

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION OF 1976-81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 8th March, 1977.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P., (Speaker); Mr. R. St. C. WEEKES, J.P.; Hon. H. deB. FORDE, S.C., M.A., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of External Affairs); Dr. R. B. CADDLE; Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Health and National Insurance); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of Communications and Works); Mr. J. G. ODLE, B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees); Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Caribbean Affairs, External Trade, Industry and Tourism and Leader of the House); Mr. V. L. JOHNSON, M.A.; Hon. L. R. TULL, M.A., (Minister of Education and Community Development); Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW; and Mr. L. L. SISNETT.

Prayers were read.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS and Mr. TAITT entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, 1st March, 1977, are before you for confirmation.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of 1st March, 1977, be confirmed.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that I have received copies of the Accounts and Statements for the month of January, 1977, as prepared by the Accountant General.

Mr. SIMMONS and Hon. C. L. BOLDEN entered the Chamber and took their seats.

PAPERS LAID

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:—

Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for 10 months ended 31st January, 1977.

The Judges (Salaries) Order, 1977.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:—

Resolution to grant the sum of \$1,446,692 out of the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1976-77, Part II — Capital, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1976-77, No.44, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, at a later stage I shall ask Your Honour's permission to deal with this Resolution in all its stages.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:—

Resolution to grant the sum of \$50,030 out of the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1976-77, Part I — Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1976-77, No. 45, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:—

A Bill to amend the Caves Authority Act, 1975.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:—

A Bill to amend the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act.

Hon. F. G. SMITH, Mr. SANDIFORD and Hon. L. S. CRAIG entered the Chamber and took their seats.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Questions:—

“To enquire of the appropriate Minister:—

1. Will the Minister state the policy of Government on the provision of official transportation for (a) employees of Statutory Corporations and (b) members of the boards of those Corporations?

2. Will the Minister further state whether provision is made by those Corporations for a motor car for the official or other use of the Chairmen of the Boards of Statutory Corporations, and, in particular, for the Chairman of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation?

3. If no such provision is made for the Chairman of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, will the Minister state whether and/or in what circumstances the Chairman of that Corporation is permitted to use a motor car officially allocated by the Corporation to other personnel of the Corporation?”

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think Your Honour may have read the Question as in order but I am asking for Your Honour's ruling on the matter. I understand that this matter is before a Coroner, and therefore this House according to its Standing Orders and Rules must always respect the Rules of *sub judice*. The matters as raised by the Hon. member would seem to be the matters on which the Coroner is sitting. I thought I should draw this to the attention of Your Honour.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's point is noted.

Mr. TAITT: “To enquire of the appropriate Minister:

1. Is it a fact that Edward Walkes also known as Edward King, of Eagle Hall, St. Michael, was admitted as an in-patient of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on Monday 21st February, 1977?

2. Is it a fact that the patient died in that hospital on Monday 28th February, 1977?

3. Will the Minister state the injuries which were found on examination of the patient on his admission to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

4. Will the Minister state the cause of death of the patient?

5. Will the Minister state whether the patient was under police guard at the hospital at any time during his hospitalisation?

6. Will the Minister initiate an inquiry, other than any inquest which may be held under the Coroners Act, Cap. 113, into the circumstances surrounding the injuries and death of Edward Walkes?”
12.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Philip North, his question with respect to the shortage of hydrants in some areas of St. Philip.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, to ask of the appropriate Minister:

1. Is the Minister aware that there is a serious shortage of hydrants in some areas of St. Philip?

2. Will the Minister urgently investigate the need for hydrants in the Church Village area as follows:

(a) to operate from the six inch main on the Sunbury/Chapel Road,

(b) for the area known as the “Back Village”,

(c) for Lower Cox Hill, and

(d) for the main road near the public bath?

3. Will the Minister further ensure that such hydrants as may be provided are properly marked and easily identifiable?

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. John, seconded by Hon. H. deB. Forde, the Bill to amend the Caves Authority Act, 1975 was read a first time.

On the motion of Hon. H. deB. Forde, seconded by Hon. C. L. Bolden, the Bill to amend the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act, Cap. 123 was read a first time.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 11 asked by the hon. member for St. Lucy is now ready.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that the reply to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 13 and 18 are now ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 40 and 44. The object in moving those Standing Orders is to permit the Government to deal in all its stages today with a Bill to amend the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Order No. 2 of Government Business.

THE JUDGES REMUNERATION AND PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1977

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise on this Order merely to inform the House that the Government does not now intend to proceed with this amending Bill, and

to seek the leave of the House to withdraw it.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply to consider a number of Resolutions for the service of this Island, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I propose to deal with Item No. 1(e) standing in the name of the hon. member for St. George South.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976-77 No. 43

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is to acquire sums to pay the salaries of teachers and other people employed on the staff of the Ministry of Education due to the salary increase of April 1, 1976. As a result of this increase Government decided that a number of non-pensionable personal allowances should be paid to the staff in certain categories, and included in these are Library Assistants, Teachers, Special Grade Teachers, Audio Visual Aids and Library Attendants.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that and reserve my right to speak.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976-77 No. 39

Head 11(1) - Ministry of Legal Affairs - Direction and Policy Formulation - was called.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the money being asked for arises because of the fact that certain allowances have exceeded the vote and it is now estimated that an additional amount of \$33,834 is necessary to meet the payments until the end of March. Originally the amount of \$96,268 was provided and \$93,000 was allotted to meet the cost of these acting allowances and the payment of substitutes in respect of all the departments which fall under this Ministry, but did not take into account the

revision of salaries and wages which became effective from 1st April, 1976; hence the necessity for the first part of the Item.

In relation to Item 5, the sum of \$9,980 was provided to meet the cost of travelling allowances to officers during the current financial year. There was an upward revision of travelling rates and as a result the provision voted by this Parliament was inadequate and the necessity of an additional sum of \$1,822 is called for.

I trust that that information is satisfactory to hon. members.

I beg to move that Head 11(1) stand part.

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

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

12.35 p.m.

Head 11(6) Prisons was called.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, in relation to Head 11(6), the additional supply being asked for is to cover questions of travel and subsistence and increases in the cost of utilities, as well as the maintenance of property. I believe that we have set out very clearly in the note to the Resolution the details, and I trust that hon. members are satisfied on this. If any additional information is sought, I would be only too happy to give what is available on the file.

I move that Head 11(6) stand part.

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

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

Head 11(8) Police was called.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, again the increased supply is being asked for to supplement the vote which was voted earlier in the year, in April 1976, in the financial year under this Head. The vote has now proved inadequate to service the Head to the end of the financial year, and this has been caused by an increase in the rates of travel allowances which have been granted to members of the Service from the 1st October, 1976 in accordance with the Public Officers Loan and Travelling Allowances Regulations. It is

estimated that an additional \$40,000 will be needed to meet the cost of travelling allowances.

I therefore move that Head 11(8) stand part.

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

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask the hon. Minister one question. I know from my operating that there is a certain disquiet in the Force about these allowances. Would the Minister care to tell the House how far he has got and whether this matter is still under consideration? And can he tell us if and when the Police can expect some definite answer? I think that he is well aware that this is a burning question. I would like to know, for the benefit of the public, what is the present Government's attitude to this allowance which I know is agitating the minds of the Police Force.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, just one question to the Minister. I have been told that recently new Regulations have gone into effect which will allow policemen to have only one day a week off. I wonder if the Minister can indicate whether this is a fact and what has caused this change in the hours of the policemen. I think that the Minister should be aware that there is a certain disquiet among young members of the Force with this new imposition, if you will.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, in answer to the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition, the position is that negotiations have taken place between the Police Association and the relevant Ministers concerned, and the Government has conceded in principle the principle of a duty allowance. In stating this I should say that this Government has moved a considerable position from the situation taken by the last Government, since the records reveal that the former Minister of Finance had indicated to the Chief Establishments Officer that he should tell the Police Force "no" and do so diplomatically.

The Government took a different approach to the matter, and we have told the Police that there will be some arrangements made about duty allowance. A communication has been sent, I believe a couple of days ago, from the Chief Establishments Officer to the Commissioner of Police, and a copy of that communication has been forwarded to me as Minister responsible for the Police; and I would

expect that some indication should soon be forthcoming from the Police as to whether or not the offer being made is acceptable, or whether or not it will be necessary to carry out further negotiations.

I think I should say to hon. members — and when I say so speaking with the knowledge of one who has advised the Police Association for several years, and gratis, if I may add that; and I have been associated with their agitation quite earlier on and before the Date Commission, for adequate compensation; but one has to bear in mind in this case that the economy of the country is going through a very critical stage, and there is only \$X to be divided up among the many competing services; and although I am very conscious — and I have become more so since I have been a Minister of Government, that when it comes to money one finds the greatest degree of selfishness being shown by individuals, regardless of whether they be employers or employees or self-employed. Yet I think that I must counsel at this stage that at least any offer made by the Government must take into account the overall public interest as well.

I hope that the Police Force will be satisfied. I expect that during the debate on the main Estimates later in the year, there will be lots more debate on this Head, and then I may be in a position to indicate more clearly the position to the hon. member, as well of course as to say what sort of plans we have for expansion in the Police Force and for changes of conditions.

In so far as the hon. member for St. Michael South West is concerned. I believe that he is referring to a report in the daily Press about the need to curtail some off duty time because of the spate of cane fires. A lot more will probably be said about that during the debate assuming that this House agrees to allow the Cane Fire Prevention Bill to go through; and perhaps the hon. member will wait for a full reply on that issue. I promise not to forget to deal with it at that stage, Sir.

The question that Head 11(8) stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Ministry of Health and Welfare — Head 15(8) — St. Michael District Hospital was called.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution seeks to provide \$2,231 to pay a

personal pension allowance to a Mr. Oswald Holder who was formerly a gate keeper at the Lazaretto. The post of gate keeper at the Lazaretto was abolished on the 1st September, 1969, and at that time Mr. Holder was transferred to the St. Michael District Hospital as a gate keeper. It turned out very quickly that it was not suitable, and Mr. Holder at that time agreed to take up the post of a porter at a lesser salary. As a consequence his total loss of salary is this sum of \$2,231 over the period 1st September, 1969 to the 31st December, 1976, when he retired; and these moneys will cover his loss of earnings.

I beg to move that the Head do now stand part.
12.45 p.m.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I notice that the note does not indicate whether Mr. Holder is going to be receiving his pension on the higher salary. Can we assume that his pension will be at the higher level, or is he merely being given a lump sum and his pension on whatever his salary was when he left? It must be on the higher salary.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, this is a matter which falls under the Public Service Portfolios in the Prime Minister's Office. I regret that I do not think any of us can give an immediate answer to this question although I believe that, in circumstances such as these which are very unusual, pension is still payable on the higher rate of salary. If the hon. member would either put down a substantive question, or allow me to obtain the information, I will communicate it to him at a later stage.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to that.

The question that Head 15(8) stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING, LANDS, LABOUR AND NATIONAL INSURANCE

Head 16(3) — National Insurance Department — was called.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, under this Head we seek funds in the sum of \$9,000 to enable the National Insurance Department to meet the salaries of certain temporary and seconded staff to the end of the financial year. The need for this supplement is due to staff changes and the payment of incremental credits

to a number of officers consequent upon their attaining higher qualifications, that is, 'O' levels and 'A' levels.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second that.

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

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING

Head 21 – Pensions – was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, this part of the Resolution seeks to make provision for the payment of an *Ex Gratia* Award to the estate of Mr. Lionel Grazette, who was formerly a Messenger at the Electoral Office. Mr. Grazette died as a result of a traffic accident while he was actually carrying out his duties as Messenger, but due to the fact that he was only an acting Messenger and the office is a pensionable one, it appeared that his estate would not have been entitled to the gratuity which he would have obtained had he been appointed.

The Establishment Division went into this matter and considered that he had been in the service of the Government for 4 years 11 months and that he was actually at work when the accident occurred. They considered, and I supported the view, that his estate should, nonetheless, be paid the gratuity. A gratuity in the sum of \$3,180 has been calculated as the appropriate amount. In all the circumstances, I will ask that the Committee accede to this.

I beg to move that Head 21 stand part.

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

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

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that a Resolution for the sum of \$123,314 do now pass.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976–77 No. 42

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move the passing of a

Resolution to grant the sum of \$102,008 out of the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1976–77, Part I – Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1976–77 No. 42 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

PART I – CURRENT – CABINET

Head 5(1) – Cabinet Office – was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, Head 5(1) – Cabinet Office. The supplement sought herein relates to the requirement of Government to meet the damages which were awarded against it in a case arising out of an accident in Waterford Bottom as a result of road works being left unlit on the 29th April, 1975, and damage was incurred by a member of the public, Mr. Williams. These things happen from time to time, and it cannot always be predicted when you are assessing the Estimates what law-suits the Government will be concerned in during the year.

The Judge found that the cause of the accident was that Waterford Bottom Road was dark and unlit by street lamps, and the watchman failed to replace the lanterns which he said had been damaged at 6.30 p.m. on the same day. In effect the Judge found that an employee of the Government was at fault in the matter, and awarded \$7,932 special damages, that was for repairing the car and hiring another car; \$2,000 for the pain and suffering for Mr. Williams, the driver of the car, and he gave interest on the general damages and special damages. Therefore, the matter has become urgent.

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

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

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

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Head 13(2) Schools – Secondary – was called.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Government's policy to give assistance to Approved Independent Schools, certain grants were made to pay for teachers provided these schools met a certain criteria of the Minister. In view of salary increases of 1st April, 1976, this Resolution is seeking funds to pay additional salaries to the teachers at the Approved Independent Schools to bring them in

line with those of teachers in the Government Teaching Service.

12.55 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 13(2) Schools (ii) Secondary stand part.

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

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, we certainly welcome this particular step, and I wonder if the Minister would care to say whether in addition to the increase in payments to the teachers as is envisaged by this Resolution he also has in mind to increase the other grants which are made to the approved independent schools as well, because of the increasing cost of administering the schools. I believe I read in the newspapers recently of an address by the Minister in which he did indicate a figure for running the Government schools, but I am certain that he is aware that the cost of operating private schools, both the approved ones and those which have so far not been approved is increasing, and I wonder whether he has given any attention in this particular area to increasing the grants and subventions to the schools for purposes apart from those of increasing the salaries.

Hon. L. R. TULL: As the hon. member for St. Michael South is well aware, the Government is at the moment paying a grant to the approved independent schools to cover the cost of graduate teachers on the ratio of 1 to 100 and moving onwards. It is the intention of the Ministry to remove the ratio from 1 to 100 to a lesser figure in the very near future. We are very conscious of the role that the approved independent school is playing to the school system in Barbados. As regards the cost of running government schools, he knows that at the moment the cost is between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to provide a place, for one school child in a secondary school, and therefore we are taking a very close look at the role and function of these approved independent schools and what they are doing and have been contemplating that at a very early date we will be making grants in one form or another to assist these schools in carrying out the jobs they have been doing so well over the years.

The question that Head 13(2) Schools (ii) Secondary, stand part of the Schedule, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Resolution for the sum of \$102,008 do now pass.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976-77

No. 40

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, under this Head there are several sections of the Ministry which are in need of further finance.

In the case of travelling and subsistence, it will be remembered that because of the increase in travelling allowance during the year the sum voted in the Annual Estimates was insufficient to continue the work of the Ministry. In respect of communications, here again due to the expansion of the Ministry and certain new telephone lines having to be installed, the amount requested in the Estimates is not enough to complete its work to the end of the financial year.

Under Utilities in Head 18(2), the reason for this sum of money is that the waterworks bills are now being received which fell due in previous years and in order to correct the situation in the Ministry, it is necessary that this sum be voted.

Under Maintenance of Vehicle and Plant under Head 18(4), that is the usual repairs to the necessary vehicles which are needed.

Under Head 18(11) — Meteorology — the amount is required because there has been a new agreement with respect to the transportation of the officers in the Met Office which we are responsible for. Similarly the staff of the Met Office were entitled to increase in travelling allowance, and that sum is therefore requested.

If there is any other matter on which hon. members would like any information, I would be glad to give it.

I beg to move that Head 18 — Ministry of Agriculture, Science and Technology — stand part.

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

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

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Resolution for the sum of \$80,000 do now pass.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976-77
No. 41

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, in moving the passing of this Resolution, I should state that this is part of the legal obligation which the Government entered into in a contract for the purchase of a residence for the Consul General at New Rochelle in New York. There is another later item dealing with the Resolution, but until the House agrees to the other item and that agreement is carried out, provision will have to be made to meet the cost of the mortgage.

There has been a short fall on that amount. Originally \$80,000 was granted to purchase the house, but part of this was used for down payment, part in discharging a tax lien including interest and part towards the instalment which was due to 31st December, 1976. The amount for which the house was purchased is \$US112,000 odd and the balance of the purchase instalments with interest are payable semi-annually, and it has become necessary therefore for us to ask for this Resolution in order to meet that commitment. I trust I have given hon. members a satisfactory explanation for the purpose of the Resolution.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Dr. CADDLE: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister be in a position to tell us how much money still lies to be paid to close off the deal and how soon we can expect this matter will be finished.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Of the original \$US112,750, so far it appears that only \$US27,413 have been paid, and the amount due for instalment and interest as at December 1976 is \$US16,813. The balance will be outstanding on the purchase price.

The question that the Resolution do now pass, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

1.05 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of five money Resolutions in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, the

Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE BY
GOVERNMENT OF THE OFFICIAL
RESIDENCE OF THE BARBADOS
CONSUL GENERAL AT
NEW YORK

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, in seeking the permission of the House to sell the house at New Rochelle, I think that hon. members are entitled to some background and some explanation for this recommendation to the House.

I would like first to explain a little further for the benefit of the hon. member of St. Michael North Central that when I gave the figure of \$27,413 as the down payment when I was speaking on another Resolution earlier in this House, that of that sum \$22,550 was actually towards the purchase price and the balance went towards disbursements with the legal expenses connected with the sale.

The Government has had representations made to it concerning the location of a house for the Consul General at New York. These representations have been both orally and in writing, and I took the opportunity during my visit to the United Nations last year to meet with the Consular group which is a very strong and powerful group — I think the hon. member for St. Michael South West claims some paternity for this particular group — but they made their representations very forcibly. They felt that whilst it was necessary to have a house for the Consul General, that the Consul General should be more accessible to the bulk of the Barbadian people who live in New York, and the great majority of these live in the Brooklyn area, and on these grounds they recommended that this house should be sold and some attempts made at a later stage to acquire a suitable location nearer to the bulk of the population.

The House at New Rochelle is further away than the Ambassador to the United Nations' house at Pelham, about three miles. The amount of travelling involved on behalf of the representative would be tremendous coming from that distance, and if as a true Consul General he ought to react to the sort of needs a Consul General must deal with as distinct from the sort of problems which confront the Ambassador, then it seems to me that these views should be taken seriously.

The Permanent Secretary in my Ministry and various other Government officials, as well as the Prime Minister, took time off to look at the residence and the implication is both from the acting Consul General as well as from the other persons that we will not lose on the sale of this house, and therefore when I am asking the House's permission I would say to the House that if I have to go back and sell below the market value I would think it proper that the House should be so informed before the sale takes place. The intention is not to sell the house at a loss at all, because if the market does go down between now and the time we get a sale I would much prefer to recommend to the House that the Ministry should have some latitude in leasing the house at least until such time as the market improves. So I can tell this Hon. Chamber that it is not the Ministry's or the Government's intention to sell below the original purchase price, it is a recommendation I have taken very seriously coming from the West Indians and the groups that I have addressed, and also from the public officials who are serving overseas, and I trust that the House will be satisfied with it.

Until the house is sold we will have to meet commitments. It had very sparse furniture which was moved apparently from the house which was occupied by the Former Consul General. I would have had to ask for a Capital grant to deal with the question of furnishing in any event if we had decided to keep it. We hope to save that part of the expenditure during the current financial year.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, we on this side will not oppose this Resolution because we accept the understanding which the Hon. Minister for External Affairs has given this Hon. House as to the reasons for disposing of the house.
1.15 p.m.

I know it may seem strange to some people that I would sit on this side of the House when as part of the Government which purchased this House. I was the equivalent on the other side which purchased the house and yet come here and say that I endorse the sale of this House.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that you are familiar with the concept of collective responsibility, and I do not seek to shirk my responsibility in having participated in the decision to purchase this house; but that decision is second to my passionate belief that anyone who represents Barbadians overseas has responsibility to the persons who are Barbadians or who believe that they are Barbadians overseas.

I think that I can speak with some responsibility because I believe that hon. members on the other side will agree that there has been very little criticism of the post of Consul General and the period surrounding the post of Consul General when I had the very distinct honour to serve my country in that regard. (Asides) It is not a question of praising myself, Mr. Speaker. If they do not wish to, it will not make a lot of difference if they praise me or not. That is not why I stood up.

I believe, Sir, that the Ambassador to the United Nations may live wherever it is convenient for an Ambassador to live, and I believe that in the light of where the persons with whom he would be doing work for the Government he represents live, then living outside of Manhattan and living outside of the general area where most of the Barbadians live is perfectly acceptable; but, Sir, the role that a Consul General should play, in my opinion, is (a) to look after the economic interest of the country to the best of his ability and serve as the chief economic advisor to the Government he is serving, (b) and perhaps more important, he should at all times look after the welfare of the citizens of the country he represents.

Looking after the welfare of citizens means much more than being available in an office between set hours at a given time. It must represent a concept on the part of the persons whom the Consul General represents, that he is part of them.

Now, Sir, New York City is a very large area. It embraces a number of boroughs, including Brooklyn and Queens etc. There are a number of persons who believe that to live in Brooklyn means to live in one of the slum areas in New York City. There are many persons who are not aware that in the borough of Brooklyn or Queens there are areas which appear at least as picturesque and as livable as areas seen even in Hollywood movies. There are areas, for example, bordering the river in Brooklyn, out by the Ocean Park area in Brooklyn, which can be considered areas accessible by Barbadians. Indeed there are many Barbadians who live in those areas. There is the surrounding area of Queens, which is not very far away from Brooklyn, where there are very good houses available for persons of even the upper income bracket.

