfair to these people. It is disrespectful to these people that their representatives whether on this side or that side should get in here and try to use them in this way. This is an aspect of the Barbadian society which is very disturbing to me. We have to be serious.

Mr. Chairman, in this country there are people who resign, draw a pension and go the next day and draw a bigger salary; but yet today we are going to hear a lot of quibbling about a means test. When I was Minister of Health it was my intention to remove it because how can we be serious in this society talking about social

justice and talking about welfare when a man who is drawing a big pension can go tomorrow and get a bigger job at a higher pay, and then the small people at this level who are concerned about how to make ends meet and who get \$13 or \$16 a week are being denied another \$15 from another source by putting in something called a means test.

We very often get hot up with these things. This society is stacked strongly against the man at the bottom. It has taken advantage of him, and it continues to take advantage of him. Very often the people who get up at political times and talk about defending the man at the bottom are only doing so for the purpose of getting votes; because after they have got their votes they get into their niches. They are well protected and well looked after and they do not care a hoot about the man at the bottom.

There are people drawing three and four salaries which add up to thousands of dollars a month; but with the man at the bottom who is eking out an existence and living in straitened circumstances we always find it possible in this society that whenever you say give him a little more money, or make it possible for him to get a little more money, there are people in the administration or there are people in the back rooms who get up and say oh, no, no, no. That is not desirable. Do something else.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It now being 2 o'clock, I shall report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Mr. SPEAKER: The sitting now stands suspended until 2.45 p.m. today.
2 p.m.

On resumption, Mr. SPEAKER took the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time.

QUESTION TIME

Question No. 7 was called.

EXPENDITURE ON CONFERENCES, OVERSEAS VISITS & TRAVELLING BY MINISTERS, CIVIL SERVANTS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, Question No. 7. I do not know what your practice is. I do

not know whether I should ask the question, or just call the number.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just state the number.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Question No. 7, Sir, reads:

"Will the Minister of Finance state and give a breakdown of the amount spent on all conferences, overseas visits and other travelling by Ministers, Civil Servants and Parliamentarians since September 3, 1976 until the present time?" This Question was asked on the 16th November, 1976. The reply, Sir —

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Prime Minister, I would wish, in future, that you merely state your reply rather than read out the question, because the hon. member who tabled the question, might feel that he has been deprived of an opportunity that you are taking upon yourself.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Thank you. The reply is as follows, Sir:

"During the 2½ months period between 3rd September and 16th November 1976, an amount of \$51,204.57 was spent on persons sent abroad by the Government to conferences and other similar visit overseas. This represents a monthly rate of \$20,481.83.

The expenditure for similar purposes from the beginning of the financial year in April up to 2nd September 1976 amounted to \$204,885.56, which represents a monthly rate of \$40,977.11.

Other expenditure, amounting to \$42,932.69 was incurred in respect of 20 civil servants who used their leave passages entitlement, and amounting to \$64,093.00 in respect of 46 who were sent on Training courses.

Representatives of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association were sent abroad by the local branch of the Association at a cost of \$11,188.20 from the funds of the Association."

Hon. F. G. SMITH: As a supplementary, Sir. Since the Minister has quoted comparable figures, will he tell the Honourable House how many conferences were attended by the former administration from April to December, and how many his administration attended during the period the 2nd to the 16th November?

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I cannot tell the hon. member how many conferences were attended in detail. All I can tell him is that the

conferences attended by the Ministers of the Democratic Labour Party cost ten times as much as the conferences attended by the Ministers of the Barbados Labour Party.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, what were the conferences attended by the Ministers of the Democratic Labour Party and what were the conferences attended by the Ministers of the Barbados Labour Party, since he knows the figures so well?

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I would suggest to the hon. member that, if he wishes details of the conferences approved by the Cabinet of which he was a member during the relevant period, he puts down a substantive question in order to have his memory refreshed.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Since he can give these figures, his memory should be fresher than mine, since I left the Cabinet on the 2nd September. Will he give us the necessary information? He has the file with him now, and he is the Minister in charge.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the Hon. Prime Minister replying?

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Sir, I am not entirely clear what it is the hon. member is asking for at this stage. If he wishes a list of the conferences and occasions for overseas travel, which have been attended since the 2nd September, 1976, since it is a substantial list and, indeed, it is too substantial to examine now, that can be given, as I would suggest, as a written answer to a substantive question. But if he wants just the question of Ministries

Mr. SPEAKER: I think, Mr. Prime Minister, that we could move on to the next question.

Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The next supplementary, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: The next question. The hon. member has already asked three supplementary questions. There being no further replies to the questions, we will now move on to Private Members' Business. There being no Private Members' Business, we automatically revert to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: The instant Order of the Day is Government Business. When this sitting was suspended, the House was in Committee of Supply and to that it now reverts.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Dr. R. B. CADDLE: Mr. Chairman, continuing with what I was saying, while we get in here occasion after occasion making a lot of jives about the payment of stipends for old age pensioners, we overlook a very important fact that these old age pensioners are human beings after all, no matter how poor they may be. Poverty is no crime. They have a dignity, and we should respect that dignity. But, too often, the way in which we discuss or go about the granting of additional increase to old age pensioners create an impression that we have no regard for the dignity of these people. It would not be surprising to me if some of these people regret the harsh fact that, if they could do better, they would not bother to take the old age pension. They are made to feel that they are less than human beings; they are often made to feel that they must be forever thankful and subservient to whoever is responsible for initiating the action in this regard. I do not think that this is the proper way in which to deal with an issue affecting people who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in straitened circumstances.

To really appreciate why we have so many people in Barbados in such straitened circumstances, we would have to go back and look at the social and economic history of this country where, for a very long time, people of my complexion have had to toil in Barbados without adequate reward. In that period, coming towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, because of the harsh realities of life which affected certain people in this country, some pittances were given to them and some provision was made in the form of almshouses and things of that nature to look after people who had made a substantial contribution to the economy of this country, but who had not been rewarded out of the money and other benefits which have been won by their hard labour. All that was offered to these people at the end of their days after they had toiled in the sugar cane fields and, as the good old calypso says: "Their sweat mingled with the earth below." When they came to the evening of their days, they were given the opportunity of going into an almshouse and dying.

We have temporarily progressed to a stage now where we no longer have to look at that, and we are trying to give them old age pension. But the way in which we get around discussing it, not only in the House of Assembly, but outside on political platforms in Barbados, tends to

remove any dignity that these people may seek to retain in their impoverished circumstances.

2.55 p.m.

I would like to look forward to the day in this House of Assembly when we could come in here and bring a Resolution for money to pay a these people and it is passed automatically with the minimum of debate, with the minimum of the remarks which we hear coming from both sides pertaining to a section of the community who due to no fault of their own have to live in straitened circumstances.

I would repeat again that it is time to remove the means test, and the reason why I am advancing that is not because of the economic considerations. When you look at the total Barbadian society you see a lot of disparities, and a lot of these disparities have become more exaggerated in more recent times. As I said earlier in my remarks, there are people in Barbados who can hold down three or four jobs. There are people in Barbados who retire today and go and get another big salary and we seem to accept that that is the type of thing that should be done. We seem to interpret that as social justice, whereas the man at the bottom who is being given the \$13 or \$16 as an old age pension comes up against a lot of barriers or obstacles in his way before he can get it, and then if he gets that we then make it difficult by bringing in a means test to tell you that if you are getting this small amount of money you cannot get this other small amount, and when you add the two small amounts of money they do not make him rich at all. If we are serious about social justice in this country we have to start and examine a lot of the things that are going on in this society.

One other thing which strikes me very forcibly is why so many people when they are unfortunate and feeling the pinch of the shoe can see so many things wrong in the Barbadian society, but as soon as they have arrived and start to enjoy the sweets they tell you everything is all right, there is nothing wrong. We have to look very seriously at the disparities in the Barbadian society, because it is these same disparities if they are permitted to continue and become exaggerated which may lead to strains which the society cannot support or withstand.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: If the hon. member would just give way for just one minute. Mr. Chairman, I have to leave at the present moment and the hon. member for St. James will lead the House in my absence. Thank you.

we have been here we have not been tested. We have to be here arguing a lot of nonsense about the Market Square, Eric Sealy and Cubana.

This is a simple Resolution. They either support it or they do not. If they do not support it, let them vote against it and tell the people that giving \$20 a week to those who reach the age of 68 is better than reducing the age of 68 to 65 so that more people can benefit from it. All they have to do is to vote no and tell the people at a meeting in Independence Square that it should not be reduced from 68 to 65 and let more people benefit, but raise it to \$20 a week. I challenge them to do that.

I have referred to members of the DLP as clowns and they have been showing that day after day and night after night. There are seven questions on the Order Paper, and not one single Private Members notice; and they talk about an effective Opposition. We are now getting ourselves acclimatised to what is going on overseas. They had to go looking for North Point money. We go looking at the means of getting skilled Barbadian Labour across North America and West Germany. That is what we are seeking about, not about nonsense. We are looking for long range work, not this half empty pocket nonsense that they have been going on with for 15 years. Not one single Private Members notice, Mr. Chairman, and I am under the impression that we will be here for one year and you will see nothing because they are empty.

They have always been corrupt and they cannot help thinking that way. They cannot sell cement. They cannot sell Mangrove and pay Brathwaite one cheque and pay Williams another cheque. This is a money Resolution. We are talking about money.

Dr. CADDLE: On a point of order. The hon. member is indulging in irrelevancies. We have a Resolution before us for old age pensioners, and a lot of what the hon. member is saying has nothing to do with the matter before the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He is challenging the Chair, making it appear that the Chair does not know what is going on. If the Chairman says no point of order, that is that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please carry on.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Rather than settle down to do the people's business in the manner in

which it should be done, you have a bundle of confusion every minute, talk about no money in the Treasury and a lot of nonsense by people who raped the country's resources.

3.15 p.m.

Sir, this Resolution is for the amount of \$1,680,000, and since they have said absolutely nothing that merits a Ministerial reply I, therefore, beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 15(5) stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 15(12) – QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Head 15(12) – Queen Elizabeth Hospital – was called.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, under Head 15(12) – Queen Elizabeth Hospital – Item 8 – Rental of Property – this is a supplementary in the sum of \$14,400 arising from the need to provide quarters for six additional doctors for the month of August, 1976, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Barbados. These posts are for consultants under the arrangement which Government has with the University of the West Indies. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is a teaching hospital. Four of those posts are already filled: one in orthopaedics, one in anaesthetics, one in medicine, and one in pediatrics. All of these posts are very important. The University is still looking for persons to fill the posts for Community Medicine and for Social and Preventive Medicine and Psychiatry which we, in this Government, feel to be more important than most other things.

Mr. Chairman, the University of the West Indies is being approached by this Government on a further matter. The posts to which I have just referred are necessary, and we need the services of those consultants in the light of the fact that the National Health Service, to which this Government is committed, is in the planning stage. We feel that Community and Social and Preventive Medicines are particularly important, especially since we so much need them to complement the service in the network of polyclinics. We are approaching the University of the West Indies, therefore, and asking them to think very carefully about the matter of creating a speciality in general practice, because the

National Health Service, the great foundation of it, will lie on the general practitioners of this country.