I feel therefore that it is entirely possible for a Government of Barbados to find a house that is acceptable for the residence of a Consul General within an area that is accessible to Barbadians;

and I hope that the Minister will spare no effort to find such a house as soon as possible. I hope that in making the decision to sell the house at New Rochelle the Government does not go to the other extreme and give its Consul General a place to live which somehow is not representative of the status which a Consul General from Barbados should have.

There are some people in this community, Sir, who feel that one should take as much status as is possible from those who represent Barbadians overseas. There are some things which we are able to give our representatives which cost us nothing. The manner in which we treat them will be a reflection of the manner in which they treat the people they are supposed to represent; and I am confident that any Consul General from Barbados, provided that the Minister exercises when the time comes for appointment, the kind of judgement which has been exhibited in the past, generally speaking, I am confident that any Consul General who represents Barbados in New York can help enhance the economic development of this country.

In this connection I wonder — and I only say this in passing — if the Minister can tell us what progress, if any has been made on the Pensioners Food Plan. I call it that for want of a better word because I am told that there is a food plan arrangement for pensioners being circulated in New York; and I hope the Minister will shed some light on that.

The basic question, Mr. Speaker, of representation is not one that can always be described in purely political terms. We have sought from time to time, especially during an election campaign, to cast aspersions on certain representatives. I say "we" here meaning we in the House of Assembly. We on this side have never had reason to cast aspersions on overseas representatives, precisely because those representatives had been appointed by us; but on occasions when it was considered that they were not acting in the best interest of the people of Barbados, the then Government had no compunction about taking whatever steps it considered desirable.

I would not digress into the area as to who is heartless and who is not heartless. I think that there is a document of this House which will demonstrate very clearly that there is a certain humaneness, if you will, Mr. Speaker, which is required by Governments in dealing with their overseas officers; and there are arguments on both sides of this question of living within the

New York area. I have heard argument led that a Consul General does not necessarily have to live among the people he represents to be a good representative. I take serious issue with that. I remember some instances where persons, through no fault of their own, had arrived from Barbados, within six or seven days being picked up by New York police who are not unknown from time to time for making serious mistakes when they are dealing with certain kinds of people, as I am sure you are aware, Mr. Speaker being picked up and taken to police stations. Now you have to picture a Barbadian away from home suddenly thrust into the dangerous — from his point of view — atmosphere of a New York Police Department.
1.25 p.m.

You have to understand that what that Barbadian wants more than anything else is to see some kind of officialdom or somebody that represents for him an indication that he is not adrift in a storm. I could recount numerous times when, between the hours of twelve midnight and six in the morning, I and the other officer who then served with me had to be called out, at short notice, to go to Police Stations and, through judicious use of the authority then vested in us, help Barbadians to get out of what could otherwise have been very dangerous and serious situations.

The Consular Advisory Group to which the Minister refers, who were apparently vociferous in their admonition to him that the house should be sold, or that the Consul General should be living nearer to the people, is a group that used to be made up of Barbadians from all walks of life now resident in New York City. They are in a good position to indicate to people in Barbados what is happening in New York, so far as Barbadian Nationals are concerned, how it is happening and what steps should be taken to make life easy and better for them. That Group was formed out of a concept that the Consul General himself cannot and will not be able to know all and be all for Barbadians in New York. He will need all the assistance he can get. Any Consul General will need all the assistance he or she can get in order to do for Barbadians what has to be done for Barbadians.

You, Mr. Speaker, on the number of occasions when you have come through New York City, are well aware of the need to have an efficient person or persons available to assist you either with your official and sometimes not so official but very Barbadian requirements as you travel in a strange city. I am glad to hear

that the Minister said he will not lose on the sale of the house. I do not think he could lose because the tendency in New York generally is for real estate values to go up. I am surprised, however, that the Minister did not consider including in the Resolution the provisions of which he gave this Honourable House an undertaking. I think it would have been much tidier if the Minister had included in the Resolution permission to sell the house on condition that such sale would not constitute a loss to Barbados. I suppose his assurance to the House would be good enough.

Mr. Speaker, in supporting this Resolution there are a number of things that I have left unsaid. I think that they are better left unsaid. I will merely say that I hope the Government will soon find it possible to announce their appointment of a Consul General for New York, because no matter how good a person is when he is acting in a post, he cannot give of his best in quite the same way as if he holds that post. I hope the Minister will soon be able to tell this Honourable House, or he may very well be able to do so as early as today, if we might expect to have an announcement of the re-organisation which was promised by the Government of the Representational Offices in New York; who the Consul General is, if there is going to be one, and when those officers, if there will be any extension, will be taking up their duties in New York City.

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I have the feeling that the hon. member for St. Michael South West, who has just sat down, has a hankering after that post of Consul General in New York. I instructed him last week that all he needs to do to be considered for any position with the Barbados Labour Party's Government is to send in his application, and we will give it urgent and serious consideration.

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, if he will give way, I will draw to his attention that my name is Taitt and not Mottley.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order!

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, it is something that perplexes me whenever I have to deal with matters like this, and the perplexing problem has to do with the fact that, whenever we think in terms of siting or selecting appropriate places for the various officials of the Barbados Government to live in, we always seem to gravitate towards the suburbs of

metropolitan New York or metropolitan Canada, New Rochelle in the case of New York, and spend huge sums of the taxpayers' money buying properties in neighbourhoods where, Consul General or not, the representative is not at all welcome. If he is not welcome in those neighbourhoods that he seeks to invade, it should be clear that the persons whom he seeks to represent in those countries likewise would not be welcome.

We can recall recently the big debate that centred around the Barbadian Ambassador to the U.N. whose dog had a propensity for biting people in Pelham. We can also recall the fact that in that same neighbourhood an African diplomat was constantly under public pressure for keeping elaborate parties and disturbing the quiet rest of the Pelham Bay residents. I am making a plea for consideration to be given to the siting of the Barbadian High Commission's residence, or the Consul General's residence, among the people whom he is supposed to represent in the U.S.A. When a Barbadian hits New York, the first person he has to confront is a taxi driver who makes the point of asking him where he is going. Most Barbadians have no idea at all about where they are heading, and they put themselves trustingly in the hands of the taxi driver, who proceeds to take them to Brooklyn via the George Washington Bridge or some other place, and when they get half way around New York and they get to some point in the wilderness, they see the mileage mounting up and it is \$25 for the taxi fare, and the last thing they have in their hand is a U.S. \$10 bill. These are problems which will come from time to time to the Consul General. He will get calls periodically.

If he is not living in metropolitan Brooklyn, or somewhere accessible to Kennedy's International Airport, this kind of problem will have to wait until sometime later. The Barbadian is left bewildered, frightened, and confused as to what next to do. Up comes a New York policeman, gun hanging on his hip, and again the problem becomes much more complexed. I feel that the hon. member, who has just sat down, is talking about going up to Ocean Parkway and Queens, but Ocean Parkway is a community for the Jewish residents of New York, and I cannot understand why he would want to move from Pelham Bay and go to Ocean Parkway. I am prepared to bet you now that there is not a single Barbadian resident living within a mile of Ocean Parkway.

1.35 p.m.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, there are at least 50 percent of the residents in the basin around

the Ocean Parkway who are Barbadians, and I lived there.

Mr. JOHNSON: I would then recommend that the hon. member would consider that basin to be an acceptable place for the Consul General. Why go on the rim of the basin rather than in the basin where the people are? You said it is the basin around Ocean Parkway and I am asking you to go in the basin where people are, don't choose to be outside the perimeter. I would suggest that a suitable place would be right in the middle of the East New York sector of Brooklyn where the hon. member is signalling me he used to live. He had a house in East New York, but I am pretty sure he used to feel far more comfortable elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, the Chinese Government had a solution to this problem. They had a confused situation prevailing there as well and wanted to know what to do with their representatives abroad, so they bought a building and converted it into apartments and all the Chinese representatives in New York lived in that place, as well as, I am told by the Attorney General, the Russian diplomats. They located themselves in the middle of Manhattan where the people whom they served lived, not in New Rochelle, Queens or Ocean Parkway. I cannot understand why it is that Barbadian middle-class upward striving people always seem to flee away from the people they represent. It is a deplorable situation that black people want to be where white people are. The white people do not want them and still they continue to inflict themselves upon them saying that they must have a respectable place for an ambassador to live. Is the hon. member for St. Michael South West suggesting that no respectability resides in areas like Eastern Parkway and East 95th Street? I would like to remind him that I lived at East 95th Street. (Mr. TAITT: And therefore it is respectable!) I would suggest that there is nothing at all wrong with finding a decent middleclass community where Barbadians are and purchasing a residence and living among the people whom the Consul General from time to time will have to represent.

Now I know the hon. member for St. Michael South spent more time preaching than representing the people. He was a very good lay preacher; every Sunday he used to be in the pulpit delivering sermons and then afterward, I am told, there used to be a little love offering. I do not know if he got any of the love offering that American churches like to give, but I would feel he used to get some inducement

for preaching in those days and not the love of God.

Mr. TAITT: First of all, Sir, as a Christian gentleman himself he knows he is a good preacher, he knows that is where the Barbadians were, in the churches, and I went where they were and I was a better preacher than he was.

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Prime Minister has already cautioned the hon. member for St. Michael South West not to favourable compare himself with members on this side, and I would urge him not to start trying to make impossible comparisons between himself and the hon. member for St. Michael West because he is bound to get into trouble on that score.

But to come back to this Resolution, I am prepared to support calling for the disposal of the property in New Rochelle or Pelham Bay but I would also like to implore the persons who are taking this decision that when they go to examine properties they should look to areas where respectable Barbadians have always managed to find comfortable residences in Brooklyn or in Manhattan, and leave the White people in New York alone. They do not want to be bothered by ambassadors or anybody else invading their properties, keeping late parties at night and disturbing their rest and the dogs. I would urge that whoever is the next holder of this office should get a poodle and leave out the alsatian dogs.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I was very glad that the hon. member for St. Michael South West sought to intervene in this debate. Had he not intervened perhaps what I have to say now would have taken a bit longer during the Estimates; but the hon. member for St. Michael South West was once the holder of the position of Consul General in New York prior to his elevation to the Ministry of Trade and the gradual demise of that Ministry while under his control. While he was Consul General in New York he owned a house which was rented to the Barbados Government of the time led by the now hon. member for St. John, the former Prime Minister, at \$US450 per month.

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order, the hon. member is misleading the House. At no time while I was Consul General did I rent my house to the Government of Barbados, I was paid an allowance as Consul General because I lived in my own house which is perfectly normal. When I returned to this country as a Minister, the

house which had a rental value of over \$500 odd was rented by the Consulate for one of the incoming officers, and at a point when it was discovered that there.....

Mr. SPEAKER: This is a speech.

Mr. TAITT: This is a personal explanation, because the hon. member said I rented my house to the Government and I think I am entitled to explain. The matter was discussed in another place and the Leader of the House can tell his colleague that I explained in clear terms that the \$US450 was reasonable value for money and I lost \$6,000 on the house.

Mr. SPEAKER: Point taken.

Mr. SIMMONS: It was after he was Consul General that the conflict of interest showed itself. He was then a member of the Government and renting his own house back to the Government. You will notice he was renting it for \$US450 per month. Let him explain this, while in the house there was linoleum that was there for five years; there was a basement that was flooded in a neighbourhood where one of his neighbours murdered his wife. This is where he was renting a house to the Government of Barbados as a member of the Government of Barbados. I am being told about a toilet that was not working. I am only giving the barest outline, but people did not want to live in the house. When my brother who was Vice Consul asked about the linoleum, he said that these middle-class fellows have to know a little deprivation and that he was not putting anything better in there.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do categorically deny having told his brother or anybody that. The hon. member is misleading the House and he is telling lies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Point taken. I would counsel the hon. member for St. Philip North to address all his remarks to the Chair.
1.45 p.m.

Mr. SIMMONS: He said I am misleading the House and he knows that on the Friday night before Keith Simmons left Barbados to go to Bermuda to work, he and I at the Simmons' house in the Pine came very close to blows. I had my fist in his face and I was pulled off him by people like David Stuart and others, otherwise he would have got a licking from me that night for the way he treated my brother.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the hon. member for St. Philip North address his mind to the Resolution before the House?

Mr. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: We want to dispose of properties now, not bodies.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: What has the hon. member risen on?

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Six foot three, two hundred and twenty pounds, do you believe he could beat me?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. The hon. member for St. Philip North may continue.

Mr. SIMMONS: I was disposing with that property over there, Sir, and I was dealing with the Vice Consul who was intimately connected with the Consul General, because for a period of time my brother worked in his department. The member for St. Michael South West well knows that it was through his instrumentality, his personal vendetta, his lies, that the holder of the office of Vice Consul in New York, when my brother was holding the substantive position, was recalled to Barbados not only for those reasons but also for the reason that he was my brother and I was a member of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want the hon. member for St. Philip North to stick to the Resolution. Let us hear the point of order.

Mr. TAITT: The hon. member said it was through me and through my personal vendetta and my personal something else that his brother was recalled. I categorically deny that I had any such vendetta, that I was ever at any time instrumental in his brother's recall, I know nothing about anything his brother did, and I ask you, Sir, to have him withdraw those remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Philip North may continue.

Mr. SIMMONS: I do not know New York, I have never been there, ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please stick to the Resolution.

Mr. SIMMONS: I am sticking to the Resolution because it deals with a residence in a part of New York. I am not competent to deal with the various localities, others who have been there may know, but I am dealing with the people who fill the office of Consul General. It is intimately connected, and, Sir, one thing I would hope ... (*Asides*). Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that the Consul General of a Third World Country like Barbados has additional functions to perform to that of being a stamper of passports and a person to whom you carry an affidavit and swear.

Sir, the Consul General's Office in New York was under a cloud after the member for St. Michael South West left and since Mr. Goring was there. We know about Mr. Goring and Mr. Straughn and the reasons for Mr. Straughn being dissatisfied while working at the Consulate. We know that Mr. Goring left recently and was lecturing at Queen's College and that for a similar reason as that involving Mr. Straughn, Mr. Goring no longer holds the post at Queen's College.

Mr. SPEAKER: Did all these try to buy the property or to sell it, which?

Mr. SIMMONS: Both, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us stick to the Resolution.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, without wishing to extend the bounds or go off the rails I would like to make it clear that the new Consul General who some day will be appointed must ingratiate himself with the Barbadian community in New York, must make them feel that he is part of them with a view to raising the image of Consuls General in New York, and not, Sir, for example, like the members for St. Michael South West when he was Consul General, he and the chauffeur playing on the same cricket team, going to cricket the same day in the same motor car, the chauffeur driving and he in the back holding on like Lord God, Sir, no. We are all one, if we can play on the cricket field together, why can't we drive together? That is all I have to say on this Resolution.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Again I categorically deny that. He is telling lies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: No no. Now the hon. member for St. Michael South West must withdraw that he is telling lies.

Mr. TAITT: Earlier the hon. member

Mr. SPEAKER: You must withdraw immediately and say not one word on it!

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw it not because you shout at me but because it is necessary for me to withdraw it. I am not going to withdraw it merely because you shout at me.

Mr. SPEAKER: You will withdraw it and take your seat. The hon. member for St. Philip North.

Mr. SIMMONS: I had indicated that on that point I had concluded my speech, Sir.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The hon. member, in the course of ...

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am rising to speak, Sir, on the Resolution to approve the sale of the residence at Overlook Circle. I will say, Sir, that I have tried to understand from the hon. member for St. Michael South West, a former Consul General in New York, who should know about these residential areas, who should be able to give us chapter and verse about New Rochelle, who should be able to tell us whether this place at Overlook Crescent was near the man that did not like black people shot the five people last week. I believe it is only a little way down the road, and so on. He should be able to tell us this, but instead he is getting up and he is denying that he ever went to cricket with a chauffeur sitting in the back seat of a car and so on.

What is being denied? That he used to sit in the back seat of the car? Because he cannot deny that, or that he used to play cricket with the same chauffeur? Because he cannot deny that either. They are both true, so what is it he is denying? What could he possibly be denying? He just wants to get up and abuse the rules of the House on fraudulent points of order all the time, Sir? Your Honour has power to deal with persons who engage in persistent abuse of the rules of the House.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for St. Michael South West is a real glutton for punishment. This Resolution was

taking the normal peaceful course before the hon. member got up and began to advertise his dirty ware. I had no intentions of getting in this debate, but the hon. member knows that a lot of what he is talking about I know about, and he has a duty to get up in here and put the record straight on a number of things.

But before I deal with the hon. member and straighten him out, I want to say that ...

Mr. SPEAKER: You will deal with the Resolution.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I am dealing with the Resolution. now. I will congratulate the Attorney General in bringing the sale and disposition of property overseas out of the realms of the wheeling and dealing of politicians and civil servants who play they are politicians. When the hon. member for St. Michael South West was the Consul General in New York he was intimately involved in the acquisition of property and he was in contract with the Government of Barbados while he was a Minister of Government over the house in New York. If that is not conflict of interest, I do not know what is.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member says that I was intimately involved with the acquisition of property for the Government of Barbados while I was Consul General. That is not true, I categorically deny that, and I would wish the hon. member to withdraw the statement because he is maligning me, Mr. Speaker.
1.55 p.m.

Hon. L. R. TULL: The hon. member acquired a property at Schenectady Avenue in Brooklyn when he was Consul General; and he was involved with the Government of Barbados in receiving certain sums for it. When he was Consul General he was renting that same property to the Government of Barbados. If that is not conflict of interest, what is?

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I bought a house.....

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise?

Mr. TAITT: On a point of elucidation. The hon. member continues to give the impression that I was involved.....

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point you want to elucidate?

Mr. TAITT: I wish to elucidate that the house which I lived in at 978 Schenectady was owned by me with a lease by me for me, and when I left New York it was leased by the Barbados Government in New York through the Consul General for \$450.00. It is public knowledge, Sir. It has nothing to do with any conflict of interest.

Mr. SPEAKER: Point taken.

Hon. L. R. TULL: He gets up and interrupts me and then concede that he was leasing his house to the Government of which he was a member. If that is not a conflict of interest, what is? But that is typical of the morality of certain people in public life in Barbados. The hon. member for St. Michael South West gets in here and makes his effusions. The one that tickled me most is when he gets up and says that he is Taitt and not Mottley. I remember when the Consul General had his appointment made in New York. I used to live in New York with him. I used to see him regularly. He used to tell people that he was a supporter of Sir Grantley Adams.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation. If I have to deny everything that he says I will have to. I deny that I ever got with him when I was Consul General and said that I was a supporter of Sir Grantley Adams.

Hon. L. R. TULL: You can deny all that you like. (*Asides*) I know that the hon. member spent more time preaching. He is a very good Lay Preacher.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member has risen on a point of order to deny what was said. That is not a point of order; but I suggest that he is being unfair to the hon. Minister of Education in that he has suggested that he is telling lies. What has been said by the Minister is something that I have heard in other circles, — how he admired Grantley Adams, and how he was to be the IDC representative. (*Asides*)

Mr. SPEAKER: Is this a point of order or a speech?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: And he was carrying the Prime Minister's brief case at the airport.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am saying that you are making a speech and you are not rising on a point of order. Let us have some order now, please.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I know the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for St. John was Prime Minister came up to open the offices in Lexington Avenue; and the hon. member for St. Michael South West, who was a big supporter of Grantley Adams two or three weeks ago was grabbing the Prime Minister's bags and carrying them, and suddenly overnight became a supporter of the Democratic Labour Party. (*Aside: You are a liar.*)

Mr. SPEAKER: I would advise the hon. member for St. Michael South West to converse in undertones.

Hon. L. R. TULL: That is significant when I hear the hon. member say that he is Taitt and not Mottley. I see you pull it off before Mottley pulled it off.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. Minister of Education addressing the Chair?

Hon. L. R. TULL: I am referring to the hon. member for St. Michael South West; not you Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But if you are on your feet you must address your remarks to the Chair.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I said that my remarks are about the hon. member for St. Michael South West, but I am addressing the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: And that your remarks are pertinent to the Resolution before the House?

Hon. L. R. TULL: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Hon. L. R. TULL: It is important that when we think in terms of appointing New Consuls General and lodging them in New York to think carefully about whether we want to build up personal empires for people in New York City, like the member for St. Michael South West. We have got to be careful that when we put a man in New York City as Consul General that his prime interest is looking after the interests of the people from Barbados rather than building up personal empires; and the hon. member for St. Michael South West knows exactly what I mean when he used to say that Barbados was being ruled by a Harrison College Mafia, but he was going to rule New York City by a Combermere Mafia. He can get up and deny that one too.

It is also important that we make it quite clear to whoever is the next Consul General that

the consulate is theirs and not the Mission. Because we have been having a lot of problems with the U.N. Mission and the Consulate General in New York from the time that the member for St. Michael South West was the incumbent. He actually succeeded in driving the Mission out of the building they occupied. He wanted to be Consul and Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. That is why he did all that he was doing. And we have to be concerned when we are thinking in terms of setting up a new man in New York that his duties and his responsibilities be clearly defined.

He has to understand, Mr. Speaker, that he is a full time employee of the Government of Barbados, not a man who goes into the office on mornings and then goes off to classes on afternoons. Nor, indeed, if he is a Civil Servant, like the hon. member over there was, that he was doing less time in the Consul General job than he was doing in teaching, earning a living in New York City. The hon. member can get up and shout about these things.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation. When I was Consul General for Barbados I was also a visiting professor at one of the universities in New York and I did that with the permission of the Government of Barbados. (*Asides: Professor of what?*)

Hon. L. R. TULL: I do not know. The hon. member is always talking about professor. The hon. member got up but he has not denied that he was going to school during the day when he should have been working as Consul General for Barbados, and that sort of thing cannot continue. If you are going to be a representative of the Government of Barbados overseas you are in a full time job. You cannot be doing the job part time just so that you can go to school. The hon. member has not denied that one. That is the sort of thing that has been happening in the past; and we have had all but one so far — disasters — the Consul General in New York.

Our duty now that we are thinking about filling this post and all the arrangements being made to bring the Consul General among the people is to make sure that the Consul General is primarily and essentially a representative of the Government of Barbados with fixed duties and responsibilities, and as I say, not to further his own personal ends at the expense of the taxpayers of Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister is about to exercise his right of final reply.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Standing Orders have been suspended. I am much indebted, Mr. Speaker, to hon. members for the various points made during the debate; and if I may summarise them essentially, the first point is that any house which is bought must be in a locality which is suitable for the representative status as well as which at the same time must cater to the needs of the Barbadian community in the City of New York. That point will be borne very strongly in mind.

I can tell both sides of the House that we will take adequate steps to consult with the Barbadian society and that we will also take steps to see that we do not get a recurrence of the strictures that we have heard passed here this afternoon.

The other point made about the status of the post of Consul General — I have listened with some care to the points raised by hon. members. I do not know how many members have had an opportunity to look in any detail at the role of a Consul General as one finds in diplomatic practice; but the Consul General at New York like the Consul General to any other city whom we may appoint will be under the jurisdiction of the Ambassador at Washington. Now, we intend to reorganise the whole of the Permanent Mission to the U.N. and the Consul General's post; and we are at present working on plans to acquire a suitable lease which we hope will not bring any additional expense in the long term to rationalise some of the problems which have occurred from that office.

2.05 p.m.

For instance, it is a fact that at present in the Consul General's office there is a telex; next door to his office at the I.D.C. there is another telex machine; and next door to that office at the Tourist Board there is a third telex machine. It is a fact that each person has his own receptionist, and he seems to have his separate empire. Now, it is a pity that our Foreign Service has grown in such an *ad hoc* fashion because, if there is one thing which a small country cannot afford, it is people sticking rigidly to the rules of only doing what they consider to be their limited jobs. The Consul General has not so far carried out or done any job relating to trade promotion on any large scale, and hence it has been felt that this is the role of the independent I.D.C. I feel that it is possible, without derogating from Ministerial responsibility for their own employees for these officers' time be much better used in the interest of the country as a whole, not only in helping to promote trade, in looking after the

day-to-day welfare of nationals, but also in giving increased assistance to the very small mission which we have at the U.N. so that we can maximise our efforts in getting technical assistance, development aid, and looking after the very vital political, economic and other interests of Barbados.

It is to this end that I have been having conversations with the Minister of Trade and Industry, and I am hoping shortly that we will put some additional papers before the Cabinet. We have carried some papers before the Cabinet, and I believe the Prime Minister has had an opportunity of seeing them. I understand that there was an attempt to do something in this direction in 1969, and it failed on the very basis of personalities. I hope that if it is attempted on this occasion that personalities will not arise and certainly, if I am Minister, I will see that that will not arise in order to frustrate the progress of the policy of the Government of this country.

The hon. member for St. Michael South West asked me specifically if I could state what progress had been made on the Pensioners' Food Plan. I should like very much to state that this is the idea of our permanent representative to the U.N., Professor Don Blackman, who has been doing an outstanding job for this country together with the Acting Consul General, Mr. Kellman. They put their joint effort together and they have written letters to several Barbadians in the United States asking them to contribute in some way to Barbadians at home who are pensioners, and they had the full support of the Minister of Labour, Youth Affairs, Sports, and Welfare. Indeed, he has not only minuted me on the matter, but has himself personally intervened and given suggestions on this. I cite this as another example of the co-operation that goes on between the Ministers of this Government. We may have, as in this case, our disagreements or difference in points of view and that is a healthy state of affairs, but I can state as a fact that never once has any Minister of this Government differed with one another at any Cabinet Meeting and walked out with spite on their face. The Cabinet is in no way divided. The Cabinet is completely behind every move. We may not accept every point of view, and we do argue strongly about papers put up by the Ministries. I get arguments about papers put up from my own Ministry. That is why I invite suggestions of the Government Ministers on matters dealing with foreign affairs as well as from the Opposition.

I can assure the hon. member that this is only one of the efforts that we are making in the

field of overseas representations and Consular representation to deal with the issue of the needs of Barbados. We see our foreign policy as a reflection of the domestic policies of Barbados, and I believe, for the first time in this House, in five years from the Government benches and not from the Opposition, you will hear real foreign policies being discussed in an intelligent manner, if you want to discuss it at any time.

The point made by the hon. member for St. Philip North is a valid one. I think we must remember that Barbados is a Third World Country and it must have close connections with the Third World, and this will prevent our representatives from acting in the same way as those from the older countries. I do not expect, for instance, that we would go into the Ministry of External Affairs to find a highly carpeted office at Ambassador level like Shirley Temple, nor do I expect us to have facilities like those of the richer and older developed countries. Any overseas country who expect that from me will understand that we cannot afford this in Barbados. The Consul General and Ambassador should not only look after us at the cocktail party or the political party, but they should work in the interest of all Barbadians, and I want to make this very clear. It must not be a partisan or political office in this respect.

I believe that members want to know about certain appointments abroad. These are being done at the moment, and I hope very shortly to make announcements as soon as the necessary formalities are done and the Prime Minister makes his representations. I only recommend, or suggest, or advise the Prime Minister. He recommends to the Governor-General, who acts on behalf of Her Majesty, in some of the appointments. I would like to take this opportunity, however, to deny a rumour which was started in the United States and which came back to me, and it is that we have not appointed an Ambassador to Washington because we have been taking up with Washington the question of the Washington representative in Barbados. Now this is a political rumour and it is very damaging. If, as Minister of External Affairs, I wanted an Ambassador to Washington withdrawn, I could have that done with the consent of the Cabinet and declare him *persona non grata*.

2.15 p.m.

There has been no question of this arising whatsoever, so it is nonsense to start rumours. There are too many rumours being started among our own people that are doing damage to our own image. Prime Minister Manley had

to get up and deny a spate of rumours and I am having to deny a spate of rumours that do this country no good. I would counsel hon. members and the country not to be led down that path. I had to deny a rumour concerning myself and the hon. member for Bridgetown, a most charming lady. There is a spate of rumours started for no particular reason. (Mr. TAITT: What is the rumour?) I am not going to answer that because I have already denied that; but this is the sort of thing that cannot do us any good as a country as a whole.

Now the hon. member for St. George South raised a very important question and I think he is entitled as the House is entitled to an answer about it, and that is, what is the Government going to do about any conflict of interest which may arise in the civil service or the political wheel.

We are at present looking at the External Service Orders and the Prime Minister as Minister of Establishment has minuted my department and we are exchanging thoughts and ideas on the question of the rules which must govern the acquisition of property overseas by certain officials, and I hope that the External Service Orders will be amended to reflect the views which are strongly held by members that wherever possible any such transactions must not have the appearance or indeed be a conflict of interest. I think once there is a complete declaration and various safeguards are written in, we should be able to deal with that problem.

Finally let me say we will try to define the duties and responsibilities of each officer; but I would like to appeal to people serving in the foreign service to see their role as one which would push this country forward, and for the time that I hold the portfolio, I will spare no effort in helping them to do so in so far as within my power and ability lies.

Mr. Speaker, I am indebted to hon. members. The debate did generate some heat as debates do generate from time to time, but I have taken the comments of each hon. member with the greatest amount of care, and I will make sure that the Ministry officials read this debate so that they too would be guided in their actions on the matter. I thank hon. members for their support.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 3 o'clock p.m.

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

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

On Resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Question Time be now taken until 3.30 p.m.

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

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

QUESTION RE SPRING HALL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 11 stands in the name of the hon. member for St. Lucy.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of Agriculture, etc. (a) Is the Minister aware that plans for the Spring Hall Rural Development Project in St. Lucy were at an advanced stage when there was a change in government on 2nd September, 1976? (b) Can the Minister state his Government's policy on this project?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 11, is as follows:

“(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government does not consider that the project as formulated is likely to succeed and does not therefore propose to proceed with it in its present form. The Government is considering alternative proposals which,

in its opinion, would be more feasible to achieve the social and economic goals of a land settlement scheme.”

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister in a position to give any information on the new policy which Government proposes to embark on?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, the scheme as was set out under the last Government is such that the Government is now discussing with the Caribbean Development Bank alternative use of the money which would have gone into the scheme.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister state what are the considerations which led him to the conclusion that the scheme as presently conceived would not achieve the objectives?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, the scheme that was put up under the last Government involved practically \$1½ million being spent in houses and roads, and this Government feels that that sum can be better spent to enhance and upgrade the existing farmers in Barbados.

Mr. GREAVES: Are we to understand, Mr. Speaker, that the present Government plans to abandon the Spring Hall Rural Development Project?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: No, Mr. Speaker, but where a scheme is devised where \$½ million would go to agriculture and \$1.5 million would go to roads and houses, we do not consider that a feasible scheme in order to enhance agriculture in Barbados.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister inform the House whether or not a study was done on this rural development scheme on the basis of which the Caribbean Development Bank agreed to give a loan for this project, and if so, what really is the basis for abandoning the project?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, Spring Hall was bought by the last Government without any proper survey and without any plans in mind as to what they were going to do with it. It was after they found themselves with Spring Hall that a plan was hurriedly put together which as I said would spend \$1.5 million on roads and houses and \$½ million for agriculture. There are some 12,000 peasants in

Barbados as small farmers and we feel that the money can be better utilised by satisfying the needs of the 12,000 farmers than putting twenty farmers at Spring Hall and spending \$1½ million in roads and houses. It is a scheme in which this Government believes you cannot ask a farmer to buy a wall house and lease the land, and we consider that it is not put together properly and we are considering the whole aspect of the Spring Hall and what best to do for small farming in Barbados.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister care to indicate at this stage what is proposed even in the outlines for Spring Hall?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, we are now looking at the whole of the Spring Hall area in relation to the new development in agriculture, especially the whole St. Lucy area.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister not agree that in view of the fact that this was a proposal for development of small farmers in terms of providing additional agricultural production, that the abandonment of this scheme is really a turning away from a very worthwhile project which would have improved agricultural production as well as put land in the hands of those who are without land?

3.10 p.m.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree for the simple reason that even the experts when called together to give you their policy as to what would be the outcome of the scheme not one of them can tell you. It appears to be something new which they were hoping to experiment with in Barbados, and the experts cannot even tell you all the ramifications of the scheme, and we do not consider that at this period of development in agriculture when the last Government abandoned agriculture and had no policy that we should go into a scheme devised by them which is likely to fail and therefore push agriculture one hundred years back in the doldrums.

Mr. TAITT: In the light of the previous statements that the previous Government had abandoned agriculture, how does the Minister account for this scheme having come to light?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, it is strange that the member for St. Michael South West should ask such a question, but the Caribbean Development Bank thought, as far as I can understand, that Barbados had nothing

tangible on agriculture, and they thought that at least since they had bought Spring Hall and had nothing to do with it that they could at least carry out an experimental plan to see what could happen.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister indicate from where or on what authority he states that the Caribbean Development Bank found nothing for agriculture?

Mr. SPEAKER: No supplementary.

QUESTION RE ELIGIBILITY OF RETIRED AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS FOR OLD AGE PENSIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 13 standing in the name of the hon. member for St. Philip South.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the appropriate Minister: Is the Honourable Minister aware that retired agricultural labourers of pensionable age are eligible to receive weekly sums of not more than \$15 from National Insurance and \$5 from the Provident Fund and are ineligible for old age pension? If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Honourable Minister give serious consideration to the problem and take immediate steps to alleviate the hardship which these retired workers who have contributed to the economy of this country now suffer?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 13 is as follows:

"I am aware that under the National Assistance Regulations 1969, any person of qualifying age who is in receipt of an income in excess of \$15 per week is ineligible for an old age pension. It is, however, not entirely accurate to state that retired agricultural labourers are eligible for a National Insurance pension of not more than \$15 since some of these persons in fact qualify for a higher rate of pension.

The means test for old age pension is already under review."

Mr. WEEKES: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

QUESTION RE CREATION OF NEW JOBS
DURING SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER,
1976

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 18 asked by the hon. member for St. Lucy.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of Labour, Welfare, Youth Affairs and Sport: (1) Will the Minister state the sectors of employment in which 3,100 new jobs are alleged to have been created during September, 1976 to December 1976? (2) Will the Minister also state the number of new jobs created in each such sector? (3) Will the Minister further state the classification of those jobs?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 18 is as follows:

"The increase of 3,100 jobs during the quarter September to December 1976 is revealed by the most recent household sample surveys of employment carried out by the Department of Statistical Services with the assistance of a United Nations Adviser. These surveys form part of a project which has been going on since October 1975 and are designed to reveal the overall level of employment. The number of persons found to be employed during the last quarter of 1976 was 91,000 as compared with 87,900 in the same period of 1975.

2. Sectoral analysis of these additional jobs are not yet available but will be published in due course as part of the regular series of Labour Statistics."

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister reveal to this Chamber the exact size of the labour force at the end of 1976?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The corresponding estimate for October to December was 107.8 thousand. (Mr. GREAVES: That is not what I asked). You want me to answer it how you want it answered?

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Hon. Minister please address the Chair? The hon. member for St. Lucy may proceed.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I recognise the difficulty the Minister has in answering. Can the Minister give us the level of employment for the first three quarters of 1976?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that is an excellent subject for a substantive question that you would like to put to the Minister.

Mr. GREAVES: I recognise the difficulty in which I have the Minister, but I will ask another question, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, let me give the hon. member the information.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You have ruled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am sorry, Sir, I must apologise to the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Lucy.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister indicate whether or not the 3,100 jobs which he has identified are jobs for people who have been working for the first time and are new jobs, or were they replacing people who had either retired, emigrated, died or in any way left the active labour force?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, in the first place I can assure the hon. member that there were 1,960 new registrations at National Insurance during that period.
3.20 p.m.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister state how many persons were employed at the end of August, 1976?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, 89,800.

Mr. SPEAKER: This brings us to the end of....

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us the total number of persons employed in the quarter ending June, 1976?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, 47,100. As a matter of fact I can assist him. You can subtract 87,000 from 91,000. He may get 4,000 instead of 3,100.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell us how many people were employed again in March, 1976?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, 95,200 which includes people working in the crop now with the canes and in the tourist season when we were at the peak of our employment.

Mr. TAITT: 1976 - 95,200?

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, in view of the statistics given by the Minister, namely that at the end of December, 1976 there were 91,000 persons employed, and at the end of August there were 89,800, how does the Minister arrive at the figure that there were 3,000 jobs created during that period September to December when the breakdown reveals, according to these statistics, only approximately 1,200? (*Asides*).

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. The hon. member for St. Lucy is disturbing the Reporter. We are not expecting you to sit as a babe or else, but remember the Reporter.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, he said from July to August. This is July to September. This is 89.8; but the figure of 3,000 is last year's comparison. That is the question that the member for St. Lucy asked and those are the answers that he is getting.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you will consider this a question or not. I would like to make a comment.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is not the time for comment. You must ask a question.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I would like to ask a question. In view of the question asked by the member for St. Lucy, namely that between September 1976 and December 1976 how many jobs were created, and we were given a figure of 3,100 jobs; and today the Minister has told us that they were 89,800 at the end of August 1976 and 91,000 at December 1976, which according to calculations do not add up to 3,100.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you making a statement or asking a question? That is not a proper supplementary.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I am asking a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you need time to frame your question better, you may sit and rise again.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I do not need any time. I am asking a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: I rule that that is not a proper supplementary. This brings us to the end of Question Time.

RESUMPTION OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that Government Business do now resume and that Item No. 4 be the next Item.

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Item No. 4 is the instant Order of the day.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AGGREGATE OF DIRECT AND CONTINGENT LIABILITIES OF BARBADOS DEVELOPMENT BANK

The Order was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, by an Act of 1969 which is now Chapter 323 of the Laws, the Barbados Development Bank was set up to carry out certain functions relating to the lending of money for the development of the island. This was the successor to the loan function carried out by the predecessor to the Industrial Development Corporation which was set up, indeed as long ago as when our party was last in power.

Under Section 5 of the Act the Bank provides financial assistance by way of loans, the purchase of debentures, participation in any share issue or by guaranteeing loans from any other investment source for persons wishing to establish funds or to modernise in a developing enterprise; and the Development Bank has been supposed to carry out these functions with a particular view to expanding productive enterprises in this country. Not all of the enterprises in which we have invested this money have been equally productive. Money has been lent for tourist development, and there have been few complaints about these. However, funds have also been lent to such enterprises as Norwood Holding Limited which is owned by a former Minister of Government and which has been a catastrophic failure and involved the Development Bank in substantial potential loss. Another such scheme was the scheme for developing Bath Plantation which is to be among the subjects that will entertain the

attention of the Commission of Inquiry whose membership and operations will very shortly be announced.

3.30 p.m.

I do not, therefore, propose to go too far into the Bath operation. Sufficient to say that it has tied up the Barbados Development Bank in, at least, \$3 million in contingent liability and until finally settled will continue to be a drain on the resources of the Development Bank and on the possibilities of its lending out money to be precise. The position as of the 31st March, that is this month, the contingent liability in respect of Bath will be three million and seventy thousand dollars, and if you allowed it to run for another year it would be \$3.28 million. Now what this has meant, Sir, is that it has become very difficult for the Barbados Development Bank to obtain funds from abroad, particularly the Inter-American Development Bank, while Bath remains on the books of the BDB. There is also another difficulty which this Resolution seeks to correct and which is exacerbated by the Bath situation. It is this: By Section 9 of the Act, the Bank is empowered to borrow sums of money required by it for meeting any of its obligations or discharging any of its functions.

Section 9(2) says:

"The aggregate of the liabilities of the Bank outstanding at any one time, including direct liabilities such as bonds and debentures issued by the Bank and the contingent liabilities of the Bank in the form of guarantees given or underwriting agreements entered into by it, shall not at any time exceed such sums as, having regard to the assets of the Bank, the Minister with the approval of Parliament may from time to time determine."

Now, Parliament has determined that the ratio of the Bank's liabilities to its assets shall not exceed 3 to 1. In other words, it can only lend out three times as much money as contained in its assets. Way back in 1972 when the appalling nature of the investment at Bath was realised – to be precise on the 25th July, 1972 – officials of the Bank began to seek to get out of the straight jacket which was imposed by the then arrangements, for at that time the Bank had net assets of \$2.5 million and including Bath, which was then calculated at \$5 million, would not have been able to lend out any more money at that time. As long ago as 1972 the Bath investment had, in fact, crippled the Development Bank, unless the Government was prepared to put

more money into it. Well two solutions for this were sought. One solution, in fact, appeared to happen automatically. The Bath liability was not as much as \$5million, and a sum of \$2 million in possible lending was thereby released. But in August, 1972, at a meeting held at the Ministry of Finance between the Financial Secretary, his Deputy and the Manager of the Bank, it was agreed that the Ministry of Finance be asked to approve a debt equity ratio of 5 to 1. In other words, the Bank would be allowed to lend out five times as much as its assets. This ratio, Sir, is indeed within accepted guide-lines. I have raised it with the Inter-American Development Bank's president and with other officials, and they have accepted that it is not an unreasonable ratio, especially when certain factors, to which I will later advert, are taken into consideration.

However, having taken this decision on August 14, 1972, nothing was done about it. On January 10, 1973, the Manager of the Development Bank wrote and complained to the Ministry of Finance that nothing had been done. Still nothing was done and, indeed, on March 21, 1973, a Paper was brought before Cabinet proposing to raise a sum of \$500,000 to be made available to the Development Bank in order to let it make more loans, since Bath was still holding it down. The \$2½ million liability at Bath was money that could have been lent out to Barbadians to help develop Barbados, but it was still holding down the activities of the Development Bank.

Cabinet did not on that occasion take the opportunity of seeking to take steps to increase the debt equity ratio. Well things hung fire and on March 18, 1975, two years later, so slowly did the wheels of administration grind under the Democratic Labour Party's regime, another request was put up from the Barbados Development Bank, at a time when the present Permanent Secretary of Planning was acting as its Manager, asking for funds which were being on lent by the Bank to be excluded from the debt equity ratio.

Now, I have to explain things a little better. Some International Agencies, Sir, do not feel free to lend directly, for example, to the Barbados Housing Authority, the National Housing Corporation, or the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company, for various reasons. In the case of the Mortgage Finance Company, which is not yet owned by the Government, I think that there are drawbacks in the constitution of these Overseas Lending Agencies which will prevent them from so doing. The means sought of doing it is to lend

the money to a Government agency, which would then on lend the funds to these other Development Agencies that are not qualified to receive money directly from overseas. This is beginning to come on stream in 1975. Funds were being made available for on-lending to the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation, I think it was at the time, from the Caribbean Development Bank for various Housing Schemes. They were all involved in it: Caribbean Development Bank, DBD., Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation and the National Housing Corporation.

It was felt that, since in the operation of these funds, the Barbados Development Bank was acting as no more than an agent, it would not be appropriate to include these funds in its liabilities. Also the Government was guaranteeing the repayment of these funds to the original lender and it was, therefore, felt that these funds should be placed in a special category. On August 14, 1975, this matter came before the Cabinet, and the Cabinet decided that all sums of money which are on-lent by the Barbados Development Bank to other Lending Agencies should be excluded from the Bank's debt equity ratio.

I believe, especially since I hear the performance in the House of the Ex-Cabinet Minister on economic subjects, that this decision was taken in all good faith. I am not accusing any of the Ex-Cabinet Ministers, who I see before me, of wilfully breaking the law upon that occasion; however, it does appear, and it appeared even to the Manager of the Barbados Development Bank that the Cabinet decision had no validity. You cannot by a Cabinet decision decide that money which is on-lent or which you have lent out, is to be excluded from your liabilities in calculating the debt equity ratio. You are responsible for it.

Legal advice was sought by the Development Bank and was first given by its Legal Adviser, Mr. M.E.S. Hewitt, and then confirmation was sought from the Attorney General, and this confirmation was forthcoming in an opinion from the Solicitor General himself that you could not exclude these funds. It was then further decided that the original plan of going back to increasing the debt equity ratio was the particular form to be followed, and this is what now comes before the House.

I have excluded all the present former Cabinet Ministers from a realisation of what they decided in August, 1975, was of no effect and was, in fact, illegal because, perhaps, they were

not familiar with the Act and, perhaps, they were not familiar with the intricacies of development financing.

3.40 p.m.