The second Item — Item 10 — Supplies and Materials — is for a supplementary sum of \$955,150, which is required to meet certain outstanding orders for supplies and materials. The bulk of the supplies and materials are drugs. Mr. Chairman, I do not suppose that anybody in this country will envy me for the job that I have to do in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I do not think that I have to go into any great detail in here about the great task that lies ahead of me, or about the unhappy state that I have found at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in September, 1976. Indeed, the hon. member for St. Michael North Central might be happy to know that the second most important man in Barbados, alias "Snow White", has been put in his place without an inquiry, and without a finger having been raised. He did try a skirmish, and without even raising my hand, it will make you happy, I know, to be informed that he resigned all of his three posts which he held at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. So I have that nettle out of my hair, without a trumpet blown, or anything of that kind. (*Asides.*) I do not mind that he is the hon. member's friend.

Mr. Chairman, this gentleman made it his business, when I first toured the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, not to put in an appearance but that, of course, did not bother me. I am accustomed now to the discourtesy that emanates in my direction from members of the Democratic Labour Party, starting with the Chairman of it, Mr. Chairman, and I do not let these little things disconcert me. It seems clear that the person who is no longer the second most important man in Barbados but is still "Snow White", having been so successfully dry-docked by you Sir, in another place in recent times, does not wish to speak to me either in this world, or in the next. When the trumpet blows and we are either rushing up or down, as the case may be, I do not even think that, at that extreme, he will give me the time of day. I have never laid eyes on him; I have never spoken to him; I have never written him a letter, but he turned tail and went his way. But that was only one of the many problems which faced me in that Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The matter of drugs is one which distressed me greatly. Having looked at the files, having looked at the dispensary at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I see that there is a very real need for a drug formulary in this country. I cannot think why there was never one before, but I would like to assure this Honourable House that the whole

business of drugs is being looked into, especially so that we might cut down on duplications and cut down on very great wastage which I have found there.

I do not want to take this as an opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to list out the bugbears, the humbugs, and the racketeering, etc., that I have found here, there and elsewhere within the Ministry of Health, but I do wish to offer the House the assurance that, without a public inquiry, without any shouting and screaming, the mess which so daunted the two former Ministers of Health, who now sit on the other side, can be cleaned up by those who work with me and myself.

3.25 p.m.

I have taken the deliberate and a conscious decision not to have a public enquiry into the hospital, because it must be realised above everything else that there are no less than 1,400 people working there, and I have no wish to undermine or to demoralise the people with whom I have got to work in what is an essential service. People who are dedicated work in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, people who have a true vocation and for whom the patients' welfare and interest come first. The majority of people who work there are like that and I will not force upon them a situation where people are breathing down their necks, peeping behind corners at them, asking rude, embarrassing questions of them, simply because public opinion might stampede me in that direction.

I have looked at the problems there and I am satisfied that with careful handling and with a firm hand the job can be done. Those who are not dedicated, those who have no vocation, those who have no care for sick people can be weeded out and put elsewhere; those who have no right to be in an institution where they deal with people can be transferred to institutions where they deal perhaps with machines — I do not know and I do not particularly care — my main object is to make the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in 1977 the kind of place that the Barbados Labour Party left it in 1961.

Under Item 12 — Operating Expenses, this is for a supplement of \$30,450 for the increasing cost of uniforms. These are uniforms for nurses, orderlies, porters and the like. I took up office in September and as soon as the end of October I found myself doing Draft Estimates, and this business in every institution which falls in the portfolio of Health kept on recurring like a decimal. The District Hospitals, the Mental Hospital, the Lazaretto, the Queen Elizabeth

Hospital and all the institutions, this business of uniforms crept up and it seems to me in every case that the amount of money voted for uniforms was exorbitant and getting higher and higher every year. I asked questions, as is my custom, I made enquiries, and the real truth is, Mr. Chairman, that I was able to uncover yet again another case of racketeering which flourished under the Democratic Labour Party administration, where uniforms were being made out of the cheapest possible materials, forcing a high turnover in uniforms, where there was a huge racket going in material for making uniforms, another racket going in the sewing up of uniforms, another racket going in the handing out of uniforms.

I think I can offer this House some assurance that the Minister of Finance has taken steps in a Department known as Central Purchasing, which is like a monster, Mr. Chairman, gobbling up all before it, the Minister of Finance has taken steps to arrest this huge racket so that I should hope that at the next time Estimates come before the House this one Item of Uniforms alone — and it is a massive Item — should not be one which would necessitate a supplement halfway through the financial year.

We spend a lot of money each year, Mr. Chairman, on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and there lies the great difference. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is as good in its physical property, its physical building, a hospital as it ever was, but these monies which were spent at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can bear very serious and detailed investigation. I will take the opportunity to reassure the House at this stage and by these general terms that I am looking very carefully at all these areas: — food costs, drug costs, which have spiralled up to \$3.7 million, and the total running costs of the hospital, but those items in particular which were not unknown to former Ministers of Health, a lot of matters were left suspended.

When the second most important man was harrying and harassing the member for North Central, in desperation the police were called in, investigations were made, allegations were posted, yet the racketeering went rolling and grinding on its merry way. It will halt, Mr. Chairman, and I should hope not to be back in this Chamber with a supplementary for this kind of item in any other year in the financial life of this Party.

I beg to move that Head 15(12) stand part.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to second that and reserve the right to speak.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Resolution for the sum of \$2,723,017 do now pass.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

3.35 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976–77, PART II — CAPITAL NO. 27

Head 111 — Ministry of Legal Affairs for the sum of \$6,500 was called.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is for the sum of \$6,500 and it is to pay for a mast head which has been erected by the Police at Castle Grant as part of the telecommunications system. The money for this expenditure was passed during the Financial Year 1975–76 and due to the fact that the foundation for the mast head was not constructed in time, the money lapsed. This Resolution merely seeks now to obtain a revote from Parliament for something already done.

I beg to move that the Head stand part.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Head 115 — Ministry of Health and Welfare for the sum of \$15,000 was called.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, this sum of \$15,000 is required for the replacement of an ambulance which was written off as a result of an accident. As a result of that accident, \$8,000 has been recovered from the insurance company as accident insurance value. A new ambulance of the Leyland variety is estimated to cost \$15,000. This is the result of an oversight by the Minister of Finance at the time of the last estimates when this was omitted.

I just would like to take the opportunity to say that this ambulance is part of the emergency ambulance service. I went into office in September to find an ambulance service of six

with four ambulances grounded and two barely on the road. Of the four ambulances grounded, one was at the Ministry of Communications and Works since 1st January, 1976 and another one was at a commercial garage the name of which I will not call. They do not deserve advertisement of any kind. This was since the 19th July, 1976.

Mr. Chairman, as if that was not bad enough, one would have thought that the very nature of the vehicle — an emergency ambulance — would be such that the Minister of Health would have speech with the Ministry of Communications and Works and if necessary impress upon him the element of emergency involved; but we find one ambulance lying down for nine months and the other for three or four months. In the meantime, of course, people must still be picked up by ambulance and therefore other vehicles have got to be hired. One way we found that rentals between the 4th January, 1976 and the 14th October, 1976 were up to the tune of \$1,733.

Anyhow, I am happy to report today that three ambulances are now on the road and this Minister of Health has had speech with the now Minister of Communications and Works who has a very clear and full appreciation of the type and nature of the service that the emergency ambulances give. We do need extra ambulances, and the emergency service is going to be updated; but for the time being we can do a bit which I am in the process of doing, simply by keeping ambulances from lying down here, there and everywhere by getting a part here and a part there and getting them back on the road.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 115 stand part.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I beg to second that.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I would merely like to say that everyone in this country would like to see an efficient ambulance service in operation. There have been problems with the ambulance service in this country and these have been raised on the floor of this Chamber from time to time; and I know that persons have been concerned to ensure that when there is an emergency call the service is in a position to respond promptly to that particular call.

When ambulances go out of commission for one reason or another — whether it is accidents, or whether it is the rate at which they can be repaired and put back into good working condition by the Ministry of Communications and Works which looks after those repairs —

whatever the reason may be, it is a fact that from time to time a large number of ambulances have been out of service because of accident, because of the poor handling of the vehicles or because of the tardiness in repairs or the shortage or absence of spare parts.

There are a variety of causes; but I would not like anyone to believe that the number of ambulances available for duty has been below the required and stipulated number because of any type of incompetence on the part of those who have to make policies for the service. I note that the Minister has failed to mention this. We get the impression from what she has said that she has gone to the Ministry and now she has managed to get three ambulances ready. The fact is that this is a problem with which officers in the Ministry have been very much concerned and we know that they have given this particular matter very careful consideration, and after consideration, proposals were made for the establishment of a particular post within the Ministry of Health itself to ensure that adequate maintenance schedules were set up for those ambulances and that accidents would be promptly reported and that the necessary follow up with those who had to repair the ambulances — all those matters were gone into.

More than that, proposals were formulated and implemented that certain developments should take place whereby minor repairs could be carried out by the Ministry of Health itself. I merely want to give the House the information that steps have been taken to improve the efficiency of the service, and that the Minister is batting on a good wicket because of the steps which have been taken. I hope that she will get on with the job of continuing to improve the service for which proposals and plans have been made.

3.45 p.m.

The question that Head 115 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

Head 120 — Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce — Item 5 — Barbados Marketing Corporation — \$750,000 — was called.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that Head 120 in the sum of \$750,000 for the Barbados Marketing Corporation stand part.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, and reserve the right to speak at a later stage.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, apart from the obvious lack of information which has been forthcoming from the Minister on this particular matter, particularly since the Barbados Marketing Corporation is such a vital corporation in this country and should, obviously, be playing a very important role in the whole life of this country, one is amazed at the approach which the Government is adopting in this particular matter. Now, I think there are a number of things which will have to be put into proper perspective when it comes to this question of the Barbados Marketing Corporation. (*Asides.*) No amount of heckling or lack of information forthcoming from the Government side will deter me from making the contribution which I want to make on this particular matter.

It is obvious, Mr. Chairman, that there are a number of issues relating to the Barbados Marketing Corporation which have to be ventilated in this Chamber and which the country and, indeed, this Honourable Chamber deserve some answers, because there are matters which are of tremendous importance. Now one has heard, from time to time, the Chairman of the Barbados Marketing Corporation making policy statements and what he can visualise as the role of the Marketing Corporation and the whole reorganisation policy which was embarked upon at the Marketing Corporation some weeks ago.

Now, I want to deal with a particular aspect of decisions which were taken at the Barbados Marketing Corporation, and that is the one which relates to a number of workers who were made redundant at the Barbados Marketing Corporation at the end of the year. For the purpose of the record, Mr. Chairman, I should like to make it clear that as early as some time in November — as a matter of fact, the *Advocate-News* of the 27th November carried a statement to the effect that the Barbados Marketing Corporation had planned to reduce its staff by about forty or so. The Barbados Workers Union, being the representative of the workers, made representations to the Board of the Corporation and, as a result, the redundancy plan was not put into effect at the time that the Corporation had decided to put it into effect. But, at the end of the year, notices were served on 41 workers at the Corporation in the various departments. In the Maintenance Department eight people were made redundant; in the Cold Storage Department six people; in the former Development Division four people; in the Produce Section two people;

at the Depots two people; in the Transport Section seven workers; in the Commercial Division three workers, and in the Retail Department nine workers, making a total of 41 workers who were made redundant with effect from the 31st December. Needless to say that they received the letters notifying them that they were going to be made redundant on the same day, 31st December. This is the kind of Government we are dealing with, and they do not show any particular concern with the way in which workers are treated. That, of course, is another matter which will, obviously, be competently dealt with when the appropriate time arises.