I would really confess that at the time I would have seen nothing wrong with it myself, although I trust I would have had the good sense to go back to the Act and try to satisfy myself that something was being done which was legal. I cannot however absolve the Minister of Finance at the time and indeed I wish he was here so that we could have the benefit of his comment on my views that I think it was done that way deliberately to avoid bringing it before Parliament so that Parliament would have had the opportunity of discussing the workings of the Barbados Development Bank and the Bath Plantation scheme at that time. Section 9 of the Act says quite clearly that the aggregate of the liabilities of the Bank outstanding at any one time shall not exceed sums etc. as the Minister with the approval of Parliament may from time to time determine. That is what the section specifically says, and I think that it reflects very ill on the advice given to the Cabinet by the former Minister of Finance that he should have attempted to get things through the back door in this manner. I would like to pay tribute to the courage of the present manager of the Barbados Development Bank who resisted this just as he resisted other things relating to the whole Bath operation, in the face of very great difficulties and political pressures.

Now we come before the House and we are asking the House to allow the debt/equity ratio of plus \$3,000,000 to be raised from 3:1 to 5:1. Particularly I would commend the reason to the House on the grounds that many of these funds are on lending funds guaranteed by the Government and are not therefore likely to involve the Barbados Development Bank in the same sort of bad debt liability as it has had to put up with in the case of Bath, in the case of Norwood Holdings, in the case of Husbands Wrought Iron and one or two other activities. I do not believe that these on-lent funds no matter what is eventually done with them by the Mortgage Finance Corporation and the National Housing Authority can involve the B.D.B. in anything because the Government stands behind the loan in that particular respect.

I therefore beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Government gave notice of two Resolutions and intimated that it would seek leave to deal with them in all their stages at a later stage today. The Resolutions have been circulated, and I am now seeking leave to deal with these Resolutions. The Opposition have given their approval.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, there is no objection. What the Hon. Leader of the House says is correct; the Opposition is not opposed to dealing with these matters in all their stages.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Leader of the House is seeking leave to deal with two money Resolutions notice of which was given earlier today on the understanding of the Leader of the Opposition that there is no objection. There being no objection, leave is accordingly granted.

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 dealing with these two Resolutions.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: 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. 45

Head 3 - Judiciary - was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 3 - Judiciary - stand part.

This relates to electricity in the Supreme Court, and also to the increased payments for witnesses, jurors and medical evidence.

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

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

Head 7(1) - Direction and Policy Formulation - was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, as hon. members will be aware, the security guard system was instituted I think some two years ago by the former Government as a means of centralizing the guarding services of all Government premises, and although I am anxious to get on with this Resolution, I think that even before the Estimates hon. members might be interested to hear that the services and its activities are still receiving very close attention from the Minister responsible for defence and security. There has been some expansion of the service; we are trying to raise the number of guards from 75 to 90 in order to improve the guard service at Grantley Adams International Airport, at Gun Hill and at various Ministries for which the Government is responsible. We also provide guard service for the Caribbean Development Bank under contract.

The expansion of the service and the security difficulties at the airport during last September and October have necessitated a greater deal of extra travel by the two top security officers who are public servants acting in these temporary posts, and for this reason it has become necessary to increase their travelling vote. 3.50 p.m.

Further to this, Sir, we are now using the old control tower at the airport as a local headquarters for the Security Guards, and it has been necessary, and it will be necessary, to spend some money on communications equipment for the new control tower and to instal certain additional facilities.

Item 9(d) deals with uniforms for the extra Guards and there will also be an additional vote for uniforms in the Estimates. The hon. member for St. Lucy and persons responsible for running the National Union of Public Workers will be glad to hear that I have recently given instructions for the Establishments Division to investigate placing on an unestablished basis a number of posts of Security Guard. I accept the criticism which the Unions - the Public Service Division and the two Unions - have been making, that we should not have people in temporary posts for what is clearly intended to be a permanent service, and I hope that very soon - I do not think by the time of the Estimates - but certainly very soon proposals will be put forward and put up to Cabinet, and Cabinet's decision will then be conveyed to the public in the necessary Civil Establishment Notice.

We are also proceeding with training schemes for the Security Officers. One is very soon to go on an airport security post in the United States, and the other Security Officer has also received local training and is being earmarked for another course on physical security.

Sir, I have dwelt a little longer than is necessary in the circumstances perhaps to deal with this Head, but I hope that the answers I have given in advance here will convince hon. members when the Estimates come up that Defence and Security is an Item as far as Security Guards are concerned that they may not need to spend so much time on.

I beg to move that Head 7(1) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 10(10) – MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to move that Head 10(10) stand part.

This is only notionally under my Ministry now, its responsibility is in fact with the Attorney General, but this is a very simple matter. It is merely to pay members of the Town and Country Planning Advisory Committee \$600.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

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

HEAD 15(11) – MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

MENTAL HOSPITAL

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Under this Head, Mr. Chairman, we are asking for a supplementary provision in the sum of \$8,000. This is due partly to the increase in travelling rates from 1st October, 1976 and partly to the

further development of the community psychiatric nursing programme. In the community psychiatric nursing service treatment is administered on an island-wide basis to patients in their homes, in their own villages, in their own districts, with the result that they stay out of the Mental Hospital and return to gainful employment.

I do not think that enough people in Barbados understand that the Mental Hospital is by far a larger institution than the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and I do not only mean by way of physical plant. There are less than 600 beds at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at the Mental Hospital we have more than 600 beds, and it is important that we develop our services, both the out-patient service that we give at the out-patient clinic in the precincts of the hospital, and the psychiatric nursing service, in such a state that we keep them from returning to the Mental Hospital more often than they need to do, that we do not encourage recidivists at the Mental Hospital.

I ask that this Head do now stand part.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, just one quick question. I believe the Attorney General would probably be the one to answer this. I am sure the Hon. Leader of the House and the member for St. George South will recall that a Mental Health Bill had come up to the Other Place and it was sent back down when the members up there were concerned about the proposed power which had been given to the Police Sergeant for the removal of persons who were acting in a strange way, and the then Government had agreed with the then Opposition and other members who had expressed views to send it back for a look by the Attorney General's chambers with a view to the Bill coming back as soon as possible.

I raise the question because although the point was a valid point and it was taken I think there were other aspects of that Bill that are very important to the mental and other health in the community, and I wonder if either the Minister or the Attorney General would be in a position to tell us how soon we can expect that Bill.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, the Mental Health Bill is under serious revision at the moment and we hope that it will be returned here within a reasonable period of time.

The question that Head 15(11) stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 17(2) – GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: This is another one of these technical ones, Sir. It is technically still accounted for by the Leader of the House but it is actually administered by me. I beg to move that Head 17(2) stand part.

This is just to do with travelling. I must confess when I saw it I was very surprised it was so small. I see that all the van drivers asked for was \$1.00 extra when they had to show two films in one evening. Such patriotism is not often to be found, Sir, in all the circumstances and I am sure that members of the House when they hear that you can get a man to do extra work and only ask for \$1.00 for what is involved in driving a van from one site to another and setting up a cinema, hon. members will be glad to pass it, and indeed they may be indignant that I have not insisted on paying more, but that will be taken care of in the Estimates.

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.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that the Resolution for \$50,030 do now pass.

The question was put and resolved in affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1976–77 No. 44

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, with respect to this Resolution an amendment was made and I thought that it was circulated. Item 2 of the Resolution should now be \$1,003,831 instead of \$575,000, making a total of \$1,875,523.
4.00 p.m.

The first item that I would refer to in this Resolution is the provision to make payments to the contractors who are working on the extension of the deep water harbour. I am sure that hon. members would be happy to learn that as a result of the work being carried out at the moment, the

contracts are ahead of schedule, and all being well, the work will be completed by May, 1978. The actual dredging of the port if completed. The protection of the areas reclaimed is approximately 70% complete. We have been able to reclaim something like 16 acres of lands which adjoin the existing port, and 23 acres of land which we refer to as the bulk handling facilities areas.

All of this money will become due before the end of the financial year, and it was thought that it would be better to have the money voted for at this stage, at this late hour. I myself regret the need for having to bring this Resolution and to ask the House to support it now in all its stages at this time; but we all know the need for the port, and the importance of the port.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, as you know, Sir, the port extension does affect a few persons – some of them very deeply – persons living in what as you know is St. Michael South West; and I would like the Minister, if he can, to give us some indication as to what is happening in regard to those persons who live on the water's edge along Lands End. As far as I know, some steps have been taken – if the Minister is not in a position to answer at this point he may say so – but steps were taken for that land to be acquired as far as I know; and the Crown Solicitor, as far as I know, was in the process of acquiring the land.

I have had representations made to me that some of these persons have no idea what is happening and they are somewhat concerned. They have heard – and I believe that there is a change in the plan. I do not know if there is a change, but I know that a road has been completed or is in the process of being completed in the back of the property. If the Minister can give me some information on this I will appreciate it, since the persons in the constituency have been actively discussing this matter with me. I have given them the assurance that I would raise the question at the first opportunity, and today is the first opportunity that I have had in this Hon. House.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I do not know which road at the back the hon. member refers to. I do not know if he means by the seaside. As far as I am aware, there will be no road constructed to the back by the existing property. I know of the existing road going

towards Exmouth, and hopefully the road will be widened and will continue going on to Spring Gardens in the fullness of time.

I want to assure you, Sir, that the Government is still considering the advisability of acquiring properties at Fontabelle; but we are trying to renegotiate downwards the prices which were asked; and if there seems to be any delay in the acquisition, it is purely because we are not entirely satisfied with the prices asked, and we are hoping that better prices can be negotiated in favour of the Government. We do not wish to have to resort to land acquisition for the purpose of acquiring the land, but we will have to feel safe having those properties there with the port extension that it is going to be. It will be a security risk, and it is in Government's interest to have the properties acquired. I do not know if my answers satisfy the hon. member.

The question that Head 108 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Head 119 – Ministry of Communications and Works (Transport) was called.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, this item is purely a book item. It is taking no money out of the Treasury. It is just a question of regularising the accounting system. We owe money for a number of buses that were bought – 38 Seddon buses – and this was handled through Millbank Technical Services Limited of London. The Accountant General has said that the matter should be handled in a straightforward manner, that it should be regarded as a debt of the country, and therefore it should be put in a regular form and Parliament vote for this money rather than how it was done in the past. I do not know that this is a matter that needs to be debated. It is purely a matter of regularising the system.

I beg to move that Head 119 stand part.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I certainly have no quarrel with this particular item under Head 119 which is to regularise a particular position but I would like to draw to the attention of this Hon. Chamber that the 38 Seddon bus chassis units which were imported were part of the programme for the development and expansion of the public transport system in this country initiated by the former Minister of Communications and Works and my colleague the hon. member for St. Michael North Central.

4.10 p.m.

It was part of the programme for improving the public transport system including the development of new routes in this country. I would like to draw to the attention of the Minister the fact that there is still a need for certain developments. I am thinking now within the St. Michael area, or more specifically the City of Bridgetown because when we consider it we have a number of bus terminals. There is a terminal at the Princess Alice Highway; there is one at the Lower Green; there is one at Fairchild Street, and there is no linking service to connect these terminals. In addition to that there are other areas within the City of Bridgetown, or maybe on the outskirts, which could be included in a sort of a circular route. I am thinking of places like the Public Library, the Law Courts, the Bridgetown Harbour, probably Queens Park and that area around there as well as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which would be very desirable and which were part of this programme of increasing the rolling stock of the Transport Board in order to provide these improvements and developments.

What I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that with these 38 Seddon bus chassis units, and with the proposal to get additional units – these we are told are to be the Leyland buses with some of them completed, and some to come as chassis.....

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of explanation. What we are dealing with now has nothing to do with the buses that are to come.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I was hoping that there would not be any delays in their coming, with the problems that the Leyland Company were having. The point I am making, Mr. Chairman, is that in the proposals for the further development of the system, building on those proposals and the steps which have been taken already, I hope that they could be developed for the City of Bridgetown, and those people who come into the City to use services in Bridgetown that they could be developed a sort of circular route linking various points in the City, including the bus terminals to which I referred at Princess Alice Highway, the Lower Green, the Public Buildings, Fairchild Street, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Queens Park area, somewhere on Roebuck Street, somewhere near the Public Buildings and the Law Courts, and maybe going down to the Harbour itself and back to Princess Alice Highway so that those persons who have to move around the City or across the

City would be able to make use of these services. Obviously, smaller buses might be used on these routes. I would just like to point this out. It was part of our programme for the development, and we hope that this particular programme would not be forgotten in the proposals for expansion.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for St. Michael South, who has just sat down, ended on what one would consider to be a hopeful note, but I am sure that, if he were to examine what has happened in the area of public transport in this country ever since the 2nd September, he would see that the hopes and, indeed, the plans which the last Government had for developing and improving public transport in this country have been thrown by the wayside, and a new set of plans have come into operation — plans which have, therefore, brought about tremendous difficulties and inconveniences to a large number of people from areas which were previously serviced by buses from the Transport Board.

Now, we are examining this whole question of public transport in view of the kind of Resolution which is put before us this evening. I want to make some points on this Resolution from the point of view of the developments which have taken place in the area of public transportation ever since the 2nd September, and it is my contention that the service has not improved, but that more problems have been created by the attempts which have been made to fiddle with the system which they have not been able to solve.

Now you, Mr. Chairman, may or may not have heard the Minister of Communications and Works indicating that he had planned to set up a Commission of Inquiry over the acquisition of the Seddon buses. I would have thought that, in presenting this Resolution here this evening, he would have been in a position to tell us whether or not he is going through with this Commission of Inquiry, or whether, in the excitement which I would imagine comes with the newness of office, he had let off some point which meant that he spoke out of turn and that he has been, subsequently, hauled over the coals for having made an error and, consequently, we have not heard anything more about the question of the Commission of Inquiry. I think that the Minister should be in a position to tell us something about this because he stated, categorically, that he was going to set up a Commission of Inquiry to go into this particular matter.

Now, I think that any person, Mr. Chairman, who takes a very close and careful analysis of the transportation system in this country would recognise that we are in a crisis situation. I almost said that we are heading for a crisis, but we are in a crisis situation. I do not want to go into the details because I recognise that, in other areas, a crisis is going to develop particularly if a particular line is pursued.

Now, I want us to recognise, and as has been pointed out, that good public transportation is something to which the entire public of Barbados is entitled. This is one of the services like Health Services, Education, and so on. It is a kind of service to which the Government must be committed to provide for people throughout the length and breadth of any country and, indeed, should not be thinking deliberately or otherwise of creating hardships.

Now, when we look at what has been planned and the fact that we are in the process of getting additional buses, we should at the same time examine what is happening to see that people are experiencing great difficulties in getting to work and getting back home from work. I am talking facts, Mr. Chairman, because I know that every day, to use a common statement, there is a human cry in St. Lucy and in St. Peter about the difficulties which are being experienced in getting transportation to and from work. People, as a result of the changes which have been introduced into the system, are no longer able to plan their business and are no longer able to rely on the transportation system. 4.20 p.m.

I would think, Mr. Chairman, that any transportation system which is worth its salt must have a considerable degree of reliability written into it. That is, if a bus is supposed to leave a particular point at a particular time....(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: You have made that speech two or three times.) And I will make it another time if necessary. (Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: And I will give the same answer.) If a bus is supposed to leave a particular point at a particular time, then this should happen because it means that there are difficulties which are created if it doesn't. I want to impress upon the Minister that this is something which he must be committed to and which he must ensure because it is important from the point of view not only of satisfying any particular group of people, but for ensuring that generally speaking the transportation system of this country is what we would want to see it as, that is, offering the best possible service to people all over Barbados.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the present situation is a crisis one and does not provide or offer the service which people throughout Barbados would be proud of as indeed they were proud before the changes were introduced. They would be proud if the Government had attempted to implement the plans which the Democratic Labour Party Government had for improving transportation in this country.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, believe me, the Minister said he would give the hon. member the same reply that he gave a few weeks ago. I am going to call on the Prime Minister or the Attorney General to bring in legislation where it would stop one member from making a particular speech all the time. The present Minister came in here six months ago saddled with a transport problem; the Minister of Finance was saddled with a finance problem, the Minister of Agriculture was laden with agricultural problems, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health had their problems, and I as Minister of Labour and Welfare have my problems, but all you can hear coming from that side is getting something done immediately. They are an immediate nuisance bunch over there.

The Minister made a statement on the floor of the House and gave it to the press that he is bringing in 40 new buses because he is saddled with the problem of nationalising the transport system which they had left with the country, with the Rocklyn buses in particular. He came and asked for money to which they agreed, and yet the hon. member for St. Lucy is getting up and saying he wants the transport system improved. I do not know why you did not call on the hon. member to discontinue his speech. The problem is something which the Minister is aware of; he has come to the House and asked for the money, and the Minister of Finance has to perform a miracle to get the money since they have wasted so much. They have agreed to bringing in 40 buses and I think more are coming, but you hear a lot of nonsense being talked which is a waste of time, and the hon. member is talking about the transportation system in St. Lucy. I can talk about St. James or St. Joseph or St. Thomas. The Minister should be more aware of the problems in the transport system because the worst system was in St. Andrew and still is.

Sir, people must understand that the Minister cannot get up from here and go to the Mercedes people or the Leyland people and take up forty buses and put them on his back to satisfy the people in St. Lucy. It cannot work so. They came in here and talked about the Acme

Engineering people, but they can only build three buses in a month. We would be glad to see the Acme people expand, but they only build bus bodies as a side line, but we realise the present problem and it is going to cost the Government foreign exchange. We would like to keep the money in Barbados, but we are saddled with the problem of getting the money out of Barbados into England to bring 40 new buses for the purpose of satisfying the problems of the people of Barbados. What St. Lucy is the hon. member talking about? You don't even live in St. Lucy. Why don't you take your car and the Union's van and go and bring them up. You can rent a bus with some of the Union's money which you have over there and help to solve the problem in the transportation system which we have inherited instead of every minute wasting the taxpayers' time talking about wanting buses for St. Lucy. You want a hearse for fair weather.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, I had no intention of speaking on this Resolution this evening, but it is imperative that I say something on it because the hon. member for St. Lucy is really talking with a forked tongue. They have a system, and if you watch it correctly you will see how the Opposition operates. They have nothing to say. The hon. member who spoke said something and ran outside in order to get his name in the newspaper. The hon. member for St. Lucy gets up and talks about St. Lucy and buses. Now I want to show you something, Mr. Chairman. You were not in here during the last session, but there was a Resolution in here dealing with the Transport Board. The present Attorney General and myself got up and said it was unfair for the Government to be buying chassis for the Transport Board out of taxpayers' money and doing nothing for private concessionaires, and that they should devise a method of assisting the private concessionaires in updating and improving their fleet.

The Leader of the Opposition now was Minister of Communications and Works and he did nothing, but I will tell you what he did. I wrote a letter to him complaining of the bus service in St. Joseph and he wrote me back and said that his Ministry had carried out an investigation and there was no need for additional transport from St. Joseph, because I had asked him to license at least two more minibuses to help relieve the problem of getting people from St. Joseph to Bridgetown. His reply was in writing to the effect that his Ministry had carried out a survey and there was no need for additional transport from St. Joseph.

Now I heard the hon. member talk about plans. They never had any plans for the bus

service, Mr. Chairman. They had no plans for improving the bus service because when I came in here and told them that there was one minibus operator who had something like 32 summonses in December and sixteen in January and that the police had lost every case and that even the magistrate realised that the minibuses were doing a valuable service, I suggested that they should work out a system to help people get around the country. We raised the issue of licensing the minibuses because they had no plans.

The hon. member for St. Lucy talked about the Trade Union. At one time he is talking for the Trade Union, at another time he talking personally and yet at another time he is talking as a representative for St. Lucy. I will show you what is happening now. Only yesterday I had a complaint from people in St. Joseph. The Elite Bus Company will only carry five people standing and the police are meeting people at Hothersal Turning and taking them off the buses. They have to walk from there to town in order to get to work at eight, nine or ten o'clock. To get back home they have to walk past Hothersal Turning to get on a bus. Now the Minister knows this and he came to the House and said he wanted authority to bring in forty completed buses to solve the transportation problem.

4.30 p.m.

I would really call him a nuisance, but I would be wrong, I would call him an idiot if it would not be unparliamentary, but they were the ones who criticised the Government for buying 40 new buses because they said we were giving work to people in Britain. Now, my God Almighty, how can you help them? You do not give people in Britain work to get buses to move the people, you bring chassis and they complain that you cannot get the people moved; what must we do now, Mr. Chairman? How do you deal with dishonest people? As I have said, if people would only be honest to themselves first, they would be honest to others. The people in this country must understand the dishonesty the Opposition is playing in.

When you come and say you understand there is a transport problem, you recognise the difficulty, the people who build buses in Barbados cannot build the necessary buses in a quick time, let us bring in new buses and move the people, they say no. Then you say all right, what must we do? But the next week they get up and complain that the people in St. Lucy want to be moved, what do they want the Minister to do? Do they want him to put them on his back? I suppose he would be the first to get on the Minister's back.

It is time that this foolishness stops, Mr. Chairman. How can you do a job when you come down with concrete plans? The Minister has submitted all his files to Cabinet, and there is nowhere in the files that they had a plan for transport, and you hear the other one talking about their plans for development. When we in the Opposition asked them about the various bits and pieces of bus stands and we said that there should be a bus linking people from the Lower Green to this bus stand and running down the wharfside, they said it was dangerous to run a bus next to the wharf. When we asked for a shuttle system they on this side when they were in Government said it was dangerous to run a bus down the wharfside. Now they come in here today and are now talking about running a shuttle service. Do you know why? I will tell you why. I told the Prime Minister already there is a serious leak in what is going on in Government today and he has to do some spring cleaning now.

The Minister will tell you why I say there is a serious leak. They did not know anything about planning, but I can tell you something. If the Minister cannot do it alone the other six of us will join together and devise proper plans for this country. They know about themselves and individuals. The member for St. Michael South West would get up and say give somebody else the buses to build but would not call a name. Do you know why? When you are touching the back hand and you are the undisclosed agent, as they say in law, you will say so, but despite the fact that Barbados needs buses they would like you to bring all the chassis down here and then they would come in here and talk about the people not being able to get around, and you have workmen spending all day and not producing buses.

The Minister, in explaining, said that he was bringing so many completed buses, he hoped to get Leyland to come in and build the balance here. What more could he have done? And you hear these old..... you know, sometimes I lose my temper and I am apt to swear, but I respect Parliament, and I often say, do you see that Gallery there? One of these days you will see a lot of people downstairs milling around the same way they did the former Prime Minister. I saw the former Prime Minister hide and come through the back door to get into this Parliament, because when the people realised that he was taking them for a ride they were vicious and would have ripped him apart down there, and if they do not stop this foolishness they will meet the same fate.

It is time people realise how dishonest they are. They did not leave any plan, you can read the files in any one of the Ministries, Mr. Chairman, and you will see that everything was done on an *ad hoc* basis. If a friend wrote a friend and told him that something was in this for him and that he should do something, that is how it was done, and until the Prime Minister moves fast and expose the lot of them they will keep on with this foolishness, but time will soon catch up with them.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, except for the points raised by the member for St. Michael South I do not think that the points raised by the member for St. Lucy deserve a reply. I have been listening to him from the time I came in and he seems to be very successful in having excursions into irrelevancies, and I certainly do not want to journey there with him.

He said just now that a matter is coming up in which a crisis might develop. I do not know if this is a threat, but I want to tell him if he is the Union's boss, or if he is speaking in that form, that this Government is here to govern and will govern and will take the necessary steps to govern whenever any person or group or persons seek to stand in the way of the Government, and we are not afraid of him or any group for that matter. We will do the necessary and take the necessary corrective measures in order to bring people in line, so if he wants to threaten somebody, this Government will not be threatened.

The member for St. Michael South posed the question about short run buses in a ring around the City of Bridgetown. The member for St. Joseph referred to leaks within Government; these are plans that we have already made, and this is what we are going about doing. I came to the Ministry on 7th September and looked in vain to find any plan for the taking over of the transport system in this island or giving the people of this country any transport system at all. As a result of the knowledge to the concessionaires that it was likely the buses would be taken from them, they allowed their buses to run down. I have had several investigations made as to the viability of the rolling stock of the two concessionaires and quite recently, only yesterday, an expert on transport came to see me, and in the course of our discussion he asked me how many buses I believe I can get from the existing two private concessionaires. I told him I believe I might be able to salvage 30 of those. He said, "Mr. Minister, you are very hopeful, I do not think you can get 20." I said, "you are putting me in trouble. If I cannot get 20 I cannot take

over, at least I was hoping to get 20." I said, "You are telling me to get 20 more buses completed from the United Kingdom." He said, "it looks to me as though you will have to look for 100, because there are no buses." It is as simple as that, but I came to find no plans whatever, absolutely none, nowhere on the files, and I challenge any member on the other side, any former Minister of Communications and Works to come and say that there was a plan of action for the take over of the bus system in this island or for a proper transport system.

There was no concentration in that area whatever, I can assure you this, and I want to tell this Hon. House something as well, and I want the country to know as well. The member for St. Lucy in his usual pontifical approach — I would not want to say pontifical to ignorance — talks about the question of work for people in this island when we submitted the acquiring of 40 completed units. The member for St. Michael South West as well joined in that chorus and talked about allowing the buses to be built here; the member for St. Michael South as well, but of course I am going to be very charitable to him. For some reason or another, I suppose it is because of his quiet, dignified approach to matters that I seem to have a tender spot for him, I am not going to lump him with that crowd.

4.40 p.m.

They talk about not giving local people work. I met Mr. Butcher for the first time, and his son, in the office of the Deputy Prime Minister trying to work out a package deal with Mr. Butcher which would keep his company going steadily 24 hours a day every day a week, with a package arrangement not only for Barbados, but for the entire Caribbean and going further.

Mr. Butcher stated to me that it would be impossible for him even if I had brought in the 20 chassis, to give me back by the deadline date, let alone the full amount that I would have wanted.

Mr. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Chairman. I have no quarrel with what the Minister is saying; because if he has a deadline for June and it is impossible to change it, there is no other way except that the buses would have to be imported, and in that sense I agree with him; but the point that I raised was whether that deadline could not be extended. Those are the terms in which I was talking, and not necessarily disagreeing with the Minister, but asking whether that deadline is fixed and immutable.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I think that the hon. member was here when I read the statement and when I was constantly pinpricked by the member for St. Lucy. I said that the bus transport system in this country was on the point of collapse and there was no coming back from the point which the Government had agreed to. The private bus concessionaires, as I found it, did not even find it possible to have 50 per cent of their buses pass the inspection test for 1976-77; and we are within the border of the area for inspection, 1977-78.

Therefore, Sir, there was no question of turning back. The deadline for the coming to an end of the concession was the end of June, and we have got to meet that deadline; otherwise you will find that when you come to the end of June, that the private concessionaires come to you, as some of them did in December, and say to you we cannot carry on; therefore you have the baby here. Carry it as you can.

Then the very member for St. Lucy will not only be keeping noise in here, but he will be seeking to get every motorcar and truck, going all over the country, not only in a surreptitious manner, but probably openly, and saying that the Government is doing nothing for the people to move in and out of town.

Now, Sir, the Butchers have told me not only that they could not meet the deadline by way of production, but further, the steel for the construction of the body, they do not have the steel in possession, and it is difficult to come by the steel at this time; but as a result of contracts given to them, by my Ministry, they were able to get in touch with the very people who are building the bus bodies in London, and who would be willing in future to accommodate them in a partnership arrangement to have things rolling on for Barbados and in the Caribbean area as well.

It is no question that we have not worked. We have worked untiringly; but what can we do? Can we remedy in six months a situation that was bad for 15 years? Can we do more than we have done? I submit, Mr. Chairman, that this Government has performed a herculean task with limited resources in a very short period of time.

The question that Head 119 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you do now report the passing of two Resolutions in Committee.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. CHAIRMAN reported and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE the Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.

4.50 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, the item was circulated, and I have spoken to the Leader of the Opposition regarding the Bill to amend the Cane Fires Act and they have no objection to this matter being dealt with today and, accordingly, I beg to move that it be the next Item of Government Business. It stands in the name of the Hon. Attorney General.

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

CANE FIRES (PREVENTION) (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1977

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, the purpose behind this Act is to stiffen the penalties which may be awarded for the burning of sugar cane, or throwing any lighted cigar or cigarette or any matter in a state of ignition on to any field of cane or any road or track adjoining a cane field, and also to deal with certain other consequential amendments which it is thought necessary to make to the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act, Chapter 123, at this time. I think, for the purpose of hon. members, I should begin by explaining that this Bill deals with the powers of magistrates to try persons accused of offences dealing with cane fires and allied offences summarily.

I ought to explain, too, that by a summary trial it is not meant that they are tried capriciously or wantonly, but according to the law, but there is no necessity to have a trial by jury trial and, therefore, the limited purpose of this bit of legislation is to update and modernise the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act in so far as that Act provided for trial before a Magistrate and not before a Judge and jury. I want to make this point at the outset because I would not hope that the debate is conducted on the basis of the distinction which I have made.

As existing legislation stands, the present Act provides only a penalty of \$48 or an alternative of three months imprisonment if a person charged with an offence against the Act is tried before a Magistrate. One of the things about cane fires and allied offences, as the history of such legislation throughout the world shows, is that it is almost impossible to get a conviction in such instances particularly if the case is long drawn out which must wait to get to the Assizes and various things. That is why you will find that the legislation of Barbados has attempted to create offences at the summary level as well as offences at the indictable level.

Now I have had representations made to me, since the Act is administered by my Department, both by the Minister responsible for Agriculture as well as by the Fire Services Department and the Police Department, and I am satisfied on the basis of those representations that the existing legislation dealing with the trial of these offences at the summary level does not, at the moment, answer the needs of the situation. I should give hon. members the benefit of the statistics which are available for cane fires during this year, and I will do so by parishes, and I will give under three different periods, firstly the period from the 1st January, 1977 to the 28th February, 1977, and then from the 1st March, 1977, to the 7th March, 1977, and then I will give the total amount for the year by parishes:

Parish	1st January, 1977 28th February, 1977	1st March, 1977 to 7th March, 1977	Total
	Acres Burnt	Acres Burnt	Acres Burnt
St. Andrew	20	—	20
Christ Church	123½	11½	135½
St. George	100½	714½	815½
St. James	2	¾	2½
St. John	369½	246½	616
St. Joseph	41½	19	60½
St. Lucy	2½	50	52½
St. Michael	222½	173	395½
St. Peter	111½	8	119½
St. Philip	262½	26 1/8	288 3/8
St. Thomas	34½	68½	102½
	1290	1,313 5/8	2643 5/8

Mr. Speaker, as I said the other night on television, this has been an unprecedented amount of cane fires for any of the periods of the records that have been handed to me by the Chief Fire Officer and the Police between the years 1974 and to date. I have and the Minister of Agriculture has and may, probably, give a

breakdown of the acreage by plantations as well showing where the damage has occurred. I think that anybody who likes Barbados, and I assume for the purpose of this debate, that we all like and love our country, must be concerned about the disastrous effects of the burning of cane, on the economic life of the country, no matter what Government of the day forms the country. In most thinking countries today economic crimes, as these happen to be, are treated as severely, if not more severely than other crimes. People who, whether for sport or deliberately, or even recklessly, set fire to cane, or causes cane to be burnt, in circumstances such as these can only despise the economic well being of their own country.

5 p.m.

Now I have had confidential reports from the police about the various investigations which they have carried out, and I am sure hon. members would not want to press me at this stage to reveal the sort of theories on which the police force is working. I want to say that the police are stretched out to the hilt and they are sticking to their duties manfully. I have always been one to find the police force as one of the best arms of the civil establishment of Barbados, and indeed their respect for law and order regardless of what occasional aberrations there may be with the individual constables here and there is something which should be admired by Barbadians as a whole. It has been built up over centuries even from our colonial past which we tend to despise these days, but the fact remains that it is inculcated as part of the civil laws and establishment which we respect.

I wish I could say the same for the few fire bugs who seem to be bent on destroying this country's economy. I want to make it clear that so far as Government is concerned, burning down the canes really does not hurt an individual member of the Government in his individual capacity as I do not think any of us happen to be in the cane business or indeed have shares connected with the cane business, nor does it help any other member of the Opposition individually, and if there are some people, whether misguided or not — and I say this based on certain information — who believe that they are doing any political party, regardless of whether it is one of the established parties or any other parties a good by being reckless in going about the business of burning the canes, then I can only say God help them. They are doing their country one of the worst disservices. This is one of the instances of economic crimes. There are others in our community that for the time I may remain as Attorney General I hope to stiffen the

penalties and provide swift trials for, not only in this field.

I want to have a whole look at the range of restrictive practices, bad business practices and frauds and deal with these likewise, but in the instant case I am saddened to think that if I look at the figures up to the time I spoke on television, the loss to the country is something in the region of \$1.6 million and it has increased since then. The loss to the workers who would have been enabled to cut green canes as opposed to burnt canes at a differential of \$3.90 per ton was calculated up to 4th March when I spoke, at something in the region of \$558,000.

Now it is a fact that these cane fires have caused in some instances damage to personal property, sometimes the personal property of peasants or people who live near at hand and also have caused damage to the historic St. Philip Church. I spoke about that last week and I do not want to repeat the position. I want to say that we should all now begin to learn the lesson of our folly in this respect. The fact remains that on the world market the price of sugar is fetching something like six cents per pound and if we had to sell our sugar on the world market our production cost would be way above what we are paying for the price of sugar. Only a few days ago this country's ambassador to Venezuela and the Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Trade attended a conference of the Caribbean and Latin American group on sugar trying to formulate a strategy of sugar producers in this part of the third world to bargain at the international conference on sugar which will be held in April in Geneva in order to get increased prices on the world market for that part of our sugar which we sell on the world market. The Hon. Minister of External Trade and Industry along with the joint advisers from the Sugar Producers' Federation and the Barbados Workers' Union only less than a month ago were engaged in high powered talks with his colleagues from the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to try to plan and map out a strategy in order to fight for a reasonable return for a primary commodity under the Lome Convention.

Now these are two things that are taking up the time of the Government. It is quite true that the electors or the people concerned may say that Ministers of Government are paid to do their job, and I believe there is not one Minister on this side of the Government who could not leave the Government today and go out and do better than they do earning as Ministers of Government. We are making a sacrifice and the country must

understand that people who can contribute to public life are not going to continue to be in public life and contribute if they in turn cannot make a sacrifice by denying themselves the ignorant thought of destroying the economy of the country regardless of whether they have a difference of political opinion or not.

I want to speak on this matter because I feel strongly about it. Most of my colleagues on the other side and most of us here have come into the economic light through the hard world and it is folly for us to preach otherwise to any of our people that they are doing any political party or doing themselves a service, or doing an estate manager a disservice; he is doing himself a disservice regardless of who is the perpetrator by this senseless and stupid act of burning the canes. I feel very strongly about this. The Minister and myself have had very high-powered consultations on the matter and we have been aided by officials in our Ministry as well as officials in the Ministry of Defence and Security.

I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation is necessary to strengthen the hands of magistrates. I am not prepared to wait for a long and indictable and drawn out case. I want a case that is going to be disposed of according to the law and tried summarily as some offences are tried summarily, because I think it is only when we deal with that in this way that people will not change their minds about evidence which they will give that we will show we are really about business. In saying this I am not throwing any slight at all on the system of our law courts at Assizes or otherwise to deal with the matter, and I want to make that absolutely clear, but it is the type of offence which since 1949 and before the Legislature thought could be dealt with as well by magistrates, although it has made other provisions for an indictable offence of a similar nature and a different way of dealing with it, and the Legislature must have been wise in so providing. I feel however that the penalty was slight and that is why I am trying to improve the Act. I am trying to improve the Act also to give the members of the police force the power to arrest without a warrant upon reasonable grounds, and then satisfy the magistrate that they acted on reasonable grounds or be liable to civil action against the person. That provision is not new either; it is taken out of legislation passed by the former Government, the Police Act. I am also conscious of the fundamental rights of people, and in any event it is in accordance with the constitutional provisions of this country since it is justified on the grounds of public policy, public safety and in the defence of the country's

interest and it is one of the exceptions, but it is contained in legislation which the former Government has passed. My legal researchers have done research for me anticipating the Opposition somewhat and probably taking a lot of the sting out of the tail of what they may contribute to the debate, but if they want to challenge me on the legal authorities for my statement, I am quite willing to add up to that sometimes, Sir.
5.10 p.m.

There is no challenge from the hon. member, the hon. member for St. Michael East and myself may have, like any vibrant political party, slightly different interpretations on matters, but this Party is as cemented and as strong as ever, and intend to remain the governing Party of the country for at least twenty years to come. There is no doubting it, when I speak on this I mean it, but like any sensible political party we can disagree and we come to a joint position on situations. For the first time Barbados has seen politics where you have a group of brilliant people, erudite and learned — I am saying so, this is true — in a political party who can get up and have differences of opinion without necessarily being offensive and who have not got to react to the *Vox Die* of one man, the voice of God, in other words. That is what they are saying; that is the whole position. I want to make that clear.

As I have told my friends on the other side, as their Party's Manifesto on that particular quality, I may well be speaking from where the hon. member for St. Lucy is sitting; that used to be my seat, and I notice that he has taken up the role there, Sir. However, that is only an Aside to relieve the tension.

There are various sections and as I go through and hon. members want explanations on them I should be only too happy to give those explanations. It is a Bill that I have personally looked at, I have taken the advice of both the Solicitor General, as well as the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Director of Public Prosecutions, who are the three chief senior law officers available to me on the matter, and I have made every allowance that I possibly can for people's fundamental rights in the issue as well, and I am asking this Hon. House to support me in this endeavour so that at least we will have a deterrent that could react very quickly. Let us say that sometimes the people we are dealing with are a little smarter than the forces of law can reach. There was one instance where someone merely escaped being arrested, and I think on that occasion they happened to be swifter than

the police who were pursuing them. I do not wish them such luck on the next occasion in the instant case.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I beg to second that and reserve my right to speak.

Dr. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my quota of support to the Bill before this Hon. Chamber, and I want too to congratulate the Hon. Attorney General, the member for Christ Church West, for the speed with which he has responded to what is obviously a crisis in our national affairs. I wish to say, however, that I fear that the Bill by itself and extension of powers given therein, and the extension of fines and periods of imprisonment given to the police therein, and the courts may not by itself be too successful, for before we punish people we have to ensure that they are caught and brought to justice and found guilty, and in this respect the first job is to catch those persons who are responsible for lighting the canes. The Bill by itself, giving the Magistrate more power, giving the police more power, giving the courts more power, making the penalties stiffer, that by itself may not help the problem before us.

I well remember, Sir, that in the last five years there was only one case of a man brought before the Court for lighting canes that I can think of. I think that person was represented by the Deputy Speaker of this Hon. Chamber, and as I remember, that person was acquitted. The point I am making is that we have first to apprehend these people and bring them before the courts before we reach the point where we are able to impose the stiffer penalties which this Bill provides, and I think that along the way we have to identify what are some of the likely causes of these cane fires.

As I understand it, Sir, there are several schools of thought. Some Headmasters tell us that they are pretty sure that some school children are involved in lighting the fires, especially at times when they are likely to be out of school — that is, at lunch time or after school — because they get great excitement and great fun in seeing the Fire Service at work, uniformed men with fire tenders contending with hoses and so on, that is great fun and attraction for them and there is some contribution there made by school children.

In addition to this, Sir, it is believed that some of the workers themselves might be involved, in spite of the fact that the majority of them admit that they are losing something like

\$3.19 per ton as a result of the burning of the canes, but there is some dissatisfaction among some of the workers resulting from the fact that they believe they should have got a bonus last year and never got one. I believe that the Hon. Minister of Agriculture in his contribution to this debate may want to clear the air on that particular point, but I have heard the school of thought that some of the workers are dissatisfied because they thought they should have got a bonus last year and never got any bonus.

In addition to that, Sir, there is another school of thought which says that because of the fact that many truck owners have not been able to get into the small quota of truck owners who are allowed to bring canes to the few factories remaining now, that because of their dissatisfaction that has resulted too in the burning of the canes.

The other school of thought maintains that after a workers has worked with burnt canes for three days, and as it were, worked in soiled clothes and goes down to Wednesday or Thursday of the week, he is not keen on working with green canes, he is already soiled and he does not mind continuing to work with burnt canes for the balance of the week.

You may think, Mr. Speaker, that there is not too much, but nevertheless there are certain schools of thought which I have heard expressed by many people who are directly involved in the sugar industry, such as plantation managers, overseers and people of that sort, but I think we ought to be clear in our minds what are the many causative factors which may be aback of this outbreak of cane fires in this community.

I want to say that it is my considered opinion that the greatest dimension here is a political dimension. I believe that the canes for the most part are being burnt for political reasons. I believe that there are people in this country who have not settled down to the fact that the Barbados Labour Party is in power, who would like to see the Barbados Labour Party falter, who would like to see the Barbados Labour Party not in a position to realise the many promises in their Manifesto, who would not like to see the country go forward as we plan to take it forward, and as a result allow us to take credit for it, and I believe that a few of those people, ill-advised, misguided, stupid, are burning the canes or encouraging people to burn the canes all in an attempt to embarrass the Barbados Labour Party as the governing Party of this country.

I want to repeat, Mr. Speaker, that it is my considered opinion that there is a major political dimension in all this burning, and I want to ask the Hon. Attorney General, indeed ask the Prime Minister who is in charge of Defence and Security, whether it is not true that members who have been connected with the former administration, and in particular a former Cabinet Minister, is under constant police surveillance and believed to be involved in the burning of the canes in this country.

We have made the point, Mr. Speaker, that considerable damage is being done to the economy, to the amount of income which people take home, to the amount of money which the sugar industry will make at the end of the year, but I think it has to be emphasised that in addition to that there is considerable damage being done to the properties of the soil.

5.20 p.m.

We destroy the humus when we burn the canes. A lot of the trash which goes to build the soil is destroyed, and a lot of the soil properties are ruined as a result of this burning; so that the injury is no passing injury. It is an injury of grave, long term consequences. I think that that cannot be over-emphasised.

The other point that I wish to make relates to the provision recently of a fund whereby the Police can pay informers for information leading to the arrest of persons who may be involved in the lighting of these canes. I have said for a long time now that the Police cannot do their work effectively unless they have a large sum from which to draw to pay people for information. The London Police cannot operate. The English Police cannot operate unless they have money to penetrate the underworld and get information in relation to the many bank raids, the major thefts etc. that are carried out in a country like that. Police in Montreal cannot operate unless they draw on the fund provided for paying informers.

We in this community have for too long thought that the Police can just go around, knock on people's doors, have a drink in a bar, and as a result get people to talk. There is a tremendous pressure in a small community to keep their mouths closed. They do not want to offend someone when they may be friendly with his aunt. You do not want anybody to victimise anybody related to you, injure you or any of your relatives as a result of your speaking up.

People must be given an incentive to give information to the Police, which has been found

in large communities were the pressures of face to face relations are not in existence. It is all the more reason why in a small community like ours we ought to have a fund available to the Police whereby they can pay for information. Obviously men from Mars are not lighting the canes. They are being lit here in Barbados by Barbadians. I have no doubt about that.

This is a small place. People are very often in the intervals having fun when these canes are being lit. They see people getting away. That is understandable in a small community. People are everywhere walking up and down, and yet nobody ever comes forward and says "officer, I believe I can help you with who lit these canes". People must be given an incentive, an inducement to give information to the Police; and I believe that the Police should have every year thousands of dollars at their disposal in order to assist them in crime investigation.

In the end I return to where I started. We will not be able to see the effect of this Bill unless people are first caught. We cannot get to punishing people unless they are first caught and convicted in our courts. They are not going to be caught unless the public co-operates with the Police.

I feel too that the Police will have to ensure that their public relations are improved. They must improve their relationships with the public. The public must be able to trust the Police — trust them in so far as the Police will never reveal the source. Trust them in so far as the Police must always appear to be the friends of the people; and in all of this I think that the Police will have to do a certain amount of self examination to see whether they have not been responsible for the mistrust that exists in some circles between the public and the Police.

My learned friend, the Hon. Attorney General, has often been full of praise for the Police. I myself have had occasion to praise them in the past, but I have always maintained that the Police Force like the curate's egg is good in parts. I have never been one to give uncritical praise to the Police. There are some fine officers; but there are also some who do not live up to the finest traditions of the Force; and they are the ones who are often responsible for the growing gap of mistrust between the public and the Police.