But I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that when we come to the question of a labour policy and the whole approach of this Government towards the question of employment and, indeed, the fulminations of the present Government when it was in the Opposition about the unemployment situation when this is measured against its performance now it is the Government, we are left to wonder what we are seeing and witnessing today. Again I would indicate, Mr. Chairman, that the Government has demonstrated a most singular, hypocritical, attitude on this question of unemployment. Mr. Chairman, anybody in his right senses, recognising the unemployment situation with which this country is confronted, or any Government would do everything possible to ensure that the unemployment situation is not further aggravated. What I am saying is that the present Government is doing all in its power to ensure that the unemployment situation in this country is further aggravated.

Now, we have a situation here, for example, where 41 workers have been made redundant. At the time that these workers were being made redundant, the Barbados Marketing Corporation was interviewing six persons who were hired the day after the people were made redundant. Those were jobs that could have been filled by people who were at that time on the staff of the Barbados Marketing Corporation. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that anybody, who is really looking out for industrial peace and trying to bring some solution to the very critical unemployment situation that we have in this country, would have found ways and means for creating jobs. I fear, Mr. Chairman, that what we are witnessing is that we have a situation where the present Government is getting rid of one set of workers and replacing them by another set of workers. Unfortunately, the workers who were employed at the Barbados Marketing Corporation cannot find employment in other areas.

Whereas we heard the Prime Minister, when he was the Leader of the Opposition, arguing very strongly that the unemployment situation in Barbados was somewhere to the tune of 28%, we now have a situation where the Barbados Marketing Corporation, according to the Chairman and to the records, which employs about two hundred and fifty-three people, making over forty-one of these workers redundant. I know that you can work out the percentage in this particular matter. One has to be very, very careful in looking at this particular matter and examine it very seriously. One has to look at this action on the part of the Government, relative to the workers at the Barbados Marketing Corporation and in other areas, and see what effect it is having on the entire country.

Mr. Chairman, if we already have a high unemployment situation and you are going to be adding further unemployment to this, are you not courting disaster? It would seem, Mr. Chairman, that the present Government likes the idea of courting disaster, and likes the idea of being in a position where it can wield the axe as it sees it fit and make as many people redundant, or put as many workers as possible out of jobs. This has been the trend which the Barbados Labour Party has set in motion ever since it gained the reins of Government in this country on the 2nd September, 1976.
3.55 p.m.

I think that we have got to be very serious in our approach when it comes to the question of employment, and what is particularly lacking from the Government is any clear employment policies. You have on the one hand a clear understanding, and indeed definition, about unemployment, that is, that I think everybody recognises in this country — even the present Government — that there is a serious unemployment problem. It is my contention, Mr. Chairman, that in this particular situation we should be made aware, this Chamber should be given some information as to (1) the precise nature of the problem, and (2) the way in which the Government proposes to alleviate this particular ill which confronts this society, but we see no such thing, and I would like to say that we will never ever be able to get any precise analysis of this until the Government sits down and really come up with a clear and unequivocal policy on unemployment.

I would like to state this in the entire context of what has happened at the Barbados Marketing Corporation, because I think that it is a disgrace that we should be in this day and age,

when things are so hard, when everybody is trying to get a job, that we could have this situation where with the stroke of a pen you will find that 41 people have been put out of operation. I make no bones about it, Mr. Chairman, that when one thinks in terms of the Barbados Marketing Corporation and the role it should play in this country, it has to be looked at from a national point of view, that is, that the Chairman, for example, talked about putting the Barbados Marketing Corporation on more profitable lines. I want to say that the question of profit, in my view, when I think in terms of a Corporation ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Which Chairman are you speaking of? This one?

Mr. GREAVES: You see, Mr. Chairman, this is the problem we have in here. This is the point I am making, we have so many Chairmen in here, but I mean the Chairman of the Marketing Corporation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please be not so copious in your repetitions. Carry on.

Mr. GREAVES: The mini Minister at the Barbados Marketing Corporation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair does not quite understand.

Mr. GREAVES: The member for St. Michael West. (*Asides.*) Mr. Chairman, can I be relieved of this heckling?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I thought it was only in the theatre where you had prompting, but there is a prompter down below, Sir, they seem to have brought that into this Chamber now.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point. May I inform the hon. member for St. Lucy that he has about two minutes more to continue. It may seem a long time to you, but ...

Mr. GREAVES: I was saying, Mr. Chairman, that one has to regard the role of the Marketing Corporation in the society, and as I see it the question of profit should not really be foremost in the minds of the policymakers at the Barbados Marketing Corporation. As a matter of fact, I would say that every effort should be made to make the Corporation as efficient as possible, to reduce wastage wherever it is possible, but at the same time and bearing in mind the very important role that the Corporation has to play, and bearing in mind also that the Government in

any situation where there is high unemployment, the role of Government is to give the lead, to create employment opportunities not to reduce the opportunities for employment as is being done by the present Government, so that we have therefore to recognise the vital role, that is, the role of the Marketing Corporation as laid down in the Statute, the wide ranging role, the fact that profitability is not necessarily an objective, and while at the same time I recognise that efficiency is very important, at the same time we must recognise that the Government has a very important role in this country in giving the lead for creating employment opportunities for the people of this country rather than making it more difficult and harder, as has been evidenced by every move that the Barbados Labour Party Government has made when it comes to the question of workers and unemployment in this country.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman ...*(Asides)*... No, I don't want him to speak yet.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak, but this is no cat and mouse thing now, it is my portfolio so I am going to give you all the chance to speak. Nobody is afraid to speak on this.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, in speaking on this particular Resolution I would like to refer to what I consider to be some deterioration in the way in which Government Business is being handled in this Chamber, and I want to refer to this particular measure and just to make a mild, or rather offer some mild suggestion.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with a Resolution for the BMC for \$750,000. If the hon. member wants to talk about the conduct of the proceedings in here he is censuring Your Honour sitting there; let him make a substantive motion. Talk about the BMC.

Mr. SANDIFORD: That is the nineteenth no point of order. It seems as though on certain Resolutions, and I am talking on this particular Resolution, that the Minister who introduced this Resolution ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This is not a procedural Resolution.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I am talking about this Resolution and the information that has been given or not given to this Hon. Chamber on this matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will be advised by the Clerk. *(Pause)*. The hon. member can speak about the BMC, speak on this Resolution.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I am going to speak on the BMC, and I want particularly to speak on the absence of any information about the BMC given by the Minister in introducing this Resolution.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir, this is very simple. The Addendum here says:

"This Resolution seeks to provide a sum of \$750,000 as a grant to the Barbados Marketing Corporation to enable it to reduce the Bank Overdraft and also to provide working capital for, *inter alia*, the purchase of greater quantities of produce from local farmers."

What more information do they require? The Resolution for \$750,000 was introduced, and the Minister has the right to introduce it for the length of time he sees fit, and that kind of information is right here in the Addendum.
4.05 p.m.

I would dare to say that if I was in their position I would pull the Minister out. He is done. I do not know why they do not toss him out of the Barbados Workers Union. Gerald Hudson, keep quiet. *(Asides)*.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He is dead, you know. You cannot go up at the Cathedral and lay down at nights.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you prepared to speak on the Resolution? If so, continue. *(Asides)*. Order, please.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution presents some difficulty because the former practice of this Chamber is for an expansion or additional information to be given by the Minister who introduces the Resolution. Now, on that side, as the Government, they have an opportunity as far as the BMC is concerned, which is the particular matter being discussed, to speak first and to speak last. In this particular instance we have had not one word of substance from the Minister responsible for this subject expanding on the proposals or the reasons why this Resolution is before us. I think that this is a....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. It is quite clear in the Addendum. The Addendum sets out why the Resolution for the sum of \$750,000 is here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am giving the hon. member a chance to speak on the Resolution. Will he please hurry up?

Mr. SANDIFORD: I have a certain amount of time to do that, 15 minutes or whatever time I am allowed. I am talking about the BMC, and as a member of this Chamber I would expect that on a matter like this that in the introduction of this Resolution for the sum of \$750,000 — it is not \$7.00, or \$75.00 or \$750.00. It is \$750,000 and the business of this Chamber demands that adequate information be given as to how are we....

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. When the hon. member says that the business of this house demands, it can only demand if it is shown within the Standing Orders. As far as I know, since I came to this Chamber — and I have been here before the hon. member — the Addendum sets out the reasons behind the Resolution. If the hon. member is not in contact with his colleague who was the Minister responsible for the BMC prior to September 2, he should allow the hon. member to get up and talk. Nobody has prevented the ex-Minister from taking his position as far as the BMC is concerned.

Mr. SANDIFORD: He is absent. Mr. Chairman, I merely wish to state again that this is a very important Resolution and all that we have to do now if that is all we are going to get from the Government benches is that the Addendum is there that is enough, we will not be able to discuss the BMC.

This Chamber is supposed to be one which conducts its business by debate and discussion, and that is what we would like to do about the BMC; and I would like to suggest that the House be treated with more courtesy in discussing such matters.

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, as Chairman of the Barbados Marketing Corporation and member for St. Michael West responsible for matters at the BMC, I would like first of all to address my attention to a statement by the hon. member for St. Lucy. By now he has already established in this House that this penchant for veracity is rather limited. He has a great deal of trouble coping with the truth.

He got up a few minutes ago and stated that the BMC last Friday fired 42 workers and on the following day, which would have been Saturday, hired six. Apart from the fact that the BMC's administrative offices are not open on Saturdays.....

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I take exception to the statement made by the member for St. Micheal West indicating that I have no penchant for veracity.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order. Two hon. members are on their feet.

Mr. GREAVES: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member for St. Michael West said that I have difficulty in coping with the truth. (*Asides*). I am saying that that is unparliamentary, and I would like the hon. member to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is nothing unparliamentary there. Please carry on. (*Asides*). Order please.

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I do not know why my statement should cause so much confusion. I am perfectly willing to accept any statement that I make. I did indeed say that he had difficulty in coping with the truth, and I went on to say that he said that the day after we had fired 42 workers we hired 6; and were it not for the fact that a certain kind of language like "dastardly liar" was deemed unparliamentary, I would be forced to use it in here. At the BMC we have hired exactly five since I was Chairman, and that was on 1st December, 1976, and not last Friday.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not giving way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order? The hon. member will resume his speech. Please continue.

Mr. JOHNSON: All of those persons who were hired in the capacity of security officers comprised a complement of Brinks Guards who had been performing that service prior to that. Brinks Guards are not in the employ of the Barbados Marketing Corporation. They are in the employ of Brinks (Barbados) Limited. They were providing on contract that service to the BMC. The last Brinks Guard, to the best of my information, left the BMC yesterday. So we have not fired 42 people in order to hire anybody. We have got rid of 42 persons in order to give the BMC something which it badly needs.

The people who were responsible for administering the affairs of the corporation prior to November, 1976 went on a hiring spree during the months preceding the General Election and

Security Chief, tells you that trucks back up to the depot and load a whole pig out of the abattoir, that is why the BMC needs money. In my first week as Chairman I dismissed, or caused to be dismissed, two Guards, 18 pounds of fish a piece stashed away.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have about one minute more to wind up.

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, during the month of December, I am going to show you why the BMC needs money, I had to issue instructions to clear what has amounted to over 500 tons of meat out of cold storage accruing charges at the rate of six cents per pound per month, over 500 tons of meat in there since February 1976, accruing \$95,000 in cold storage charges to BICO, and you are asking me why the BMC needs money? I am telling you now, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, when you ask why the BMC is asking for \$750,000, I hope you have a fair understanding now, but there is a lot more that I have in these files that I have here, and fifteen minutes cannot do it, so I will come back again and we will talk some more on the BMC, at Estimates time.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I too have a lot on the BMC, and fifteen minutes might not be enough.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir, am I to understand from the former Minister of Trade that he has taken away BMC files? (Mr. TAITT: Oh, no, Sir). Am I to understand this, Sir? Because all it means that the police will come to your house for the files.

Mr. TAITT: That is the style of Government which they would like to see implemented in this country, where every time you wake up in the morning the policeman will be outside.

Mr. Chairman, what has happened to the Barbados Marketing Corporation is only a microcosm of what is happening across this country. This Government of the Barbados Labour Party has been pursuing with a relentless force, a relentless unscrupulousness the entrenchment of themselves for as long and for ever. The way they have been doing it, Sir, is to dismiss people, and I am talking about the Barbados Marketing Corporation, and I intend to talk. They have dismissed 41 people from the Barbados Marketing Corporation. That 41 can be added to the large numbers that have been dismissed before and those who will be dismissed again. I do not expect the Chairman of the

Barbados Marketing Corporation to be overly moved by the fact that some poor man or woman would not be able to feed his children this week because he fired him, I do not expect him to be moved at all. You see, Mr. Chairman, he earns \$4,300 a month, so when he is getting \$4,300 a month it is easy for him to send away a little young man who is the only worker in a house of ten children, a young girl who is the only worker in a house of fifteen children. He works in here and gets \$1,000 a month, he gets \$2,800 from BIMAP, he gets \$500 from the BMC, plus travelling, so anything over \$4,000 a month is what he takes home. In fact, he gets more than the Ministers, and if we are not careful, more than the Prime Minister, so you see he cannot care what happens to the ordinary people.

Let me tell you, Mr. Chairman, how heartless this man of God is. This man of God the Chairman of the BMC, has got his kicks out of taking persons who have been in one position and reducing them to a position where they are denigrated and where their moral capacity is removed. There was a man who was an Executive at the Barbados Marketing Corporation; within days of his going in he walked him down to the yard and said "down there is for you, come out of the office and work down there in the yard." There is a Supervisor, he took him as a Supervisor, he said "you are now number two on a truck," he has taken all the Supervisors practically and has made sure that he has given them jobs bound in the context of living in this country to cause them psychological pain.

But I go further, Mr. Chairman. You hear him getting up in here and talking about he found people who steal. Stealing is not something new in this country, stealing has not only been found at the Barbados Marketing Corporation, or else there would be no need for a Police Force, there would be no need for the courts, there would be no need for the gaols, but I think it is unfair for him to suggest that the reason why these 41 people have been dismissed is primarily because he has found them stealing.

Mr. JOHNSON: On a point of order. I suppose that proximity to the member for St. Lucy is making it difficult for the hon. member

to grapple with the truth again. I have stated the reasons why the BMC needed money. I never for one moment suggested that the 42 workers who were sent home had anything to do with stealing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair rules that the words "42 members of the Barbados Marketing Corporation were dismissed for stealing" should be withdrawn.

Mr. TAITT: Which words?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You have asked the hon. member to withdraw the words complained of and he has merely said that the Clerks will have a hard time with that. You may ask the Clerk to read back the words.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair regards this as a serious matter. Are you prepared to withdraw the remarks?

Mr. TAITT: I am willing and ready to withdraw the remarks — the words that 42 workers of the Barbados Marketing Corporation were dismissed for stealing.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Sir. It is sometimes customary when we get a debate of this nature for members to lose their equilibrium. Your Honour rules that the suggestion that 42 persons were dismissed from the BMC for stealing should be withdrawn. What I am concerned about is the attitude of the member and his remarks "they will have a hard time with that". I consider that rude to the Chair. I think the hon. member should be sober enough — I say sober enough — to withdraw the remarks rather than saying that they will have a hard time with that. Which means that as far as he is concerned he is not worried whether they are withdrawn or not. I think that that is gross contempt of the Chair and of Your Honour's ruling.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, if members are not allowed to speak, you may seek the advice of the Clerk at the table.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair requires the hon. member for St. Michael South withdraw any imputation that 42 members of the BMC staff were dismissed for theft.

Mr. TAITT: I withdraw that. During the course of the discussion of the 42 members who were dismissed he made references to 13 who were charged or are being charged in the courts. He made reference to various things which he has found wrong and which suggested malfeasance,

theft. I am saying that when one looks at the people who have been dismissed, the names of these people, one has to start wondering how this is possible. Let us take a look at some of the names. You hear them talking about yard fowls. It is most significant that of these 42 persons dismissed, at least 37 are members, or supposed supporters of the Democratic Labour Party.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw your attention to Standing Order 28(2) "A Member must confine his speech to the subject under discussion, and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto." This Resolution before this Committee is for the sum of \$750,000 to finance the Barbados Marketing Corporation. At no time within the last ten minutes have we heard anything mentioned about the Resolution, why we need the money and how we are going to spend the money. All that we have been hearing is about people dismissed and who has been dismissed.

The hon. member for St. Michael West gave reasons in his speech. The reasons were the amount of money that was needed and why they had to get rid of staff. The hon. member is completely out of order, and I ask Your Honour's ruling under Rule 28(2).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot have two hon. members on their feet. It has been clear that there have been several irrelevancies and indeed the Chair is prepared to give warning to the speaker. Please continue.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman,.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Hon. Leader of the Opposition please keep quiet. His voice is affecting my ears.

Mr. TAITT: I take it, Mr. Chairman, that I am permitted to speak about the operations of the Barbados Marketing Corporation while we are considering giving money for the operations of the BMC.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please confine your remarks to the Resolution.

Mr. TAITT: When you look at the number of persons who have been dismissed from the Barbados Marketing Corporation...

Mr. JOHNSON: On a point of elucidation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member give way?

Mr. TAITT: No, Sir. Of the persons who have been dismissed — and you have seen all of the grand charge that they have been making, it is doubtful. You take a young man like Sylvester Padmore.....

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member be kind enough to give way just a minute?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you rising on a point of order?

Mr. JOHNSON: On a point of elucidation. He is about to read a list of the people fired. I think that in fairness to the House it will be for me to say that the criteria for dismissal... (*Asides*).

Mr. TAITT: No, Mr. Chairman. With all due respect, a point of elucidation will have to be on something on which he has spoken. This is another speech. Mr. Chairman, you take a young man like Sylvester Padmore, a young man who went to the Alleyne School. He got eight O Levels. He is the only person who has an O Level in Agriculture. This young man went to work at the BMC because I literally begged him to go because when we were discussing the upgrading of the BMC we were trying to get persons of a certain quality to enter the Corporation as clerical people so that they could move up into middle management eventually. I persuaded the young man with eight O Levels, Head Boy of the Alleyne School.
4.45 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I must draw to Your Honour's attention Standing Order 28(2). What does Sylvester Padmore, a headboy at the Alleyne's School, have to do with the Resolution for \$750,000 for the financing of the BMC?

Mr. TAITT: He was fired from the BMC for which we are getting the money.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I must draw your attention to Standing Order 28(2). You may seek the advice of the Clerk.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will both hon. members take their seats, please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You can talk about the airport, and all about, but we are not dealing with the Alleyne School.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Acting Leader of the House take his seat. This behaviour is not.....

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am developing a point to show that the policy.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you, please, wait a minute. I would like to draw the attention of this Honourable Committee to the behaviour of certain hon. members, and ask them to desist from the cross-talk and the loud asides I am hearing. The hon. member may continue, and I should like to remind you that you have 2½ minutes to complete, and that makes allowances for much of the time lost.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I would never question you, but two minutes? I have been interrupted almost from the time I started. Am I not permitted ever in this House to make a statement? It has been going on time and time again.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you carry on with the Resolution?

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, another young lady, who lives in Lands End, has two A levels from the Community College. Her only sin is that she lives in Lands End, and that is why they fired her from the BMC.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What has that to do with the Resolution?

Mr. JOHNSON: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. He cannot impute improper motives to me.

Mr. TAITT: I am imputing them, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what point do you rise?

Mr. JOHNSON: He is suggesting that the reason the lady to whom he was referring was sent home is that she lives in Lands End. That is false. That is imputing improper motives to me.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is irrelevant and I have said so. Will you, please, continue and leave out the irrelevancies.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it is clear what the position is. Let me simply say that it is passing strange that the vast majority of the persons who have lost their jobs find themselves living in St. Michael South West. Let me say that they were not yard fowls. They were people who were highly qualified and for whom there were good reports on files. I am not embarrassed by the fact that I persuaded some of those people to go and work at the Marketing Corporation, because the

Marketing Corporation needed a high quality of people. If I had to do it again I would do so.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will both hon. members take their seats? What is the point of order on which you rise?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I am drawing to Your Honour's attention Standing Order 28(2) again. If you are in disagreement with me, you may seek the advice of the Clerk at the Table, and this is what the great Erskine May would advise. The member for St. Michael South for the past twelve or fifteen minutes has dealt with all irrelevancies and nothing at all about the Resolution for \$750,000. I am appealing to Your Honour to draw this to the hon. member's attention.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you please take your seat? The hon. member has just about half a minute to complete his speech.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it cannot be in the English Language anywhere in the world that, if you are dealing with a corporation, the dismissal, or employment, of people at the Corporation is irrelevant. I do not mind how much you stop me from speaking. I have five years' experience. It is sufficient to say that they are creating a monster in this country. You, the people in the Barbados Labour Party, are now getting rid of all of the people in the Democratic Labour Party. When the Democratic Labour Party wins the Government, then they will expect us to get rid of all the people in the Barbados Labour Party. Can you not see that you are creating a monster, and that you are going to turn this country into a situation of blood and sand?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member please be seated?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, that is the monster.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you please be seated.

Mr. TAITT: They may continue forever.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you take your seat; your time is up.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I share the view of the hon. member for St. Michael South. When we in this House objected to

Parliamentarians being made Chairmen of Boards, it was put forward as some idea that we were going to get better representation and more accountability. What we are getting here is that the Minister himself on a Resolution involving nearly \$¼ million of the taxpayers' money – the Government said it would give more accountability, more open Government, and let the public know everything – and we have not heard one word from the Minister as to how or where this money is going, or how it is going to be distributed.

Now, when he was in the Opposition, he spent hours criticising the Marketing Corporation. Now that he is in the seat of Government, one would have expected that he would have explained things to the public. The present Prime Minister came in here and used the Marketing Corporation as one of the items in his total mismanagement package. One would have expected a Minister in his own Government, in presenting to the House a request for \$¾ million from an empty Treasury, to explain things. I do not care what you do with the money. You could flush it down the toilet, but it is the taxpayers who want to know how the money would be spent. The taxpayers should know what new measures the new Ministers have introduced, and what plans you have for the BMC. Do not wait because you have the last word. That is typical law tactics. You want the last word to the jury. I would like the law to be abolished to do that.

Be that as it may, you owe it to me, as a member of the Opposition, and you owe it to the public to get up and in a rational speech – nobody can quarrel with you, but we are still carrying on the election in here and we are not concerned with people's future and the people's welfare. You are in the Government. Get up and tell the public: "Since I assumed responsibility for the BMC, I have gone into every aspect of its financing, and this is what I propose and this is why I need \$750,000." I would be the first one to get up and agree to it. You are playing a cat and mouse game. You waited to bait the member for St. Michael South West and so on. The people are the ones who suffer in this cat and mouse game. When you come now and make a big speech winding up, you have not achieved anything. You think you are scoring a point, but you cannot score a point on me. You cannot score a point on me in law or out of law. You will score a point because the member, who just spoke, happens to have responsibility at one time for the BMC. I think he has a legitimate excuse. I would ask young Ministers that when they come into

the House they should leave out the question of trying to take political advantage.