I think that the fact that they have never been able to get their hands on anyone or to receive information leading to the arrest of anyone reveals that there is a genuine problem of mistrust between the public and the Police. We

can do our part as parliamentarians. We can give the Force extended powers. We can provide stiffer penalties. In the final analysis we need the support of the public and we need the Police to improve their image and heal this breach of mistrust that exists in some circles between the Police and the public.

Dr. CADDLE: Mr. Speaker, the Barbadian society is a rather interesting one. Whenever it comes to improving the conditions of the workers and the under privileged class of this society you will find that the establishment drags its feet; but when punishments, restrictions or sanctions are to be meted out against workers and the under privileged, one is amazed with the alacrity and vociferation with which such contemplated action is pursued. Whenever workers seek better working conditions, better wages, the conservatives of this country are vociferous in their acclamation that the workers should work harder for less money; but when punishments, restrictions and sanctions are the order of the day, the cry goes forth that anyone who is thoughtful, anyone who is nationalistic can only support the contemplated action.

The implication in that statement is that if a person does not support the contemplated action, punishment must also be meted out to such person. Sir, this Bill is couched in such terms, and adorned by such an attitude. The hon. member who introduced this Bill has sprung from very humble origin, and I believe that he knows quite well the privations and frustrations suffered by the workers and the under privileged people of this country; and I hope that his success, both social and financial, has not caused him to turn his face into the clouds and "scorn the base degrees by which he did ascend."

He will know, like myself, that when we talk about burning canes in Barbados it is nothing new. It is generally felt that only certain people can burn canes and that these people are generally categorised by a certain complexion. He knows this very well. This Bill before us today is in my opinion an attempt — although we accept that when laws are passed they are passed for the total society, in application they are directed against a certain section of the community.

It is interesting that this Bill is being offered as a solution to the cane fire problem; but as the speaker preceding me has stated, a Bill like this by itself does not ensure that this is an end to the cane fire problem which has hounded this country for many years, and will go on to hound

this country maybe for a longer time than most of us would like it to do.

5.30 p.m.

No real case has yet been put forward apart from stating that we have had an unprecedented increase in the number of cane fires. No case has been put out for the introduction of this Bill here today. The present Bill, Mr. Speaker, has not been shown or proven to be inadequate in any respect. We have not been told, or no evidence has been adduced on any other occasion to indicate that people have been repeatedly caught burning canes, brought to the courts, tried, convicted, and then after that they go out again and start pursuing the same type of activity for which they were convicted. It is not like in the case of some countries where laws have been implemented against prostitution whereby you find a prostitute after being arrested and taken to court, goes and pays a fine, and as soon as she returns from the court starts prosecuting her profession again. There is no such thing.

For a very long time in Barbados we have not heard of any cases where people have been arrested and brought before the courts and tried for burning cane, or causing cane to be set on fire. In my opinion we are putting the cart before the horse. What is needed is not a new Bill, or an amendment to an existing Bill with harsher fines. What is needed is better surveillance and better investigation which will lead on to the detection of people who are burning canes, and without that there is no point updating punishments or penalties.

When you look over the history of burning of canes in this country, it has gone on, and as I say it will go on for a long time until we get around to serious issues affecting the people in this society. We will have to start thinking in terms which will cause us to move away from the concept that only certain people are capable of burning cane. In passing I would like to point out that many years ago a man by the name of Weatherhead was caught burning canes in Sandy Lane, and he got off by the help of a lawyer by the name of Adams. This is the type of situation in which we find ourselves.

We are concerned on this side about the problem of burning canes and the undermining of the economy of this country, but we have to be realistic. Unless proper steps are taken and, unfortunately, we have reasons to believe that proper steps are not being taken to detect the people who go around burning cane. One of the reasons for this, maybe, is that people expect Government to do everything. Government is

already hamstrung by so many activities. Government is already committed to do so much in so many different areas, and many of the people themselves who are directly affected by the burning of canes do not set into operation any scheme or plan to ensure that they will detect people who set about burning canes, or to prevent people from setting fire to the canes. They sit back and they ask, not only this Government, but previous Governments, what are you doing about the issue?

The hon. member who spoke just before me has mentioned a number of theories about the burning of canes. In addition I would like to mention another. You will find all over the world that, when market conditions for commodities are not favourable, the producers themselves set about to behave in a way which shocks the conscience of rational people. In the United States when the market conditions for milk are not good, What do the milk producers do? They dump it; they bathe in it. When the market conditions for potatoes are not good, What do they do? They plough them back into the fields. They dump wheat, and they do things of that type. Are we trying to suggest in Barbados that only certain people such as the underprivileged or the working class will burn canes, or are we going to turn our attention to the fact that people, who may be owners of cane fields are quite prepared to burn the canes?

Sir, when you look at the history of burning canes in Barbados, you will find that cane fires are most prevalent at certain times, and that time is when the price for sugar is low. You will find then that cane fires are more prevalent than at any other time. This needs analysis. Why should you burn canes on those occasions and not on other occasions? Are we in a position to say what benefits do people get who own the canes? I am made to understand that they get insurance, and they also benefit when the burnt cane are ground and converted either into sugar or molasses. Are we examining these things? It sounds very good to get up and accuse people, for political motives, of setting fire to canes. It may go down well with some people, but it is not meeting the demand of the day. The demand of the day is proper surveillance and investigation leading to the detection of people who burn canes; therefore, unless you are going to set into operation such a plan, or such a Bill, or the amendment as we now have before us, will remain like the previous Bill where year after year you will find canes being burnt. This is not the first time that we have had heavy burning of canes, but year after year you will find canes being burnt, and when the season

has come to an end nobody has been arrested, nobody has been brought before the courts and charged.

In 1974 over two thousand acres of canes were burnt by March. In 1964, when we had a certain amount of social discontent in this country relative to the windfall issue, lots of canes were burnt in this country. In spite of that nobody was arrested or detected and brought before the court. The burning of canes, Sir, I submit is evidence of social or economic discontent in the country. Are we examining this? We had it in 1964 and in 1974. Are we prepared to look at this and try to find out which way or to whom it will point us? I think we have to rise above this question of political accusations. Adversary politics has gone on in this country for too long, which very often prevents us from having an intelligent appraisal of the problems before us.

Sir, it is a very serious matter in this country when such a large amount of canes can be burnt. I would like to point out here that a lot of canes were burnt after the Hon. Minister for Agriculture made his appeal to the public. Why is this so? I have been worried about it. Is it because there is some dissatisfaction relative to his performance of his job? When one looks at the Sections of the Bill, and, like the previous speaker and myself, one recalls the present image of the police in this country, I am a bit concerned about putting certain powers in the hands of the police. I do not think it is fair to the police at this particular stage to saddle them with powers which may only add further to a deterioration of their public image. In many areas of the public in this country people are not satisfied with the behaviour of some policemen and, like the previous speaker, I recognise that they have some very good policemen, but at the same time there are others whom you cannot put on that level. If people go on feeling that the policeman is their enemy, you are going to find that when certain powers are put into the hands of the policeman the people are going to react in a way in which we do not like them to react. The police will have to do a lot to improve their image, but, at the same time in trying to improve their image, we must also be aware of the fact, or make ourselves aware of the factors which cause the public of this country to distrust them. It is very vital because they are very important in the surveillance, investigation and detection of the people who burn the canes.

5.40 p.m.

If people see them as their enemies, I would agree with the previous speaker that they are

unlikely to give them the type of support which is necessary and which will enable them to detect it. By now there should be some pattern which would characterise the burning of the canes and lead us in certain directions to come to some definite conclusion of where to look or for whom to look or on whom you will keep your eyes. I hope the hon. member who has introduced this will not necessarily go into any great detail but indicate to us that there is some pattern which is leading somewhere, because all along we are getting the impression that this is a rather pernicious Act conceived in panic and that nothing clear-cut has been forthcoming to underscore the necessity for coming here before us. We would like to know that you are on the point of arresting people. We would not like to believe that this is just something done to indicate to the Barbadian people that because there is a spate of fires in this country that you are doing something, because this mere Bill by itself is not going to lead to a decrease this year or next year in the amount of cane fires.

Mr. Speaker, we have to look very seriously at the total problem. When you look at the total problem you have to look at the social conditions, because one of the things we have to admit in this country is that a lot of people who are involved in the sugar cane industry as workers and from whom we expect a lot are not made to feel that they belong to Barbados, and if people have the feeling that they do not belong, they do not have any care or respect or regard for things around them. Unfortunately, Sir, this has been so; people who work in these areas have been deprived of ownership of land for too long, and they do not see these things in relation to themselves. They could not care less because all along they do not have any further involvement or attachment beyond trying to get some money, and if they can get some money by working, what do they have to bother about? It is not a simple matter of just coming in here and updating an Act and feeling that that is going to put an end to it. You have to go a lot further. You have to look at the social climate in the country; you have to look at a plan for bringing in better surveillance, better investigation leading to proper detection, and in this respect I would like to point out that in the Ministry of Communications and Works lying down somewhere there is information on helicopters which would be of some benefit to the police in the surveillance of Barbados and detecting cane fires. I have done that because I have been concerned. That information is there and can be pursued further.

So, Mr. Speaker, you cannot have this type of *ad hoc* measure and feel that by introducing this *ad hoc* measure you are going to have an effective solution to the problem. The problem must be looked at in its entirety and all the other issues which have to bear on the problem must be fully evaluated, and then you will get a proper solution. I will have to admit that when you do that, maybe part of the solution would be to update the Act, but the Act alone is not going to lead us much further than we have been in the previous Act. The previous Act is there and it has not proven ineffective; what has proven ineffective is our methods of detection, surveillance and investigation, not the Act. The Act can only be proven ineffective when you detect people and bring them into court and then the lawyers who defend these people lay bare the defects in the Act. Over the years, and I accept what the hon. member has stated, there has only been one case brought before the courts in this country. I think we should be able to do better than that. In some areas there have been hundreds of cane fires and you have only apprehended one person in a period of five years. That shows that something is wrong with the system of surveillance and investigation leading to proper detection, and I should like to impress upon the hon. member who has introduced this Bill that he should seek to impress upon the sugar producers and the owners of plantations that they must do their bit also and not sit down and throw up their arms and ask what is Government doing.

I think we are leading these people into a fallacy to let them go on believing that Government can do everything effectively and at the correct time. We have to impress upon them that they can do a lot, but I am not satisfied that the owners of these plantations on which much cane is being grown are doing their bit to help survey the canes and prevent their burning in this country. If Government as has been requested in another area is to improve or increase the police force to do this type of thing, it is going to mean that more and more of the financial cake is going to be given to the police and the security guards service, and other areas of activity or endeavour in Barbados must suffer by comparison.

I know a particular individual, I do not have to call his name, who is vociferous since last year that the police force should be increased, but I do not believe that a mere increase in the police force is a solution to all of our problems in the society. I think that many people in this country who own things and who benefit by them when things are going well and who suffer when things

are not going well have a responsibility to assist Government in detecting or in the preservation of suitable conditions surrounding their own property.

Sir, I should like to assure the Hon. Attorney General that nobody on this side is really opposed to this Bill; nobody on this side will condone any burning of canes where that is not the expressed policy of the Government; but at the same time we would like it to be known that this attitude of adversary politics which has gone on for too long in this country will only succeed in splitting the people further apart rather than bringing them together and getting the type of concerted action which is necessary for solving some of the problems of the country. I will appeal to him that in addition to this — and I may accept this as an *ad hoc* measure — a lot more has to be done to really deal with the problem of cane fires which has been here for many many years. Unfortunately in previous years when the canes burnt it might not have precipitated as many problems financially as it is now doing. Nowadays when canes burn, due to a lot of factors in the world market competitive and otherwise, we find ourselves worse off than when people burnt canes 25 years ago.

I would submit that one of the things you have to do is to have a very effective educational programme to make people aware of the importance of the sugar cane industry to themselves, and further, the people of this country who have been alienated too long from the land on which they live must be given some opportunity to own and participate in this country. It is not sufficient to tell an individual that because he was born here he is a Barbadian and on that premise he must do everything to show how national he is. A man or woman must be made to feel that they have a sense of belonging, and until they have that sense of belonging or participation in this country, you are going to find that they will have scant respect for other people's property whether it is Government property or some other private individual's property. People must be involved. These are only two parts of the total solution to the problem. There are others and I believe that other members speaking this afternoon will have an opportunity to suggest what they consider to be the other parts of the total solution to the problem.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I intend to deal with this Bill after listening to the last hon. member who made a few comments. He told this House that there were social and economic

discontent and that these were possible factors behind this spate of cane fires.

5.30 p.m.

Dr. CADDLE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation. I would like to remind the hon. member that I said that cane fires are often an indication of social or economic discontent. I did not say it definitely is.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, social and economic problems are usually the factors behind certain unrest in any country. There are other factors, politically. Throughout history we learn that there are social and economic problems and that there are also political reasons or political motives behind these factors. What members of this House must understand is that we are dealing with cane fires, and sugar cane is the basic and most important factor in our economic source in Barbados. We cannot dismiss this question. What the Hon. Minister is seeking to do is to impose heavier fines on offenders, and I want to support him on this measure because I think that people must understand what cane fires can do to this country. They must understand this.

It is time that Barbadians understand too that there are lots of people who live in tenancies and are surrounded by sugar canes, and when someone maliciously sets fire to these sugar canes they are endangering the lives of people who live in those houses. That is the question.

What people must understand too is the fact that most of the people, the labourers and the tenants, who live in the tenancies have goats, pigs, cows and fowls keeping in order to make an extra dollar, and when sugar canes are burnt and their livestock which are usually out on the pasture are burnt, these poor people suffer the loss of income. Mr. Speaker, I happen to come from parentage, my parents were agricultural labourers, who depended on their sugar crop to educate me. They depended on the fowls, the pigs, the goats and sheep as well to sell when the term came around to pay for my education. I am not going to be ashamed of that, hon. members can get up and laugh at that, but I am not going to laugh at that. What I want to bring home to this Hon. House today is this, when you can hear an hon. member getting up and saying that people feel they do not belong I want him to understand that is not the case. I belong to the agricultural community, and I am sure that people who work in the agricultural belt are very proud to know that at least the Barbados Labour Party has welcomed a son of the agricultural community. They are proud because of this.

I want the hon. member who just sat down to understand that in 1971 when I was running for St. Philip South I heard a prominent member of his party say in Six Roads that I was the son of an agricultural labourer. Now you will see who are the people who detest those agricultural labourers. It was the Democratic Labour Party who did not want those people to feel that they belong to the society. What we must understand is that this is a very serious thing, the lighting of canes.

Around September people depend on what is known as preference money. They depend on back money, and I can tell you from my personal experience that people who depend on preference and back money use this money in order to repair their homes. That is what the people depend on to repair their homes, to put on a wall back, to run water in the house so that they do not have to go at the pipe to bathe. I had to go at the pipe to bathe. These are the hard facts about these cane fires, you will see how it hurts the average poor man. I am not concerned about the plantation owner, I am concerned about how it affects the average poor man, because today in Barbados when we find the poor people, those same agricultural labourers who live in the country, striving to send their children to private secondary schools, to pay for their education, we find that lawless people are out there engaging in destroying the crop to prevent them from having some money so that they can pay their children's school fees. Mr. Speaker, there are the facts and members have got to understand, they must come to the stark reality, the time is ripe for them to understand today how people feel about the whole thing.

It is not a question of imposing a fine. I would go so far as to say that the fines as far as I am concerned are not stiff enough. I would like to see those culprits who are caught taken in Independence Square and publicly whipped. I am not going to think that this is a half measure, this is serious business. We have to think in here today of those many parents who have to depend on the money from the sugar cane crop. They did not have a secondary education, they have to depend on the sugar cane crop, money which they earned from working hard in the sun, and you are finding people trying to make it hard for them to earn a living.

What we must also bear in mind is that when they burn the canes the crop is automatically shortened. Normally a sugar crop would end sometime around June. I remember the time when the crop used to end in June, but

we have seen quite recently that crops are finishing in April and May because people have been burning the canes and therefore we find that the money which would normally be derived from these canes is lost.

Mr. Speaker, people in Barbados and their attitude towards the sugar industry must be such, because it was the hon. member for St. John in his well known notorious speech which has caused lots of people in Barbados to lose faith in the sugar industry, when he said that he would like to see the day when there is not a cane blade in Barbados. That was the attitude of the Democratic Labour Party, so they have to be blamed, and I do not want them to think that we are so foolish as to accept that they are saying there is no political motive behind the burning of canes. If you are going to say that people are dissatisfied, what are people dissatisfied about? What are they disgruntled about? We have only been in power for some five or six months, and if there is social and economic unrest in Barbados it was created during the past fifteen years of DLP rule. We must face it. The people are prepared to give us a chance, and I have confidence and faith in my people of Barbados, but reckless statements. Why did the people on the other side not take the opportunity when they had their mass meeting a couple of Sunday nights ago to publicly declare that they were not in favour of the burning of sugar canes? Oh, no, they could not find time to do that, that was a golden opportunity for the other side, the Opposition, to tell the people how they felt. Do they have the interest of the country at heart?

Mr. Speaker, this is serious. We must understand what is going on. If they as a Party that was in power for fifteen years could have a public meeting when there was a spate of cane fires, and at the same time they knew that the St. Philip Church was burnt down as a result of cane fires, and instead of taking time off to denounce the cane fires you heard some reckless and careless statements by one of the members on that side, the Leader of the Opposition.

6.00 p.m.

That is the sort of thing. They have not yet got up or come out although we on this side invited them to come out and make a public statement. We did not deny them the right to use the public media. We did not deny them the right to come out on T.V. We have not muzzled them in the way they tried to muzzle us when we were in Opposition. But no. You will not find the representative for St. Lucy who is supposed to be a representative of the Union coming out and

denouncing this. I want to see him today on the wicket. I want to see how he will come out.

They must understand that it is because of their irresponsible behaviour by not coming out and joining up on a national issue that people are behaving in such an irresponsible manner. They have got to be blamed for this. As I said before, burning of canes has got to be condemned in the very strongest language and fashion. I feel that there should be stiffer penalties for people who are caught lighting canes.

Mr. Speaker, it will affect the economy of Barbados. People will be out of work for a longer period of time if the crops are burnt down; and I will say this: when you burn five and six fields of canes you are not able with the work force at these various plantations to reap all the canes. If you could reap all the canes, Mr. Speaker, then there would not be any great loss to the sugar industry; but the point is that when so many canes are being burnt, the canes will have to be plowed back in, hence it is a loss of income to the would be earners.

That is the point. It is not the burning of canes. It is loss of foreign exchange, because we have got to sell sugar to outside countries. There will be no so called windfall. Those are the facts; and I hope that there is still time, even at this late hour, for the Opposition to get up on the floor of this House like men, and not like beasts and make a statement to the effect that that Party denounces cane fires in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that I congratulate the Hon. Attorney General for coming before this Hon. House and introducing this Bill so that at least we can curb the spate of cane fires. I am appealing to all Barbadians that they should not feel that they have been left out. We have got a Government of the Barbados Labour Party, and I want the people of this country to understand that they have got something of which they can be proud. Do not let it be said that the people who are poor and unfortunate do not have a voice or are denied a privilege. I am sure that they are proud of the Barbados Labour Party when they see me as a representative of the agricultural community on the floor of the House of Assembly as a member of the Barbados Labour Party.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the hon. member for St. Michael South West who has clearly said that he has sprung from peasant farmers. I am still wondering whether it is good peasant farmers or poor peasant farmers at this point of time because if

we look at the whole question of cane fires, I think that the member for Christ Church East made a very pertinent point.

You can make hanging a penalty. The point is that the hon. member for St. Michael North Central said that you have to detect people by increased surveillance, and therefore you have to find more up to date methods to detect the origin of cane fires. I felt very saddened in this Hon. Chamber last Tuesday when the hon. Minister of Agriculture got up and accused me of not joining with him and denouncing cane fires.

The first point is that he as Minister of Agriculture had the statistics of cane fires. I see the sky red at night, but I am not in a position to know if it is six acres or 600 acres which are being burnt. If the Minister is in possession of the statistics and he wants to enlist the aid of the Opposition, I would expect him to say to the Leader of the Opposition or cat or dog or whatever, this is a matter of national issue, will you join with me?

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is not reflecting on a speech made by ...

Hon. F. G. SMITH: No, Sir. Even if television is made available to me I, as Leader of the Opposition, cannot go to C.B.C. and say give me a five minute spot.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I made a statement arising out of a statement by the Leader of the Opposition at a public meeting at which he said that the burning down of St. Phillip Parish Church was an act of God's retribution to the Dean of St. Michael's Cathedral. What I said was that instead of making that statement he should have joined with the Government in condemning those who set fire to sugar canes. He did not do that. He became sacrilegious.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I can say anything. All that I can say is that if the member who is Minister of Agriculture wants to enlist the assistance of the Opposition I would expect him to say that these fires are becoming too prevalent and we would like a united front in talking to the people, and we will make C.B.C. or Rediffusion available. I am not going to pick up myself and go to C.B.C. and say that I want to make a broadcast on fires without the Minister knowing. I may cut across what he is saying. They may want to see the script before it goes on the air.

What I would like him to do is to enlist my assistance. He has the statistics. The first time that I heard how many acres of canes were burnt was when I heard the Hon. Attorney General's broadcast and I then realised how serious it was. You can look into the sky and see a red glow, but you are not in a position to know the total acreage burnt unless you are told.

Canes fires are not new to Barbados. We have never accused the Barbados Labour Party of burning canes or setting fire to canes.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Mr. Freddie Miller who was then a Minister was accused of setting fire to canes. I can tell you this.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I have never heard my party accuse the Barbados Labour Party of setting fire to canes. Mr. Freddie Miller has been out of the House for donkey years. However, I want to go on record as saying that anyone who deliberately sets fire to canes is an enemy of this country. I want to go on record as saying that.
6.10 p.m.