4.55 p.m.

If the amount of money was not \$750,000, the way you introduced it I would let you have it. It is only because to us the Marketing Corporation in the news with people getting fired is a matter that has asked us out of a sense of responsibility to respond, otherwise I would let you vote the money the way the Minister introduced it. He moved it, he does not want any contribution from us, and this is the whole point, that I feel, Mr. Chairman, that the Government must show, not to us — they can treat us, they can't treat me, and I don't think my colleagues will allow them to treat us in a manner less than we should be treated — but the public wants to know. Are you closing down the supermarket side? All this talk from the Chairman, and you ought to be the last person to talk about laying off anybody; how you could sleep at night with three jobs giving you \$4,300 a month and you laying off people? If you are a Christian you will have a lot to answer for, your conscience must torment you, that you have a job as a member of the House, BIMAP, Chairman and all this, and you can think it in your heart to lay off one single, poor soul? I don't know how you could sleep, but some people could sleep through a storm. If you can sleep and if you think that your prayers and the forgiveness you must ask God for, because somebody who can do that and lay off needs forgiveness, needs repentance, well it is a matter for you and your Creator, but coming from you, with three jobs, higher paid than the Prime Minister and anybody on the front bench, to talk about laying off somebody in this country. I wonder when the public hears this what they really are going to think; the Prime Minister reduced the number of Ministers and he has one backbencher getting more than the Prime Minister.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would you please confine your remarks closely to the Resolution?

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I appreciate that, but I am dealing with the member....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And avoid these irrelevancies, please.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: No, it is not irrelevant, the point is that a man with three jobs at the Marketing Corporation can dismiss somebody and make them have none. That could not be irrelevant, anyhow I will abide by what you say. I do not want to get into it, except to deal with the two points I made. One is that even although

the Government know they can rely, as we used to rely, on our numbers, they owe it to the public, not to me. I say it is not coming out of my pocket so you can vote millions, but the public wants to know what are your plans. You are a new Government, you have promised the people open Government, you are going to do everything above board, you are going to take the people into your confidence, and yet the Minister comes in here today and gets up and moved that this amount do now pass. This is not good enough.

Now, the Minister can answer this. This morning a lady asked me a question. This lady has a contract with the BMC for chicken. Just by accident she rang me, they were to pick up this lady's chicken, a poor woman from St. Andrew....(Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: You don't talk about Abigail Smith, I know about her). You know her too? She is a BLP? *(Aside)*.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No cross talking, please; will you address the Chair?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, let me stop the Leader of the Opposition and tell him to go and ask the former Prime Minister about Abigail Smith and he will get the history of Abigail Smith.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I am nothing to do with any Prime Minister, I said she rang me this morning, I was hoping to get a case against you, but I think I solved it without going to court. If the lady had a contract with the BMC to collect her chickens by 16th December, they have not collected her chickens, and she said she is now told that there is some co-operative that is marketing chickens. I do not know anything about it, that is why I am saying if the Minister had told us today that he has agreed or arranged — even the Chairman — that poultry should be bought either through a co-operative, that pigs should be bought through the Agricultural Society, one would be able to see a new policy and a new alteration, so I would not have had to mention Abigail Smith if I knew exactly what was happening, but he gets up "I move that \$750,000 under this Head do now pass." Are we idiots around here? Monkeys? Must we follow blindly? Does he want to tell me whether he still has an interest in Boldhill Farm? Whether Boldhill Farm is doing any work for the Corporation or what arrangements he has made to divest himself of such interest in the farm since he has become a Minister? I am not saying you have not, but I want you to assure us that there is no conflict of interest in your arrangement with the BMC and Boldhill Farm for processing chicken. That is

all, I do not want you to think I am imputing, because Carter is trying to put his peanut farm in some sort of trust. That is what I read, so there is nothing wrong in having something, but I would like the assurance and the public would like the assurance that proper and satisfactory arrangements have been made to avoid any conflict of interest, since you now have as you didn't have before, responsibility. I am not imputing because I do not know, but I want the assurance that there is no conflict between your Ministry and you personally in any arrangements by the Corporation for using any facilities which will advance its activities and its efficiency.

I would like in future, Mr. Chairman, the member for St. Joseph to treat this House with greater courtesy. Avoid trying to make political points, because as we used to say, you have 17. You have the member for Christ Church West now becoming a big bazooka, he is bringing up the rear, he is no pop gun now. When you were in the Opposition he was a little pop gun, gradually his firing power has increased to bazooka size now.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The hon. member does not object to being known as a bazooka, but it didn't even take an arrow, a sling shot, to dismiss the hon. member, so he doesn't need a bazooka. I would not intervene in the debate, I can assure him.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: That is what I am saying, they cannot be scared of us. In any case the Minister has the last word, and I think the member for Christ Church West himself should counsel the Minister of Agriculture when he introduces a Resolution, to give the Opposition a greater detail if it is non-controversial, but since this is the first real measure being introduced by the new Government which must entail — after all, you will remember, Mr. Chairman, some time in the last administration, probably in the last year, we put \$3 million into the Barbados Marketing Corporation. The Minister knows that, so what we want to know is what has happened to cause us to have to make this significant contribution since it is a departure, of course, and we expect to hear your new policy. That is all, and I think you owe it to us to give us your new policy.

We are not going to oppose it, we are going to support it, but I had to join in it because I wanted to let the Minister know that the Opposition is dissatisfied with the short, abrupt, concise uninformative way that he has introduced this particular Resolution.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Leader is quarrelling about the way I have introduced the Resolution. It is surprising that when they were in Government they introduced several Resolutions in this manner, even the vital Estimates, and they paid no regard to information being given to the Opposition. When I introduced the Resolution I was of the opinion that since the hon. member for St. Michael South West was Minister responsible for the BMC, and that as I understand, they hold parliamentary meetings on the Monday evening before Parliament, that he would have brought them up to date with the operations of the BMC, but I must admit that my memory failed me, otherwise I would have known better, because in the course of a reply which I hope to keep for the Annual Estimates, I will disclose that the Minister operated the BMC as his own little empire, and therefore the members of the Democratic Labour Party and the Cabinet of the last Government did not know what was going on down there.

5.05 p.m.

First of all, let me say as the Minister under whose portfolio the BMC falls, that I have absolutely nothing to do with the day to day running of the BMC or any other of the corporations that fall under the Ministry of Agriculture. My position is that I will set a policy in relation to Agriculture and leave it to the chairmen and the various persons on the Boards to regulate the day to day operations of the corporation; but I am forced today to make statements to clear up some of the misguided pronouncements which have been made by at least two members on the other side.

In the first place, the BMC has proved a vital organ in the community. I look at it as an arm for carrying out the Marketing arrangements for agricultural commodities which are grown or developed in Barbados. Therefore the BMC will fall into its true perspective in accordance with the law. One section shall be profit oriented and the other section shall be developmental.

I will disclose how these two sections will work. The member for St. Lucy spoke about how persons were made redundant and that he read it in the Advocate-News. As I have said, the member for St. Lucy speaks with a forked tongue. When he is speaking for the Union he takes up one position and when he is speaking in Parliament he takes up another position. It is time that he...

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I take objection to the charge made by the Minister that

all, I do not want you to think I am imputing, because Carter is trying to put his peanut farm in some sort of trust. That is what I read, so there is nothing wrong in having something, but I would like the assurance and the public would like the assurance that proper and satisfactory arrangements have been made to avoid any conflict of interest, since you now have as you didn't have before, responsibility. I am not imputing because I do not know, but I want the assurance that there is no conflict between your Ministry and you personally in any arrangements by the Corporation for using any facilities which will advance its activities and its efficiency.

I would like in future, Mr. Chairman, the member for St. Joseph to treat this House with greater courtesy. Avoid trying to make political points, because as we used to say, you have 17. You have the member for Christ Church West now becoming a big bazooka, he is bringing up the rear, he is no pop gun now. When you were in the Opposition he was a little pop gun, gradually his firing power has increased to bazooka size now.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The hon. member does not object to being known as a bazooka, but it didn't even take an arrow, a sling shot, to dismiss the hon. member, so he doesn't need a bazooka. I would not intervene in the debate, I can assure him.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: That is what I am saying, they cannot be scared of us. In any case the Minister has the last word, and I think the member for Christ Church West himself should counsel the Minister of Agriculture when he introduces a Resolution, to give the Opposition a greater detail if it is non-controversial, but since this is the first real measure being introduced by the new Government which must entail — after all, you will remember, Mr. Chairman, some time in the last administration, probably in the last year, we put \$3 million into the Barbados Marketing Corporation. The Minister knows that, so what we want to know is what has happened to cause us to have to make this significant contribution since it is a departure, of course, and we expect to hear your new policy. That is all, and I think you owe it to us to give us your new policy.

We are not going to oppose it, we are going to support it, but I had to join in it because I wanted to let the Minister know that the Opposition is dissatisfied with the short, abrupt, concise uninformative way that he has introduced this particular Resolution.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Leader is quarrelling about the way I have introduced the Resolution. It is surprising that when they were in Government they introduced several Resolutions in this manner, even the vital Estimates, and they paid no regard to information being given to the Opposition. When I introduced the Resolution I was of the opinion that since the hon. member for St. Michael South West was Minister responsible for the BMC, and that as I understand, they hold parliamentary meetings on the Monday evening before Parliament, that he would have brought them up to date with the operations of the BMC, but I must admit that my memory failed me, otherwise I would have known better, because in the course of a reply which I hope to keep for the Annual Estimates, I will disclose that the Minister operated the BMC as his own little empire, and therefore the members of the Democratic Labour Party and the Cabinet of the last Government did not know what was going on down there.

5.05 p.m.

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Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I take objection to the charge made by the Minister that

I take up one position as member of the Union and another position as a member of Parliament.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Carry on please.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: When you sign a letter calling a strike and turned around — you idiot.

Mr. GREAVES: Who is an idiot? You are an idiot. You thief.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will ask both hon. members to withdraw their remarks and apologise.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I beg to withdraw my remarks and apologise.

Mr. GREAVES: I beg to apologise and withdraw my remarks.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will now put the question.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, I have the right of reply. When I took up office in October, because I was out of the country in September, everyday I got telephone calls from the BMC saying that they needed \$1.9 million for the operations of the BMC. The request always came on a Wednesday, and if the money was not forthcoming by Thursday evening, which is the end of Cabinet day, they could not pay the personnel at the BMC.

I accepted that the BMC might have been in trouble and I went to Cabinet Thursday after Thursday and requested the Prime Minister to give me the right to find money to keep the BMC operating; and I was told by the Ministry of Finance that the BMC had operated on this basis year after year, stating that they could not pay their workers on a Friday unless they had money on a Thursday evening, and it was not proper to advance or increase the overdraft of the BMC.