I have to be able to put it through the proper channels. The Minister is aware, the Minister makes the statistics available, so that, at least, when you talk you are aware of what is happening. I, personally, did not know, until I heard the Attorney General, that the amount of acreage burnt was extensive. I want that to be quite clear. I would have expected the Minister of Agriculture — (*Asides.*) Do not mind what you say I said. If he wanted to enlist the help of this side, I would have been willing, provided I had the facts, the statistics, the loss of earnings — I would have been the first one to join him in condemning the wanton waste of the limited resources of this country exposing, as the member for St. Michael South West says, poor people to the danger of being burnt in their houses and the consequential loss of occupation which must follow from this wanton waste of our limited resources.

The member for Christ Church East made some very pertinent points. We are supporting this Bill on the ground that if it is going to act as a deterrent all well and good. If this is a purpose just like in Jamaica when they made the offence for ganja mandatory, or rape mandatory, in the hope that it would stop it, although, apparently, it did not stop it, then if that is the deterrent effect of this piece of legislation all well and

good. There are several schools of thought, and do not let us get on as if in the Democratic Labour Party's time there were not cane fires. As a matter of fact, I think, subject to statistics, that during our time, either in 1975 or 1976, we were able to, having cut out migrant labour from abroad, get Barbadians to go back and cut canes. It cannot be said that the Democratic Labour Party was not committed to the cutting of green canes.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, you will remember when the Ex-Prime Minister, the member for St. John, and the then Minister of Agriculture went down in the field and cut a few holes of canes. Of course, we were lampooned, but that was another attempt. Even although it might have been a token attempt, it might not have had the value that it was intended to convey, but I think it can only show an honest attempt by the Democratic Labour Party to get the people to cut canes green. As a matter of fact, if we cut out this political aspect if it — (*Asides*) I say if you have evidence you can collect the reward, if you know politicians are setting fires. There is a reward of \$2,000.

If we cut out the political aspect of things, you will notice, Mr. Speaker, and I think this is one thing to the credit of the former Minister of Agriculture, that he did the same thing with the Hon. Minister of Agriculture that the Attorney General did. He went on T.V. endeavouring to persuade people to cut canes green. Even so he went into the field and attempted to cut canes green. It was he in his regime who stopped migrant labour coming into Barbados. It was in our time that labourers from St. Vincent and St. Lucia were stopped from coming into Barbados because it was felt that these persons had a tendency to cut burnt canes. All of this happened in our time. Of course, things can change overnight and I am not arguing. But arguing from the policy of the Democratic Labour Party, I think it will be agreed that we endeavoured to cut canes green whenever it was possible.

As a matter of fact, if the Minister would check the history, it was the Employers' Association who suggested to the Government that, since cane fires had become almost part and parcel of the sugar industry, we should have controlled burning. Perhaps that was one of the worst things we ever did by allowing them to do that, but it had become part and parcel of the reaping of the sugar industry and it was felt that, rather than allow the indiscriminate burning of canes, we should have controlled burning since it was more or less accepted that this was part and parcel of sugar reaping in Barbados.

When you look back two things come out clearly, Mr. Speaker. One is that Barbados has had cane fires from time immemorial; that at certain periods of time cane fires are more prevalent than at other periods of time. What I fear is, and I hope it is not that, in the present political atmosphere where a new Government has just come to power, there is this easy argument that the Democratic Labour Party is spurring on people to burn canes in order to embarrass you. (*Asides*.) If you know that you must give the police the evidence but when it is related, Mr. Speaker, to the pattern of Barbados then, of course, as the member for Christ Church East says, you have to look for certain other schools of thought.

Now there are certain questions the Minister may be able to help us on, if he has the statistics readily available. For the last five years, could he give the House and the public the amount of acreage of canes burnt each year? How much were burnt in 1971? I do not know it. That is why if I were asked to broadcast I would have to know the statistics. Can he give us that so that, at least, over a 5-year period we could see the pattern of cane burning in this country? Another point is this — it does not matter that it has to be political, and this is why the member for St. Michael North Central referred to the economic as well as the social problems. Now, Mr. Speaker, the workers were expecting an increase of wages. (*Asides*.) I am giving reasons, I cannot tell you, Mr. Speaker, if I could I would, what are really the main causes of this wanton waste of the limited resources of Barbados which I condemn unreservedly and in full support of the Government.

They were expecting, Mr. Speaker, some money in 1976. You know that. The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister himself had to intervene and impose a settlement on the Sugar Producers. Now, whenever there is a question of paying out money you will get bad feelings. The workers were expecting money. The workers have had a settlement imposed on them in the interest of the industry. In that group of workers, Mr. Speaker, you are sure to find some ignorant, disgruntled people who, because they did not get what they thought they would have got in monetary terms, are prepared to do certain things. I am giving reasons. I cannot tell you whether that is 1% or 2% of the causes. It is peculiar that at this time you get a case where a settlement is imposed in the interest of the industry, you will always find, whether it is in a factory where a man will throw a spanner in the works, or a fellow will loosen the tyre on a bus, once there is money which to some worker or workers is not the satisfactory

expectation to which he or they have been looking forward, you will find a few people who, ignorantly, will do things like this.

Another thing which the Minister can enlighten me on, and I am asking for information – when cane fields are burnt, what is the benefit to the Plantation owner? Does he get the insurance for the field? Does he get the weight for the canes? Is there some deduction? How is it equated? You can look at the final price of the sugar, as predicted, and see whether it is not more beneficial. I am asking for facts; I am not accusing anybody of anything. I would like to know whether when you get the insurance money, plus the canes that are burnt, and you have reaped them, whether the total amount may not in the long run in financial terms be more beneficial to the sugar producer or the sugar owner. This is something that the public has been asking itself. I am not accusing them. I do not know. It may be less; it may not be worth their while, but these are areas in which I would like some enlightenment. I would like to know what they get when canes are burnt.

In addition to the reasons given by the hon. member for Christ Church East, Mr. Speaker, little children, careless motorists, people going into cart roads and smoking on certain social occasions and carelessly throwing matches away, I do not consider to be a big percentage.

6.20 p.m.

A man will pass by a cane field with a lighted cigar or cigarette and throw it in some dry bush and a fire starts. There may be instances like this. As I say, I am not giving a percentage for any of this. I am trying to raise reasons. I cannot tell you whether it is one half percent or none. In addition to what the hon. member for Christ Church East has said, I am giving possible reasons why cane fires are caused, because I think the Hon. Prime Minister will agree that if this was not a source of cane fires, and if he reads the section of the Act he will see there is an offence for throwing a lighted cigarette in certain areas in connection with cane fields; so I do not think he can think my answer is so stupid, because I think he will see that a particular section of this Act makes it an offence for throwing cigarettes or anything within the area of a cane field. I do not think he can condemn my argument that that may be a possible source of fire, and I do not think the Attorney General would have included that if it could be completely eliminated as a possible cause of fire in this area. I am not

assigning any percentage. I am only rising to make two points; that cane fires are a damage and harm to the economy; that Barbados at this time cannot afford the spate of cane fires which from the figures given by the Attorney General are either escalating or proliferating. Some means must be found to put a stop to this wanton waste of the resources of Barbados, and that is why we go along with the legislation if perchance it will act as a deterrent, and that those who are caught should be meted out the severest penalties which the law itself can give to them. I am prepared to join with them publicly or otherwise if invited to condemn what I think is a bad state of affairs in Barbados.

The hon. member for St. Michael South East went into a lot of what are obvious problems and consequences of cane fires, and the dangers and wanton waste of our natural resources, and I certainly, if it is drawn to my attention, would dissociate myself completely and absolutely from any member of the Democratic Labour Party who is shown or known to be deliberately inciting, setting fire to or in any way connected to this type of nefarious activity in wrecking the economy of this country. I would go that far. If any member of the Democratic Labour Party hierarchy, high up or low down, especially an ex-Cabinet Minister as was suggested is caught and convicted for setting fire to or inciting people to set fire to the crops in this country, I, the hon. member for St. Michael South Central, would completely dissociate myself from the Democratic Labour Party and I make that a public statement now. I think that is my feeling and the feeling of my colleagues because no responsible person in the Parliament of Barbados can sit idly by if he has this country at heart and condone, incite, excite, persuade, exhort or cajole any single person in this country to destroy the economy of Barbados.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, because I want to reply; is the hon. member only limiting his threat of resignation to the hierarchy of the Democratic Labour Party rather than to the membership of the D.L.P.?

Mr. SPEAKER: He said high up or low down.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I would dissociate myself and sit in the back as an independent in Parliament until I am ready to go. I would leave because that person certainly would be

worse than the person who is alleged to be likely to be charged with treason. Treason is an offence against a country, but he would be an enemy of the working class people of this country.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is all right as the hon. member for St. Michael North Central says to talk about the workers losing \$X in wages. The workers may very well lose \$½ million in wages but on the other hand the employers are saving \$½ million in wages because they do not have to pay them out. So let us look at both sides of the picture. You have got therefore to look at all the reasons, and I think too often without any evidence especially in a charged atmosphere so soon after an election, we are always tempted to suggest that the background to a problem is political whether it is vandalism or whatever, when in truth and in fact the causes may go much deeper than what we on the surface suggest, and that is why I was listening outside to the speech of the hon. member for Christ Church East who endeavoured to make two very vital points, by reciting the various schools of thought that have come forward with some reasons for this epidemic, because it is an epidemic which has got to be stopped by violent means, and when I say violent means, I mean in the terms of the sense of the Act, while at the same time dealing with the question that it is no sense putting all the teeth in the Act if we cannot get some people to be charged to make examples of before other people.

That is my contribution to this debate, and I just would finally reiterate and emphasise that as Leader of the Opposition and as a member of the party in Opposition, we wholeheartedly support the Government in any measure within the Constitution, within the framework of the fundamental rights of the people which they are taking to ensure that the limited resources of Barbados are not destroyed by fire bugs, by thoughtless people who care nothing for the economy of Barbados. I would like to say that I condemn it, I think it is a positive disgrace to this country that people can be so evil-minded as to attempt to embarrass any Government, our Government or that Government by trying to destroy the limited resources of Barbados especially at this time.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, in welcoming the fact that the Opposition members have indicated their support for this Bill and in particular I welcome the statements of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition which I am sure were made in all seriousness and out of a sense of

national responsibility, I have no criticisms of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, except that I did not hear the speech of the hon. member for Christ Church East, but from what I have gathered from listening to the Leader of the Opposition, it appears that the hon. member for Christ Church East shares some of my comments about the Bill. That is to say, this is an emergency measure and it may appear as though we have closed the stable door after the horse has escaped, or perhaps we may not have closed it at all, because the Bill presupposes that you have caught people and then the punishments are imposed under the various terms of the Bill. But the Government must act as it sees fit in what I consider an emergency, and to some extent the Bill by the increase of penalties, by the creation of new offences and by the extension of powers of arrest given to the police, it has met some of the difficulties which excess cane burning may give rise to. It just occurred to me that since detection of fire bugs, pyromaniacs or whatever else these people who wantonly set fire to canes may be designated, would seem to be of paramount concern. I wonder if the Government and the Cabinet in their deliberations considered for example extending the system of island constables or giving island constables additional responsibilities. Those who may still be island constables who are unemployed could have been invited in my view to help police the cane fields.

6.30 p.m.

Those who may still be island constables but are unemployed could have been invited, in my view, to help police the canefields, because there is a significant development here. Granted that in the past we have had cane fires taking place during the daytime, but more so this year we have witnessed an increase of cane fires during daylight hours, and to some extent I believe that greater policing of areas of great expanse of cane should have been encouraged.

Take, for example, the very bad one we had last week Tuesday in the St. George Valley. It burnt from Windsor past Bulkeley and even encroached on areas of the Belle and adjoining plantations. I think the Attorney General gave the figures the other night, about five or six hundred acres of cane, but if you looked at it from the Boarded Hall Road and looked across to your right if you were coming to town, you would have seen that there was a vast expanse of cane, one field running into the next, so one field could easily ignite the other. There are other areas, I am not going to identify them today for fear of giving encouragement to those

who are bent on lighting vast stretches of cane, but I discussed this point with a Superintendent of Police, a particular area, and he has assured me that he will put it under surveillance.

Why I say that detection is important, and perhaps members of the public who have powers similar to those of the police but are not police could have been utilised is that, for example, at District "C", right next door to where I live, we have fire watchers up there, and it was reported to me on Sunday morning that a motor car was seen to go by a canefield, turn off the lights, a fire was seen to start, and then the lights on the motor car came on and the car disappeared. By the time the fire watchers, both of whom have cars at District "C", got to the area there was no trace of the motor car. The police have certain information and they believe that they are on to something. I cannot say any more at this stage because I am not seeking to prejudice any police investigation, but it would seem to suggest contrary to what has been said that it is the workers who are burning the canes, or the actual cane cutters, that perhaps this is part of an organised group. It has been reported to me by a man who drives a lady from St. Philip to town every morning, and who takes lunch in a part of the City, that he has overheard discussions in that particular part of the City, specifically in Baxters Road, by persons in a group who were gloating over the fact that they were going to set out to light some fire that night. So there is some evidence, there is some reason to believe that this is an organised thing.

The Minister of Agriculture can say that I told him since November last year that it had been reported to me that certain supporters of the Democratic Labour Party — I am not associating them with any members in here, so there is no need for them to jump up — but certain supporters, perhaps irresponsible ones, did say after we got the rains in November, they made their boast, "wunnah 'gine get a good crop? Wunnah 'gine see that yuh 'en' gine reap nuh benefits out of that crop, we 'gine burn down de crop". I communicated that information to the Minister of Agriculture and other members of this Party, so this is nothing new.

The Leader of the Opposition has talked about the fact that when we had imported Labour they were blamed, but we have no imported Labour now so the problem is Barbadian and we have to look inside this society and try and identify who are the causes of this problem.

By increasing the fine many things may happen. The fact that a fine is made more stiff does not mean at all that it will act as a deterrent. You have capital punishment, you hang people and people still go and do murder, but as I say, Sir, I feel it is an emergency measure, the Government has to deal with it, this is the first way in which they can deal with it. Perhaps for next year's crop we will institute a different system, an extended system of surveillance. I would certainly hope that the Attorney General's Department and the Ministry of Agriculture would collaborate to see to what extent we can cut out the root cause or assist in the greater detection of pyromaniacs for next year's crop.

I have queried the use of island constables and people of the like because I know that the police are being asked to do extra duties. It was raised in here today that they are losing one of their off days. I think they are entitled to two days off and already they are losing one and we cannot continually, having regard to the fact that the Police Force would appear to be understaffed, we cannot continue to impose greater burden on the police who have always done their best, and who are still doing their best, in this society.

To that extent, Sir, I would hope that we can look at a different system for the protection of next year's crop.

The Bill in itself does in fact create an offence of strict liability and one not of strict liability. If I understood him correctly, I do not think that the Leader of the Opposition appreciated the difference between clause 3(1) and clause 3(2), because whereas under the Parent Act, Cap. 123, there was not an offence requiring *mens rea*, clause 3(1) now requires *mens rea*, because it says any person who unlawfully and maliciously sets fire. You have virtually to do a deliberate act. I do not believe that it is the purport and intent of this piece of legislation that if you are driving along smoking a cigarette and you have your hand resting on the door and you drop your cigarette by the side of the road, or in the road, that that automatically brings you under the umbrella of section 3. It is a different matter, because of course to that you can plead the defence of accident, but of course it is a different matter if you are driving along next to a canefield, you puff a fag and then take it and throw it deliberately into the cane field. You can have only one intent there, or certainly you would be reckless and you would be caught by the words "unlawfully and maliciously."

The other subsection, Sir, subsection (2) is an offence of strict liability. You go into the field, smoking a cigarette, or the pipe or a cigar, or you carry a lighted torch or something like that, the fact that you have it and you go in the field alone brings you within the scope of the subsection and you are liable, and you will note that the penalties are different. When you deliberately throw a cigarette or whatever, then there is some gaol in that. As the Trinidadians would say, you would make a gaol for twelve months.

6.40 p.m.

I wonder if it was meant to be a deterrent. Under Clause 3(1) you may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 12 months, and if you do it again, to two years. (*Aside*) You can prove the intent. The Leader of the Opposition is taking his lessons well in the law. These are the comments I want to make on this Bill in its second reading except that I am glad to see that the Opposition has now come around to the view that we need sugar cane.

We need it even though the former Prime Minister would not have wanted to see a single cane blade. If people continue to burn down the canes he may get his wish. I am glad that they have come around to saying that we need to keep the canes green. The fact that the former Prime Minister might have appeared a few years ago in a section of the Press using a cane bill the wrong way around, and with a watch on his hand — no real cane cutter operates like that — and in his good clothes was only one of the gimmicks for which they were so popular and which ran out in '76.

Some years ago when he was a student at the university here Glenroy Straughn tried the same exercise and Bobby Clarke. It was Fidel Castro who started the idea. (*Aside*: John Connell cut canes?) They were only trying to give people the impression, trying to convince people that the cutting of canes was in some way not degrading. Neither of them could boast to be a cane cutter. The former Prime Minister with his shape and physical stature could not have managed to cut more than two holes. (*aside*) Two rows? No, two holes. That is what I said. (*Laughter*).

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. SIMMONS: Sir, I think that it is common ground on all sides that we deplore the present situation and hope that those who are bent on this course of wanton destruction of

sugar cane will see and mend the error of their ways.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I see that the member for St. Philip North tried to take over the former Prime Minister on cutting two holes of cane. I think that he should leave the former Prime Minister alone. The member for St. Michael South West challenged him to a combat and he refused to take up that challenge because he sees the stature of the man. Leave the former Prime Minister and take on a younger man. (*Laughter*) (Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Is he saying that the former Prime Minister is an old man?)

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair. (Cheers).

Mr. SANDIFORD: It has become my lot, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to welcome you to the Chair. I had to do it before and I am glad to see you there on this occasion. It is only on rare occasions that we see you presiding. I hope that you do not take this out of my time. I am now about to begin my speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this measure which has been introduced here has been brought because we believe that there is a loss of revenue by cane fires and that there has been an increase in the number of cane fires, and that therefore stiffer penalties are being imposed under the law in order to prevent, hopefully, the outbreak or the spread of cane fires.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one would normally assume — and you will forgive me if I am wrong — that increased penalties in legislation are made when it is found that because of the lighter penalties imposed, and out of the practice in courts those penalties as imposed are not having the desired effect; but as I understand it, one of the big problems relating to the existing legislation is that the people are not being caught. So one cannot say that the penalties which have been imposed after the perpetrators have been caught have been too light or have not proved or turned out to be a deterrent.

So we have a peculiar situation in which the present legislation has not been used in order to impose penalties on persons because those persons have not been caught and yet we are recommending stiffer penalties. Now why is this so? What in fact is the motivation for persons to light canes? Why do they do it? The information available to us is purely speculation. We had a number of reasons suggested by the hon. member

for Christ Church East, but still, because not many persons have been caught, we are not sure what the motivation is.

One thing we are certain of, however, is that spontaneous combustion does not take place. Cane fires must be caused by people for one reason or the other, whether it is through some reckless act or through some deliberate act; but what I want to take issue with is this very easy, this very facile stance that we have got into as politicians in trying to ascribe political motives for actions that develop or for social deviation in this country. From the way in which this particular measure has been hurriedly brought here we would believe that this is the first occasion on which this country has been confronted with the problem of cane fires.
6.50 p.m.

But the very fact that we are amending an Act means that at some stage in the past this society was confronted with the problem of cane fires. I believe the Act dates back to 1949, the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act, 1949, and I believe that that Act was brought at that particular time because the society faced a problem of cane fires. That is the only reason for putting legislation, certainly of this nature, on the Statute Book. I believe that the Act of 1949 has a pre-history as well because the attempt in 1949 was to correct what were thought to be deficiencies in a previous Act, I believe, going back to 1901. This has been a field day for the Attorneys-at-Law on both sides.

Mr. SIMMONS: If the hon. member will give way, I think it may be significant to point out that the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act, 1949, came the year after there was a Coalition Government in this country in which Labour Party people like Sir Grantley and so on were in power.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I am grateful to the member for St. Philip North for pointing that out. The point I am making is that cane fires have occurred in this country virtually from the time that a sugar industry was developed and, certainly, from the beginning of this 20th Century canes fires represented a problem in the country. To suggest now that because there has been a change of Government last year that suddenly there is some political motivation by the outgoing Government for the spate of cane fires, I think, is to do an injustice to the fact that this society, over all of the years in the 20th Century, has been faced with this problem, I have gone back to 1901 because that was the date when the Act was placed on the Statute Book. That was not as a result of anything done by a

Democratic Labour Party. The action in 1949 was not the result of anything motivated or spearheaded by the Democratic Labour Party. There are always certain reasons outside of the political arena, and that is why I say that we are too facile to jump to the conclusion that when there is any social problem in the country you look for some political mischief aback of the fact that that social manifestation or the deviation has manifested itself. I do not believe in that type of explanation unless there is ample evidence to suggest it.

Now, in 1949 — I will see if I can get some figures. Let me go back to 1947. It is significant that we get these dates. During the period 1st January to 15th February, 1947, there were some 280 cane fires involving 3,701 acres of canes. That is two years before this amending legislation was introduced into Parliament. In 1948, I believe, there were 89 cane fires involving a total of some 659 $\frac{3}{8}$ acres. In 1941 there were 61 cane fires involving 247 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres, and it is in that year in 1949 that what is known as the parent Act, the one which we are amending here today, was placed on the Statute Book.

What I am trying to bring to the attention of this Honourable Chamber is the fact that this society has faced, at different points in its history, the problem of cane fires, and I would not want us to come to any conclusion that there is some unique problem facing this country because we have faced the problem of cane fires throughout our history and, certainly, from the beginning of this century when there was the first Act placed on the Statute Book.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we go down to the question of the significant increase in the number of cane fires which occurred during the 60s — now the Democratic Labour Party was in power at that time during the 1960s, and the problem of cane fires became so great that there was a proposal to the Government coming from the Sugar Producers Association, those persons who own the vast majority of the cane land in this country, that there should be controlled burning. The Government was most reluctant to accede to that particular request, but this was the voice of the industry; this was the voice of those who, traditionally, had been responsible for the planting and the cultivation, and the reaping of canes. It was their advice that because of certain inherent problems, because of the problems of indiscriminate cane fires, because of the problems of labour, because of the problems of harvesting mechanically, and other related problems, they recommended that there should be controlled burning of canes hopefully resulting in the

reduction of indiscriminate cane fires. As a result of that a programme of controlled burning was introduced into this country. As a result, too, of the experience of that controlled burning, and after it was seen by experience that this was damaging to the economy of the country, it was decided that that particular experiment, even though at the insistence of the Sugar Producers' Association, should be discontinued.