Now, at that particular time the overdraft was \$975,766 — accountable to Barclays Bank \$464,756, and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce \$511,000. That is over and above a further sum which had been borrowed on a long term basis. That is what I knew at that point. Mr. Chairman, because at that time there was no chairman appointed to the BMC, I called the Deputy Chairman who was under the old administration. I call the management staff of the BMC and I asked them to present me with the liabilities and the receipts of the BMC. They presented them in figures, and after a week I said that I needed to know the exact persons you owe

and those who owe you. When it came to me and it appeared that the BMC had collectables in the region of \$695,000 and owed away \$300,000, I then said that if you have more collectables than liabilities, collect half of your receivables and then you do not need money.

At that time nobody told the Ministry about the outstanding sums owed to BICO or about a short term loan signed by the past Minister to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce for \$400,000 on a letter which stated that the money would have been paid back in three months; and up to this day the money has not been paid back.

Somebody called me early in the morning and told me that if you check with BMC you will find that the BMC has got more than enough beef, chicken backs and wings to carry them through to the end of March. I called the BMC and the Price Control Division and asked for outstanding price control orders. I gave instructions to cancel outstanding orders for backs, necks and turkey wings. That was done because the management of the BMC was representing to me that they had no money to continue, the financial position of the country being such at the time.

Subsequent to this, Mr. Chairman, I got a telephone call and I regret to say it was from the Canadian High Commissioner who said that he wanted to see me early. I said he would have to come the next day. At 9 o'clock the High Commissioner turned up with three Trade Commissioners from Trinidad. I called the manager to the meeting together with Ministry staff — the Permanent Secretary, the Senior Assistant Secretary and the Recording Clerk. One of the exporters said that he has an order... (Mr. GREAVES: Had, not has.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member for St. Lucy stop interrupting?
5.15 p.m.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I will deal with him later. He had an order from the BMC for a quantity of turkey wings. He said he got a telex cancelling two orders. Then he got a telephone call from the Manager confirming the cancellation. He then got a telephone message from a senior officer at the BMC who said: "Ignore the previous messages. Ship the goods." Within a week the senior officer at the BMC turned up at the office of the exporter in Canada and confirmed the shipment of the goods with the result that four containers arrived in the Harbour, two more were at sea, but there were

no licences for them to be landed. Incidentally, there was no money to pay for them. When you talk about dismissals at the BMC, what we have done is to relieve inefficiency and dishonesty.

Mr. Chairman, the BMC was set up in this manner under the last Minister. You had a General Manager, a Purchasing Manager, a Wholesale Manager, a Retail Manager and a Developmental Manager, each running his own show. One Manager will tell you that he did not know what the other Manager was doing. I had to tell the Canadian Trade Commissioner that Canada had been good to us, and all I could do was to issue licences and take the goods because the man was still employed by the BMC. At that time, Mr. Chairman, over five hundred tons of commodities were in BICO with \$94,000 in storage charges. This took place since March last year, and the same officer travelled to Canada to confirm an order after I had cancelled the licences and said not to ship the goods!

Mr. Chairman, they talked about administration and about the Chairman earning \$300 a month, but they did not talk about the senior men at BMC. I know who have bought houses out of BMC. I know who have bought cars out of BMC. (*Asides.*) Some of them were brought from Canada by you. Mr. Chairman, a man who was in charge of purchasing at the BMC was told to cancel licences, but he travelled to Canada to tell the people to ship the goods. He knew that the licences had been cancelled and that we had no money to pay for the goods.

Now, they talked about the role the BMC must play in the community, and they talked about Earlyn Garnes. When you look at the list of the people who owe BMC, you will see that the Big Wheel restaurant owes the BMC \$15,000 and it is run by an employee of the BMC! The very man employed as a Purchasing Officer at the BMC goes down the Islands with BMC funds, hires a boat to bring up the produce, sells them, and what he cannot sell he turns over to the BMC, and he appeared on your platform day and night after having one year's study leave. He had one year's study leave and he appeared on a political platform. He chartered an aeroplane to fly peppers from St. Vincent to Barbados. (*Asides.*) If the Prime Minister had given me permission, I would have gone in the Market Square long ago and tell you about certain things.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address your remarks to the Chair.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, they want to know what is happening at the BMC. Let me tell you what is the policy of the BMC. You have a full-time officer employed at the BMC, and

the very week I took office a bill was presented to me to okay the payment of the man for \$11,000 for work done by his company with the BMC staff and himself during the working hours at BMC. I told them to put the BMC in court, and I refused to pay the money. No man can do two jobs at the same time.

With regard the question of laying off people, the Union suggested the policy of first in first out. We did not pick and choose who we wanted to work down there. Mr. Chairman, when you look at the total expenditure of BMC, you will find retired men working down there as Contract Officers going around giving advice about what to grow and how to grow it. You have the Ministry of Agriculture giving advice about how to grow and what to grow, but after it is grown the Ministry of Trade told the people how much they should get for what they produced. Why can we not get English potatoes grown in Barbados? When the local farmers grew them the Ministry of Trade was prepared, under the old administration, to issue licences for potatoes to come from outside the region at 47 cents a pound and the local farmers were asked to take 29 cents a pound for theirs. Local farmers grew sweet potatoes in Barbados, but the BMC ordered sweet potatoes from St. Vincent and the farmers in Barbados could not get their sweet potatoes sold.

Mr. Chairman, I have said that the Ministry of Agriculture shall be responsible for advising all farmers in Barbados what to grow and when to grow it. They have been given a whole market, because I have placed an embargo on the buying and importing of beans, tomatoes, carrots, cabbages and all crops that can be grown in Barbados. I have also said that the BMC should employ a Co-operative Development Officer whose duty it – I have minuted the Board to say that all small farmers, who sell vegetables to the BMC, will have a contract from January to July, but as from the second half of the year be advised that they should join some commodity group or co-operative who can tell them what and when to grow things.

I have called in the BAS. They have their own Society, and I have said to the Statistical Department or Economic Unit that they must work out a guaranteed price of all commodities grown in Barbados and we will negotiate with the farmers for that as a guaranteed price. (*Asides.*) I have said before that the BAS is one organisation. I am not asking anybody to join any association. I have asked them to form their own institution, co-op., or whatever they want. I am not catering to any one organisation. I have said that, out of season when it is difficult to grow crops, there shall be a percentage increase in the guaranteed price so that the price of commodities would not

run to astronomical heights and there would be no wastage as had been done before.

Mr. Chairman, I have said that and based on that the BMC must now reorganise itself. You have the Cold Storage down there, and people will tell you that people will go into the Cold Storage and come out with a whole pig, the half of a cow, and so on. Quite recently at BMC a woman went through the door, struck the Brink's Guard with a bag on his head, and, while they were scuffling, four people walked through the door without paying for what they had taken up. 5.25 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, there is in the Ministry of Agriculture something called the Poultry Production and Marketing Board. In November I asked the S.A.S. to check the position of commodities, for December, and based on figures produced it showed that the country would have been 220,000 pounds of poultry meat short in December. I told him to call another meeting, and at that meeting the S.A.S. told the group that there was a shortage of poultry and that we would have to import. Mr. Chairman, not a word was said at the meeting, but within five minutes after the meeting finished the telephones started to ring. One poultry farmer said he had about 25,000 pounds hidden away that he did not tell anybody about and if any were imported it would put him in trouble. Another one had 30,000 hidden, giving the Government wrong figures, and what I have said is that if you have an intricate poultry industry as a co-operative, the co-operative will be responsible for furnishing the Ministry with figures, and therefore the two will work hand in hand. I have done it because I am pushing the Co-operative Movement, I have told the B.A.S. they have their plantations to look after, I have advised the small farmers to get their own entity going, and therefore, Mr. Chairman,...

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Was not the Minister when he was President of the Poultry Association in charge of these things? When I asked him whether the Poultry Producers used to do that and hide production, he said that was not so.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order. Please carry on.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, it is surprising. Some people live in the clouds, some live in the ground and some are like worms running in the barks of trees, but this one was never here while I was in here so how could he ask me a question? When I was Chairman was the

time when he was controlling the price of feed and everybody was down in the ground, so how could he ask me a question? What production figures? (*Asides*).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. It appears to me that the hon. member for St. Lucy speaks better making a speech sitting than standing. Will you please carry on.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, when the hon. member speaks about Executives being moved out in the yard and Supervisors lowered, let me tell you what happened at the BMC. This is a wide open tale, that certain persons used to go at the BMC with commodities, get a ticket and drive out with the same commodities and go and sell them outside. The Minister knew, I told him about it before. What we have done is try to put responsible people in responsible positions, so that we can then regulate the operations of the BMC.

Mr. Chairman, the reason for the \$750,000 is this. On the 21st August, 1975 the BMC needed \$4,881,000 to take it out of the red. The previous Government brought a Resolution to the House for \$3,150,000, leaving a deficit of \$1,731,000. Immediately after that the BMC lost \$320,000 between the loss of vegetables spoiled and its other cold storage operation. That is why I have said I shall have a co-operative to regulate when you grow, what you grow and in what quantities. They then had a salaries increase, Mr. Chairman, listen to this carefully, which cost the BMC \$290,000 in September, immediately after the Resolution. Then the Board sat down over and above this and said they would give a 5% increment to certain officers of the Board costing another \$6,000.

On the onions, they were shipping onions. Licences were issued to bring onions into Barbados in January, at the same time that the farmers in Barbados were producing onions. When there was an outcry, the then Minister informed the B.M.C. to bring in the onions, with the result that the BMC lost \$109,000 on spoilage.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I believe that the Minister is misinformed, I do not think he deliberately wishes to mislead the House. At the time when the onions were imported the onion crop in Barbados was late and they did not come in until February. I do not think he wants to mislead the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order. Let us carry on.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, that is not true. Onions are sown in Barbados not later than 6th October and are reaped at the end or the first or second week in February. The onions were brought in in the middle of January in order to tie the gap, there should be no more than 250,000 pounds of onions available on the market in December to take up the slack between January and February.

Mr. Chairman, there was cold storage equipment which was ordered. When you talk about dismissing people you have to look at efficiency in administration. The cold storage equipment came in and was lying on the wharf, a tune of \$400,000. The interest on the overdraft then was \$10,230,000, and the Development Division had lost \$103,349.50 since the re-financing. The subsidy which was paid out was \$45,129.31. It is estimated that by June of this year the BMC will need about \$1.6 million of the taxpayers' money even to pull it out beside the \$750,000 here. What we are attempting to do here is that in December when we found that the BMC was in the critical position we started to negotiate with the cold storage about reduction of charges. I had to give an undertaking through Cabinet...

Dr. R. B. CADDLE: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member will give way, do you have any proposals to close down the BMC?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: We had to give an undertaking, Mr. Chairman, to the various banks that we will find money to keep the BMC going. The BMC, for the benefit of those over there, will be used to control the prices in the community. My policy is to remove as many licences as possible in Barbados, because as a result of that policy, Mr. Chairman, as a result of linking the policy of licences together with the BMC and the Ministry, and for consumer benefit, the price of cement last week caused an upheaval in this country. When we look into the cement deal one finds that one single importer made over \$1 million.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have to call time, you have about a minute more.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, I have no time in winding up, with all respect to you. One importer made over \$1 million, and when one looks at the way cement was charged, they started off by charging a communication charge, they started off by charging overtime before the boat arrived.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Is the Minister going to be telling us about imported cement, and will we be able to join that debate? If he is going to discuss cement, will we be able to do the same?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, may I draw to your attention that this is a money Resolution and the hon. member can speak about the taxpayers' money spent at Seawell Airport, the Hospital or anywhere at all?

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it shows how that member when somebody over here is speaking he is prepared to say it is irrelevant.
5.35 p.m.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, I will have a lot more time to deal with the BMC and to deal with matters like licencing etc. but I would not like to mention that it was Mr. Leo Leacock who made \$1 million on cement. I will come to that. Let me wind up. I will tell you the position at the BMC. I take my words from the financial statement for the year ended 30th June, 1975, by the chartered accountants Coopers & Lybrand incorporated under the previous Minister of Trade. This is what they said: "In connection with our examination of the financial statement of the BMC for the year ended 30th June, 1975, we have reviewed the additional information presented on the following pages, which has been taken primarily from accounting and other records of the Corporation, but which is not in our opinion necessary for a fair and reasonable view of its financial position in relation to account of operation, because we did not obtain all the information and explanation required and because of inadequacies of the operation of internal control both of purchases and sale, we were unable to form an opinion concerning the results of operation for the year and accordingly we were unable to express an opinion on the statement of losses and accumulated deficits covered by our audit and report, and are therefore not in a position to say that such additional information is fair or reasonable."

That was under the last Minister of Trade, under the last administration. That is the situation that this Government has inherited. I go further and say that they ran the BMC in such a way that when Cabinet had agreed that the BMC should get a further overdraft of \$300,000 the bank manager called me and said "We have a letter from the previous Minister about \$400,000 and up to now I do not have a guarantee for the money. I am not lending it any money until I get a guarantee." When we checked the Cabinet papers for a year we found that nothing was ever

told to the Cabinet that the BMC under the past Minister had signed a document to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and a letter from the Central Bank telling CIBC to go ahead and lend the BMC \$400,000. Not one word, until it was told to me in the Bank when I was on my private business.

That is how the financial position of the BMC is in the state that it is in today. We have promised, Mr. Chairman, to bring provision in the estimates to clean up the mess at the BMC and to put it on the path on which it was designed to run under the Act of 1961. You will understand that when one looks at the state of the BMC, it is not that it does not make money. The projected pay for December alone would be \$11 million and yet, Sir, today the BMC cries out that we have no money. When you look at people who owe the BMC — fictitious bills from the BMC to the Ministry of Health. When I called on the Health Minister I said pay the BMC otherwise they will not feed those people in the hospital or in the other institutions. When I called on the Ministry of Education they told me you had better go and check; and when I asked them to bring the bills let me see them, do you know what was the answer I got? We cannot find them.

When you look down the line and you think that the BMC has money, the BMC has figures. One of the big concerns in Bridgetown making money and owing \$11 million and talking about hiring somebody to collect the BMC debts. That is why we have to ask for \$750,000 now, and when the estimates come we will have to ask for more.

It is not my money. It is the poor taxpayers money; and we are trying to do the job of cleaning up the mess left by the past administration.

The question that Head 120(5) stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that the Resolution for \$771,500 do now pass.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976-77 PART II — CAPITAL — NO. 28

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Resolution for the sum of

\$1,377,890 be the next item on the Order Paper. It stands in the name of the Hon. Minister of Education.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is for the sum of \$1,377,890, and it is necessary for the continuation of the Community College project. In 1973 there was an agreement between the Government of Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank to finance the Community College by \$4.3 million. Due to a lapse unexplained so far by the Ministry of Education of the last Government, the estimate for the year 1976-77 represented a short fall of \$1,377,890. Apparently there was a misunderstanding of the nature of the agreement between the IADB and the Government of Barbados as we were responsible, as the Government of Barbados, for contributing 35 per cent to the financing of this project as counterpart funds.

When the money is paid by the IADB it is paid directly into the Consolidated Fund in Barbados. Therefore the Capital Estimates for 1976-77 have incorporated the total expenditure over the period of one year. Due to some unexplained oversight (*Asides*).....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Due to some unexplained reason, when the now Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Education, the Estimates contained a short fall of \$1,377,890; and this money is to keep the Community College project going until the end of the financial year, that is the 31st March, 1977.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I was Minister of Education. The Estimates are made up by Civil Servants. The Estimates go to the Minister of Finance, and it is the Minister of Finance and the members of the staff of the Ministry who say what is to be put into the Capital Estimates. So do not walk around trying to give the impression that somebody in the Ministry did not put in something. We are prepared to vote for it, but Civil Servants do it; and if the Civil

Servants are not giving you an explanation as to why there is an omission, then the Minister of Finance should get rid of every single one of them.

5.45 p.m.

I was the Minister. The Estimates are made up by Civil Servants. The Estimates go to the Ministry of Finance, as you will discover, since you have only just been in the Government. It is the Minister of Finance who knows what should be put in the Capital Estimates. Do not go around giving people the impression that somebody in the Ministry did not put in something. We are prepared to vote the money. Civil Servants have to do it, and if they cannot give you an explanation why there is an omission, then the Minister of Finance should get rid of all of them. Did you prepare the Estimates? Do you not submit it to Finance? Do not Finance deal with it and cut it up? What foolishness are you getting in here telling people? You are trying to give people the impression that somebody deliberately left out something, or that somebody was ignorant. Do you believe that your Ministry will not leave out something next time?

No Minister has ever prepared Estimates. You must ask the civil servants about that. Ask Lewis. Ask Steve Emtage why this was left out and they will tell you. They had a Planning Unit in the Finance Division who dealt with this. You did not ask the right person, and you merely wanted to come in here and give the impression that somebody left out something. Do not have it on Barclays Bank, CIBC, or any Bank. I do not have the \$1 million point something. Do not come here and give the impression that somebody in the Education Department hid it away. I can give you names to ask. When you reply, tell me if you have asked Steve Emtage, Dr. Reid, Harry Lewis, or the Accountant in the Education Department. If you had asked them, you would have been told why the omission took place. You should ask your own Permanent Secretary who is now with the Minister of External Affairs at Marine House. They have never paid me to prepare any Estimates.

Mr. Chairman, we understand that there has been an omission by somebody in Finance, or by some civil servant. I have heard in this debate the whole afternoon that Ministers are expected to stand up over people at the Marketing Corporation. We are supposed to add up the figures; we are supposed to be watchmen to see who is going to carry out a cow or a sheep. I was never paid to be any watchman, book-keeper, time-keeper, lorry checker, or anything like that. The people of Barbados could not pay me to do

those jobs. When you come in here giving the public the impression that a Minister must stand up at a Board, and a Minister must watch and do everything, it is time you start educating the people on what is Ministerial Government. If a fellow carries away a cow, the Minister is responsible. Even the member for St. Michael South West is called upon to be responsible for what somebody else has done. If a Minister gives a man a job, has he given him a licence to steal? Are you not going to give your own people jobs, too? If the man you have given a job steals, can it be said that you gave him a licence to steal, too? We have helped people during our time, which we are entitled to do, and you are saying that we put thieves to work?

Now whoever works at the bank is an honest man, but when the time comes he may yield to temptation. When I recommend somebody to a bank and he gets a job, that does not mean that I have recommended a thieving man to the Bank.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member would give way, I should like to say that nobody has accused him of stealing money from the Ministry of Education. Take that from me; wipe the corner of your mouth; and come outside before all of the gin goes.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I have likened you to a common dog already.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I gave you one the other day and you have not yet recovered. Be that as it may, I would never expect the Minister to be trying to score points, and I was only endeavouring to give him the names of the people who could give him an explanation why he has to come with this Resolution. The omission to put it in the Estimates is not a Ministerial omission, but a civil servant and a financial omission.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I am going to be very brief, and, were it not for the wrong constitutional theories being advanced by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I would never have intervened in the debate. Ministers have failed for too long to accept responsibility for the errors and omissions of the Civil Service staff. Let me make that absolutely clear. There must somewhere be a final responsibility, and the final responsibility rests with the Minister. That is the theory. There are certain matters of principle on which a Minister will resign if the error in his Department, for which he may not be personally

responsible, is of a substantial nature and usually a nature of policy. Where it is a normal act of omission, or commission, which is due to negligence or, probably, oversight that is a different matter. I would have expected that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition would have been on stronger ground if he had got up and said that there could have been an oversight at the time of the preparation of the Estimates, and this debate need not have gone on in the manner in which I think he was trying to conduct it.

The Hon. Minister of Education never levied any suggestion, either by way of innuendo or otherwise, about the lost of funds. He has said that it is unexplained up to now, and he has asked why \$1.37 million, which is a substantial amount of money, was omitted from the Capital Estimates for 1976-77. Now, different Ministers may choose to run their Ministry in a different way, but the provision of estimates ——— again a lesson in constitutional practice for the hon. member — is most important in order to direct policy, and a Minister must know what is in his Estimates and he should be in a position to keep a check on it, if he wants to put the policy of his Department, or his Ministry, in a particular direction. He should ask, as I have been asking now I am going through the preparation of my Estimates before I get to the Estimates Committee, why is not there X dollars here? Why has it gone up in this way? What is the explanation?

Mr. Chairman, each Minister must spend time with his Departmental Head and with the Head of the Ministry. Furthermore, Ministers must find time to go to the Estimates Committee. I would not like to think that this Government runs the Ministry in the type of way the hon. member is telling us that he ran his Ministry. He was a super overlord. He was no Minister of Road Works, or Minister of Primary Schools. He has given the impression as if it is wrong for a Minister to do his day-to-day duties. The more I hear the Opposition talk, as I have said to my friend, the hon. doctor across the Table, I now understand why the Government lost the last election. There was a complete arrogant approach to what their day-to-day duties were. If they want to get the Government at the end of the next 20 years, then they must not preach wrong theories for the younger members of their Party to follow who may be coming up to take Ministerial Office.

Mr. Chairman, I know the hon. member was mistaken about this and was, as usual, clearing his name, but I have never heard even a suggestion that he had \$1.3 million in Barclays Bank. If he

did, Sir, I would like him to live in more style with not only the Jaguar. He could, at least, use a Mercedes Benz and show it. He must not be so touchy. Let us get down to the facts. If a civil servant omitted \$1.3 million from the Estimates in his Department and did not put it up, and, if the Minister fails to spot this substantial sum of money, he should say that it was a mistake; he was not aware of it when he looked at the Estimates; the Ministry of Finance did not spot the error; the Estimates for the country were out in 1976-77, and we would have to supplement it. It means that the deficit the hon. member for St. John then forecast of \$45 million might well be \$57 million this year, but the country still has to pay for it.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the Attorney-General seems to suggest that the Ministers had some system of operation which was not entirely right. I should like to draw to his attention that this was a peculiar situation where part of the counterpart funds, apparently, appeared in the estimates, and then funds which would be coming from external sources had not been put in the Estimates. It is possible that they assumed that it had been budgeted for in the Estimates, and the external amount was not budgeted for.

5.55 p.m.

They have subsequently discovered that the external funding is paid into the Consolidated Fund, and I think the Attorney General would agree that if the Minister in introducing the measure had not given just that slight insinuation which would score a very tiny point, then there would have been no need for debate. I am sure the Minister did not seriously intend to suggest that the money was lost, because he knows it was the external funding source, but I am very curious that the Attorney General would say that it appears to him that members on this side when they were Ministers were arrogant in their approach, when not so very long ago we were hearing that a particular Minister was in fact the Chairman, the Purchasing Officer, etc. etc.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I am really surprised that what is really a non-controversial matter should have taken this time, because we were not really intending to make any points on this particular matter. I myself do not believe that there was any insinuation intended by the Minister of Education, I think what he said there about the amount that was unexplained, I assure that almost came in as an Aside, and I am surprised however that this matter should generate this amount of heat, a matter on which there is agreement on both sides of the House.

What I would say, however, is that an explanation like that, I fail to see how that could come straight to Parliament without an explanation forthcoming, to pass the Ministry, to pass Finance and to pass the Cabinet, and the explanation not available. I believe it is available and must be due to an oversight, and I would counsel the member for Christ Church West that however much he checks I am confident that from that front bench during the course of this calendar year there will be times when this House will be asked to correct some type of oversight out of the Estimates, however much they check, I could almost be certain that that would happen.

As far as the other point which he made is concerned, the next twenty years — I do not even remember the context — I do not have much confidence in the mathematics of the member for Christ Church West, but I know that 1981 is not twenty years away from this particular date in 1977 when the DLP will be in power.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir, the hon. member has really become a false prophet.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I am making no apology whatsoever for the statements I made in introducing this Resolution. Indeed I am going to go a little bit further, since I have been spurred into doing so. If the Leader of the Opposition thinks he is going to make as incompetent a job as the Ministry of Education before my incumbency and think that I will get in here and not be a gadfly you will hear about it, and if you want to hear more about the Community College — no wonder you did not want me to get up here and introduce the Resolution — but he sits over there telling me I do not have to say anything, why does he not talk about the Bursar at the Community College and all the money that is missing at the Community College? About the sort of things you wrote on the file?

Hon. F. G. SMITH: On a point of order. I did not carry away the money. I talked about it, the auditors came in, they investigated the matter, so am I going to be blamed because a Bursar carried away money? What sort of ignorance am I going to hear now?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Because the Bursar carried away money is that incompetence of the Minister? Is that not foolishness and ignorance? A

Bursar stole, the Minister is incompetent; what must I do now? Be an Accountant for the Bursar or for the Community College? What ignorance are you talking? Talk anything you like and talk about my minutes and what I do, but do not tell me about what a headmaster does, the Headmaster of Harrison College or any College, that is foolishness.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you please take your seat.

Hon. L. R. TULL: All the money missing from the Community College, and what do you write on the file? "Save the man's pension rights." If he carried away the money get rid of him but let him keep some pension. You wrote that and now you are talking about not condoning it.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: On a point of elucidation. I did write on the file that the man had put in over 20 years, the man was trying to run — as you know — a book scheme at the Community College to help poor children and poor people to get books, and in the confusion of that there might have been a racket, but there was no money in the Estimates for running a book scheme. The man ran the book scheme and therefore it was not clearly shown by the auditors that he had carried away money at all, and I defy you to show or the auditors to say that he carried away money. When it came to me I said that he should be sent home but save a man's pension rights. What is wrong with that? Is that something to be ashamed of? I am not ashamed of it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Hon. Leader of the Opposition take his seat?

Hon. L. R. TULL: What kind of defence is that? The Leader of the Opposition said that he realised that money was carried away, but he is writing on the file, do not mind the man carried away the money, please save his pension. Chase him away but save his pension. I will be a gadfly in your back, you talk too much. It is a disgrace that a Minister of Government can manage Estimates in this House, come in here and manage Estimates, and one million and a quarter dollars shortfall and he does not care. Well, I do not have any explanation, and I do not care what the hon. member for St. Michael South gets up and say, up to now I have not had an explanation as to why there was a million and a quarter dollars shortfall, so if you are incompetent do not blame me for that.

The Leader of the Opposition feels that the Civil Service must run the Government of this country and whatever is wrong or right in the Estimates, a million missing here and there from the Estimates, a miscalculation of a million and a quarter over one single one year project, he has nothing to do with it, I must go and ask the Civil Servants about the money. It is not going to be that, and it is not going to be that in relation to anything you talk about the book scheme. This whole administration of the past is riddled with a lot of inconsistencies, I do not know if you are corrupt or not but too many things happened. No wonder that the Leader of the Opposition gets up as soon as I make an innocent introduction of a Bill, an unexplained shortfall of one and a quarter million dollars, that he should jump up and talk about people stealing the money. The members on that side are far too sensitive, not all of them, but too many of them over there are far too sensitive about money. I never said anything about any of them carrying away the money, he has now given me reason to think that something has gone wrong because I never said so.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Set up a Commission of Enquiry to see if I carried away the money. If I have now given you the suspicion that I carried it away, the Commission will see if I carried it away.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you take your seat? I wish at this point to call the attention of the Committee to the conduct of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and to ask him to desist from this type of behaviour in this Hon. Chamber.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I hope he keeps it up, Mr. Chairman, I hope the Leader of the Opposition continues to get on the floor of this House and say that he is not accountable for monies missing in his Ministry. I am glad to hear him say that, and it is on the record, but the Department has been riddled, and because it is not as sensational as some of the others you have heard in This Place already, the Ministry of Education is not left out, the Ministry of Education has a lot of scandals in it. You keep pushing me and you will hear about the rest. *(Aside)*

Mr. Chairman, I heard the hon. member for St. Michael South West, and all his explanation was what appeared in the Addendum about the counterpart funds and made it sound as if he was saying something so heavy. Nevertheless, he has the knack for fooling people with big words. He reads the Addendum on this and gets up to impress somebody that he is making an important speech.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think I need proceed on this, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976-77 No. 25

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is a Resolution which seeks to supplement the funds voted under this Head. Expenses incurred under the opening of the new Post Office at Brittons Hill, and it seeks to cover certain expenditure such as the installation of telephones and just a few minor things.

I do not think that the Opposition would need much explanation on this, but in the event they do I would be quite willing to give them such explanation. I consider this to be a simple and straightforward matter which should not give any problems.

I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of four money Resolutions in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, the Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY GOVERNMENT OF A LOAN OF \$743,647 U.S. TO LIAT (1974)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister I seek leave to deal with this Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no objection, leave is granted.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is a Resolution for the Barbados Government to make its contribution of \$743,647 U.S. towards LIAT. The Caribbean Development Bank agreed to lend the equivalent of \$5,843,270 U.S. in various currencies to LIAT (1974). The Governments of the area have all agreed to have this amount guaranteed, and the Barbados' share is \$743,647 U.S. and this is what I am seeking so that we can also make our contribution towards LIAT (1974).

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, there are just a couple of points I would like to make on this particular Resolution. I would want to say that this side of the House is not at all opposed to this, because in deed and in fact as you will very well recognise, this is an arrangement which was made some time ago. It is the policy obviously of the Democratic Labour Party to be involved in these kinds of operations, vital to promoting, encouraging and fostering closer economic links between the various territories, and one has to see LIAT operations in this light.

6.15 p.m.

But there are a couple of disturbing things about LIAT which I have to draw to the attention of the present Government with the view that some very serious position should be taken on it. LIAT has been serving this area for a number of years, and it baffles me how they have not been able to really grapple with the problem of being able to service the Eastern Caribbean and the areas that this airline touches as effectively and efficiently as it should be doing.

Just last week, for example, I had to take a trip to Antigua and I had to use a LIAT aircraft; and I was appalled at what I discovered. There was a situation, for example, where passengers from Grenada joined LIAT early in the morning, their baggage was checked through to Antigua; but when they reached Barbados they were put off because they were told that they had no confirmation and other passengers in Barbados were put on. So we had a situation of people joining an airline at the beginning of the journey, but half way in the journey they were put off because of what appears to be very bad arrangements and an inefficient kind of operation. I think that this is something to be

aware of and if we are investing in this airline, we have to demand that this airline is able to operate as efficiently as possible.

It is only in this way that we are going to be able to foster and establish the proper links between the islands as effectively as you will want to have this done; and there is no doubt that this is going to be important from the point of view of the tourist trade, and we know very well all of the implications of this to Barbados. Barbados stands to benefit from an efficient operation of LIAT in the same way that the other islands of the Eastern Caribbean stand to benefit from this.

I think that the Government should demand, Mr. Speaker, that some proper management survey be done about LIAT operations to ensure that the airline has the aircraft and operate at the level of efficiency so that these problems which arise from time to time do not continue to arise; because when we are talking in terms of the Caribbean, I think we must realise that efficiency is very very important.

The next point, Mr. Speaker, that I want to raise is what appears to be a serious matter affecting LIAT. You will recall that some time ago, a couple of years ago, there was an unfortunate accident which was fatal concerning an employee of LIAT who was servicing an aircraft and who lost his life as a result of — I am not sure what the Commission of Inquiry established — but it was certainly carelessness on the part of LIAT and of the people who handled that airline.

Quite recently a similar situation arose. An employee of LIAT lost his life in almost from what I gather, the same manner in which the former employee of LIAT lost his life. I think that this is something that we have got to take stock of, and I think that the Government should pay very careful attention to this; and I have not heard anything coming from the Government as to whether they have established any Commission of Inquiry, whether under the Civil Aviation Act or any other area to investigate the reason why an accident like this could happen at the airport.

I feel that it is incumbent on the Government, indeed it is the duty of the Government to set up a Commission of Inquiry to find out what happened so that the public can be informed because we have to be aware that if we are going to be talking in terms of looking after the life and welfare of the workers, safety is a very important aspect in this regard.

It appears to me that no proper safety system seems to exist where LIAT aircraft are serviced at the airport. I think, therefore, that the two points that we should look very carefully at should be the whole question of the functions of LIAT and a proper management study to be done of the airline's operations. We also have to look into this safety aspect, and I feel that the Government should be able to give us some satisfactory answer on whether they intend to proceed on this matter and find out what really happened, and in future what provision will be made to ensure that this does not happen. After all, safety is very important, and the lives of workers, as indeed, the lives of all of us should be protected as much as possible, and I think that the Government owes it as a duty to this country to ensure that there are proper safety measures in operation in any area of occupation in this country.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I believe that the hon. member rose to put me on the spot since I am the person who introduced the Resolution. I know all of these old parliamentary tricks good. I have the file here before me. First of all, let me draw to the member's attention, as far as passengers coming from Grenada to Barbados and getting put off is concerned I can assure him that this happens not only in Barbados but over the entire world. It happens with Air Canada, Air Jamaica and all of them. I can assure you that I have made a note here and I am going to ask the Minister in charge of this Resolution — Aviation — to have this brought to the attention of his colleagues at the next meeting.

That is answer No. 1. Answer No. 2, Sir, is about the efficiency of the airline. Now, I believe you should be aware that in nearly every airline in the world there is the cry of losing money; and therefore the Caribbean Development Bank set out to assist LIAT, so as to pull it out of the doldrums.

As regards the unfortunate loss of life of the young man at the airport, I am wondering why the member for St. Lucy did not ask for a Commission of Inquiry when the first person died when they were in power. We heard no call for an inquiry coming from that side; but on this occasion I can assure the hon. gentleman that there is a departmental inquiry first. We will have an inquiry whereby we will be in a position to make sure that these things do not happen.

I was in here when the man got pulled into the propeller on the first occasion and not a single word was heard about an inquiry; but on this occasion...

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Let the Hon. Minister know that there was a call for a public inquiry. Of course he said that he did not hear. That is not my fault.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, there is a departmental inquiry going on at this time. I want to tell the hon. member that they did not take measures to avoid things of that nature; but I am quite sure that this Government will do everything in its power to ensure that nothing like that happens again.

I beg to move that the Resolution for the sum of \$743,647 to guarantee the loan to LIAT 1974 be now read a first time.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE the Resolution was read a second time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, this is the end of Government Business and I am quite sure that my colleagues on the other side will agree that they have had a very interesting day; and I would recommend a bit of Alcolado to rub their backs from the licks we gave them.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 18th January, at 12 noon.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

6.25 p.m.