Now, the Democratic Labour Party has always been interested in the reaping of green canes — unburnt canes. That is why in the 1969–72 Development Plan there were proposals for, I believe, the sum of \$85,000 which was included in the Plan for the purpose of carrying out experiments with mechanical harvesters for the reaping of unburnt canes. This demonstrates, therefore, that the Government of the day, the Democratic Labour Party, was interested not in burnt canes but in unburnt canes and in reaping the crop green. Indeed, the interest in this particular area extended so far that officials of the Ministry were sent to observe developments as far as mechanical harvesting was concerned, and they went as far as Australia to watch these particular developments.

7.p.m.

They went as far as Australia to watch these particular developments. Of course they were harvesting burnt canes in Australia and the information which came back was that there was no significant loss to their economy as a result of their using harvesters to harvest unburnt canes. However our situation is completely different from those prevailing in Queensland, Australia or in any other part of Australia or wherever, and it was at the insistence of the former Minister of Agriculture that we returned to a system of reaping the canes green.

The point I wish to make here is that there was an appeal in 1975 by the then Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Anderson Morrison, to the people of this country to return to the harvesting of the canes unburnt, an appeal to the people of this country to cooperate in this particular exercise, and that appeal met with some success, and the statistics will certainly show that there was a reduction. In his appeal he called upon all persons in the country to cooperate in this particular exercise. Now today and yesterday the Opposition is being called upon and apparently being criticised because according to those statements there has been no official statement from the organs of the Democratic Labour Party condemning cane fires, but yet when we look at the record and when the then Minister of

Agriculture in 1975 — it is said that we have short memories — but when he made that appeal in 1975, and those who care to draw upon their memories or to do their research can certainly attest to this, I am not aware of any official statement coming from the official organs of the Barbados Labour Party whatever they are called, whether the Executive or whatever else. I am not familiar with the structure of that party. I am not aware of any Resolution or any statement coming from the Barbados Labour Party's official organs cooperating with the then Minister of Agriculture on this matter. (Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I will show you something now.) From the Executive of the Barbados Labour Party? This is the first occasion that we have had a measure before this Chamber relating specifically to the question of cane fires, and we have taken this opportunity, the first one that is legally presented to us in this Honourable Chamber, to dissociate ourselves from any suggestion, implication or innuendo that the Democratic Labour Party is behind the spate of cane fires in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know you were not in the Chair at the time, but it does pain me to hear a member of the Government getting up and saying or suggesting that former Cabinet members may be implicated in this, and that they are under constant surveillance. There are former Cabinet Members on these Opposition benches and there was no exclusion of any of us from that particular innuendo or smear, and I would think that it is the duty of the Chair to protect the members on this side from that type of smear and innuendo. (A VOICE: He did not say in here.) He did not exclude in here either, and I take a very serious view of that because the rights of hon. members over here and indeed over there should be protected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must not cast reflections on the Chair. In my ruling, that is a grave reflection on the occupant of the Chair at the time. It is to be presumed always that the Speaker acts with due regard to the rights of members on all sides.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I follow your words very carefully, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is to be presumed; and it was not action, it may be lack of action. Anyhow I take your admonition on that particular point and I submit to your ruling in that respect.

There is also another point I wish to make. We have heard all types of talk about a call for national unity on these matters, but when you get that type of behaviour on the one hand in

calling on the Opposition to come and sit on Boards and to participate in other ways in support of governmental action, and on the other hand try to cast all types of aspersions on the conduct or motivation of members of the Opposition, how are you going to get that type of cooperation. I think we have got to do better than that.

I wish to make the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Democratic Labour Party when in Government had to contend with the serious problem of cane fires as we had to face that problem during the late 1960s and 1970s, and not once during that period did we go to suggest or indicate that the Opposition Barbados Labour Party was behind the spate of cane fires. We did not do that. We did not indulge in any such irresponsible action. Indeed in one year, 1970, I believe over 36 percent of the crop was burnt, and I believe in 1969 it was estimated that over \$4 million was lost to the industry as a result of cane fires, but yet we did not make any suggestion or innuendo as far as the Barbados Labour Party was concerned.

7.10 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to suggest that the Democratic Labour Party is interested in the burning of canes and in the wrecking of the economy is certainly a discreditable and unworthy suggestion to make, and I make that statement in all seriousness, because from 1961 until 1976 when we held the reins of Government in this country there is no Party in the history of this country, Conservative or Labour — Barbados Labour, that is — which has done as much for developing this country as the Democratic Labour Party, and indeed which has done as much for the development of agriculture, even though on the other side they wish us to believe that nothing was done for agriculture by the Democratic Labour Party. And yet the significant development in those areas in agriculture, whether it was the development of the dairy industry, whether it was the development of vegetables, onion production, whatever, poultry production, in all of those areas whenever you look at it, these developments date back to the years of the Democratic Labour Party, and to suggest that because in 1976 there was a change of Government and that as a result former Cabinet Ministers would be interested in wrecking this country simply because power has been lost to the Democratic Labour Party, is certainly an unworthy suggestion to come from that side or from whatever quarters it is made.

I want to get these things straight and we wish to say, and I wish to join my colleagues on this side, we reject the burning of canes in this country as a solution to any problem in this country. We reject that completely, because the loss to our economy, the loss to our workers and the threat to property, to lives and the other inherent dangers involved are too great for us to trifle around with that type of reckless solution, if so it could be termed. We are not interested in the politics of incendiarism, what we are concerned about are those areas which would lead and make for the development of this country, and whenever those measures come we are going to support them.

We extend, of course, our sympathy to the Church, to the people of St. Philip, we extend our sympathy to the Anglican Church, to those parishioners who have been deprived of their ancient and historic and beautiful church, and we do hope that arrangements will be made in order for the Church to be replaced as soon as possible. I believe that an investigation has been set up, I do not know, I may have missed it, I do not know if the Minister has instituted an investigation, I believe under one of the Acts it may be required for investigations to be set up as to the cause of the fire. I will not go into that because I believe the legal people over there would know the provisions involved, but maybe when there are fires I believe the Government has the power and the authority to institute investigations into these matters.

I wish, before closing, I am certain the Minister will be able to give us some information on the relationship between this particular measure here and some other measure on the Statute Book — I believe it is The Malicious Injury to Property Act, Cap. 140, — which also has provisions for those caught burning canes.....(Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Section 16). Section 16, and for burning trash, and that there are very stiff penalties in there. I believe if you are over 16 years it is something like, not life imprisonment, if you are under 16 years there is a whipping for you if you are caught and life imprisonment, "any person who unlawfully and maliciously sets fire to any stack or large heap of trash, mill trash, cane tops, corn stalks, fodder or wood, etc. shall be guilty of a felony and being convicted thereof shall be liable to imprisonment for 14 years." There is another section relating to cane whether standing or cut. Maybe the Minister in his reply can tell us what is the relationship between this particular legislation, this amending Bill we are

considering, and the Malicious Injury to Property Act which is already on the Statute Book, where the penalties are much stiffer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion I wish to make this point. The Democratic Labour Party and this Opposition disassociates itself from any suggestion or implication that we were involved or that we are aback of any cane fires in this country, because we have done too much to build up agriculture and to build up the sugar cane industry, and to develop the economy of this country generally, and we wish to point out also that this country, certainly from 1901, if you go back to the turn of this century, has been faced with the problem of cane fires, so we must not come and believe that this is a new situation which we are facing. We do not wish any suggestion to be given that this is a new situation and that it was not there before, and hence the solution or suggestion that political motivation is the major factor involved here, I think that is an unworthy suggestion, and when that is coupled with a hint, innuendo or open statement that former Cabinet members are aback of this, I think all of that must be considered as very dangerous to the unity and development of this country and the political progress and advancement for the people of Barbados.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sat and listened through this debate by members of the Opposition, and one by one they tried to disassociate themselves from what is happening in the sugar industry. The last speaker, the member for St. Michael South, I will deal with first. He is a member of the Democratic Labour Party. He says that nowhere has he heard the Barbados Labour Party condemn cane fires in this island. I have said before, a man must first be honest to himself before he can be honest to other, and it surprises me that this particular member should seek to forget at this time, because the late Sir Grantley Adams took to the platform while in Opposition and begged the public not to burn the canes in this island. When he retired from Parliament and I came in my first act was to condemn the burning of sugar cane in this country.

I have only just been given the Question Book from 1970, I have not been able to check right through 1970, but if you look from the 29th January, 1974 when I was shadow Minister of Agriculture expounding the Party's policy on agriculture, I asked Question No. 230:

"To enquire of the appropriate Minister:

In view of the critical situation existing in the sugar industry in this country, an annual drop in sugar output, would the Minister state what steps will be taken to reduce the number of cane fires this year.

Will permits be granted to persons to burn canes before harvesting?"

7.20 p.m.

I will deal with the total Opposition in this reply. Listen to what they said: Early in 1974 an appeal was made to the nation in an effort to reduce the number of cane fires occasioned by indiscriminate burning. There has been a reduction in the number of such fires, and the situation is being kept under constant review to determine what further measures are necessary. (b) Permits were granted for the controlled burning of sugar canes this year and it is intended to have a systematic phasing out of the grant of such permits.

Now when the doctor, the member for St. Michael North Central, came in here today with a prepared, written statement, he said that cane fires are a problem; and he said that the cane fires started after the appeal by the Minister. How dishonest can you be? He knows that I prompted the last Minister of Agriculture to make an appeal; and when the Leader of the Opposition now talks, he says that he was never asked to join in a national appeal to talk about cane fires. (*Asides*).

Last Tuesday in this House when I was making a statement I said that it had been reported to me that St. Philip Parish Church had just been burnt down. The police came and told me outside. On the Sunday night after the Leader of the Opposition said that it was an act of God's retribution on the Dean of St. Michael's Cathedral. (*Asides*). But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in January before the crop started there was a small fire in St. George. Early in February I realised that there were a few fires. I asked officials of my Ministry to call the Fire Service Department and inquire for certain statistics of the sugar canes that were being burnt, and I put forward certain theories to them.

The custom has always been from 1974 for the Minister of Agriculture to make an appeal to the nation not to burn sugar canes. I made a release from the Ministry, but the fires continued; but I will show you that the Democratic Labour

Party has been an obstacle to progress in this country; because I waited for nearly two weeks and could not get figures from the Fire Department. It was only when I appealed to the Minister responsible and I said that I am worried about the fires that I was told that a directive went out from the last Cabinet to the Chief Fire Officer that he must not disclose cane fires to anybody. (ASIDE: Including a Government Minister?)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one can see what has happened in the sugar industry. We have collective responsibility, so do not worry about that. The member for Christ Church East put forward certain suggestions. Now, we called several meetings to find out what was happening about this rash of cane fires. Let me deal with the theories put forward today and then we can come back to what is happening. One member said that school children were lighting the fires. This is one of the reports which the police have got — that a small, insignificant amount of the fires were started by reckless children. The next theory is that the workers themselves may be involved.

The workers are losing \$3.19 a ton. The workers are dissatisfied with the number of burnings. Where it is regarded as political mischief is that you had trouble with truck drivers. Nowhere else in the country except in St. Lucy have we been getting trouble with truck drivers. The workers are not involved in the burning of canes. As far as political reasons are concerned, I will deal with that subject. The members of the Democratic Labour Party want to dissociate themselves from this. Let me say what happened with the burning of the Bulkeley Valley, and this is a report given by the Fire Department and the Police Department. The fire started at Windsor. The Fire Department was called out and managed to put out the fire. When the Fire Department got there was a lorry parked across the road. The plantation fire cart could not get in. The fire officers had to demand that the lorry be moved to get to the fire. (ASIDE: Who owned the lorry?) That is for you all to find out.

The fire was put out. The fire department left and back to Bridgetown. The fire restarted at Buttals. When the fire department got back to Buttals the same lorry was in the area where the fire had restarted. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Fire burnt 600 acres of the Bulkeley Valley. We in Government after having received certain information — the reason the Opposition is looking at this Bill as only a penalty Bill — what they have missed is that powers are being given to the police to arrest on suspicion, powers that

they did not have before; and the reason why the powers have been given is that both the police and the fire services have reported that at least on two occasions they saw a certain individual who is a member of the Young Democrats come through a cane field. Fire started in the first instance, but they had no power to stop him. In the second instance the fire started. The police ran behind him. He back tracked and relit the canes. The police had to scramble to get their vehicles and get out from between two burning ends of a field. This member of the Young Democrats, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the very member who attempted to break up a meeting in St. George during the elections.
7.30 p.m.

I will go further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With some nationally-minded citizens in this country I held a meeting in the Ministry of Agriculture. We set up a detection system. Do you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a gentleman was found down in one of the burnt-out cane fields. When challenged he said that he was sent to check, but he cannot say what he was sent to check.

We go further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You heard the member for St. Philip North talk about Saturday night fires. A car was seen to drive up; the lights were switched off; before the lights were turned back on a field of canes at Dodds were lit. The very car was tracked by the detection system which we have set up; the fire watchers were at District C; the car stopped and there was another fire again. The reports are to burn out the canes by March and the Government will have to fall. Burn down the canes and Tom will have to go.

The member for St. Michael North Central said that we had cane fires for years. If you look at the pattern of cane fires, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will find that in 1974 up to the end of February there were 198 calls and 909 3/4 acres of canes were burnt. In 1975 up to the end of February there were 52 calls and 224 acres of canes were burnt. In 1976 there were 30 calls and 95 3/4 acres were burnt. In 1977 there were 153 calls and 1,290 acres of canes were burnt. I go further now. The crop started in March and this is what you get. You have heard that truck owners and small farmers are experiencing difficulties. Do you want to put the blame on the truck owners and small farmers? The records do not show that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. (Asides.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please! Members must only speak when they are standing. Continue, please.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: On March 1 canes were burnt at Windsor, Brighton, Buttals, Stephney, Boarded Hall, Hanson, Constant, Redland Market Hill, Bulkeley and the total was 631¼ acres, and no small farmers' canes were burnt. In the night Wildey, Belle, Waterford, Lower Estate, 170 acres, and no small farmers' canes were burnt. Claybury, Wakefield, 157 acres. Arthur Seat, Vauclose 3½ acres. Enterprise, Rendezvous, Blackmans, Pleasant Hall, 992 acres burnt on the first March, and no small farmers' canes were burnt. On the 2nd March. Valley, Fairview, but no small farmers' canes were involved. Haggatt Hall, a small farmer with a ¼ acre. Brittons Hill, 50 holes belonging to a small farmer. Marchfield ¾ acres belonging to a small farmer, and 100 holes in Church Village. Ashford, Malbern, Applewhaites had their canes burnt, but no small farmers were involved. On the 3rd March, Society, Clifton Hall, Pool, Eastmont, Mount Wilton, Arthur Seat, Walkes Spring, Friendship, Valley, Drax Hall, Warrens, Lower Gays, Ebenezer, Thorpes, had their canes burnt, but no small farmers were involved. On the 5th March, Rayside, a small farmer had a ½ acre of canes burnt. Greenidge, a small farmer, 8¼ acres, were burnt. On the 6th March, Pool, Wakefield, Colleton, Clifton Hall, Fisherpoint, Cottage, Harrison, Pleasant Hall, had their canes burnt, and one small farmer, Mrs. McCollin had an ½ acre burnt. The trends goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that throughout the burning — they talked about small farmers not getting their canes reap — you will find an insignificant amount of small farmers having their canes burnt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will hear the talk about workers wanting 10%. What is the situation with the workers wanting 10%? In 1974 when the price of sugar was high the Sugar Producers and the Trade Union negotiated a Wage Agreement suitable to the price of sugar in 1974. The price of sugar has been falling since then. Last year the then Government had to pay to the sugar growers in this country \$3.5 million; therefore, there was no money to give back pay. The price of sugar has fallen constantly at the end of 1974 where you were getting something like \$1,400 a ton. I think that 10,000 tons of sugar was sold from this country at over \$3,000 a ton. The price last year was \$670 a ton, so there was no money for back pay.

When you hear people talk about disagreement in the sugar industry, I am told that the workers are dissatisfied because of the amount of canes being burnt. I am also told that the way the sugar industry is now set up when you cut green canes you have a cutter and a

follower, but when you cut burnt canes there is no follower, no packer, therefore, your combination will lose \$3.19 per ton. The total national loss as at the end of February was \$1.6 million. The workers themselves will lose \$½ million by the indiscriminate burning of sugar canes.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition said that nobody called on him to make a national appeal, but when you come in here a man who is Leader of the Opposition, holding a responsible position, and you say that you have just been told that St. Philip parish church has been burnt — I said at the time that people were bent upon destroying the national crop — he went out in the Market Square and said: "It was an act of God — God's retribution to the Dean of the St. Michael's Cathedral." When I hear the member for St. Michael South say that nobody every accused the members of the Barbados Labour Party, I have to take a different view. The present Speaker was openly accused by the Democratic Labour Party of setting fires to sugar canes. What foolishness am I hearing? Not only did the Leader of the Opposition go out there and make laughing sport to make the public of Barbados believe that he had no interest in sugar cane, but he talked so much that, as the member for Christ Church East had said, it looks as if his gratuity will fly through the window like the reckless words flew out of his mouth.

7.40 p.m.

In the same way that the hon. member for St. Michael South could bring the statistics on canes burnt from 1947 to 1974, how come the Leader of the Opposition who should be competent enough to know what happened during his reign in power is now telling you he did not know it was as serious as this? He cut away from the rest and left them all scrambling by themselves.

Now the hon. member for St. Michael South talked about cane fires being so great that there were proposals for controlled burning, but he should know that they had no policy in agriculture. I heard Mr. Patsy Springer give a definition of agriculture as his party's policy. He said: "Mr. Speaker, my party wants nothing to do with agriculture because when the rich white man had his children, he put his brightest son to be a doctor, the next brightest was a lawyer, the next was a commission agent and the idiot he put on a plantation." That is how they defined agriculture, and the hon. member was on the front bench at the time when Patsy Springer made that statement from the back bench.

I will show you something, Mr. Speaker. He talked about the sugar industry, but his Government was part and parcel of the agreement with the sugar producers and went to Australia and brought two machines called the Don Mitzi to this country costing \$80,000 to reap burnt canes. His Government agreed that you should leave 20 feet of land around every cane field for a Don Mitzi to work; his Government agreed to bringing modified canes carts to cart what you call chopsticks to the factory despite the fact that the Agricultural Department was breeding predators in order to control white worms and root borers, and he sat as a member of Cabinet and could not open his mouth and say it was wrong. What foolishness do they want to tell the public now? You were ignorant of what was going on in this country and are now trying to fool people. It is damn dishonest, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw that language.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I withdraw that, but I get angry when I hear this stupidity coming from that side when they encouraged the burning of sugar cane. Sam Ashby walked about and said that one acre of land under industry could provide five more jobs than one acre in agriculture.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should know who is the ex-Cabinet Minister that is being followed day and night by the police because they have evidence on him. This is a serious matter, but they come in here and do not know what to say. Everyone is scrambling for himself this evening. The Leader of the Opposition said he would resign if he knows any member of his party is connected with it, and this is the reason why we are amending the Act today, because if either one of them go out when the Act is passed you will see that the hierarchy of your party will end up before a magistrate in Bridgetown, because there is enough evidence. Had the police these powers two weeks ago, the public would have seen who is lighting the canes in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had meetings and called everybody connected with the sugar industry. One thing has got to be learnt in this country and it is that we must reach the point of orderly development in our agriculture. There was none when the Democratic Labour Party was in power. The hon. member for St. Michael South talked about social manifestations, but do you know what it is? It is mental retardation by

wicked and corrupt minds who have lost power. Seventy percent of those who have lost power cannot find a job; they are incapable and unqualified to hold jobs, and their only answer is to try to bring down this Government; but let them know that you do now bring down a Government by destroying the whole economy of the country.

Now the hon. member for St. Michael North Central talked about land not being owned by small holders. We have set up every system available. The hon. member for St. Lucy asked a question today about Spring Hall. The policy of this Government is to make every small holder who is interested in agriculture better off than he was under the last regime. They talked about land not being owned. Look how many small people own land in this country today and refuse to cultivate it? Why do you think we talked about an idle land policy? Do you give land to people to let it lie down when you import bill for food is in the vicinity of \$80 million a year? They had no policy for agriculture, and when the hon. member for St. Michael South gets up and talks about their having a policy, when you look at the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture back in 1956 when I left it and what it is today now I have gone back, there is only an increase of six or eight persons. When you look at the total sum of money spent in agriculture in 1956 as against 1976 by the Democratic Labour Party, when you calculate the value of money in terms of what it would have been worth in 1956, there is less money being voted to the Ministry of Agriculture by the Democratic Labour Party than was voted in 1956 under the Barbados Labour Party. I have done this research because I know you would come in here and talk foolishness about agriculture. Even in the fishing industry not one stroke was made to develop it since the Barbados Labour Party lost power, but the wicked corrupt minds inside your party who drive around day and night to foment trouble in this country is what is going to bring you all to complete shame in this community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I join with the Attorney General in promoting this Bill. We have got to understand that when the people of a country have spoken, they have spoken well. The Democratic Labour Party was in power from 1961 to 1976 and we sat in Opposition and criticised when criticism was necessary. Nobody can tell you that the Barbados Labour Party ever organised a group of people like now with the young democrats; and it is so constant with their behaviour. In 1966 they organised the underprivileged that broke up meetings and

nearly 90 percent of them ended up in gaol, and I know that before long you will get 50 percent of the young democrats in gaol in the same way and when the police hold them every member of the Dems will disown them as they disowned the underprivileged in 1966. I have lived to see Cameron Tudor driving in a public car, an official car, with Golbourne Brown — the two of them in the back seat — after Golbourne Brown with a Russian flag went down to the City Hall and waved it in front of the Queen. The next week I saw Cameron Tudor being driven to the bus stand by a police, he opened the door for Golbourne Brown and they drove down to Westbury cemetery. (*Asides*) Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleague wants to speak and I will not worry to say anymore.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must conclude that my colleague read the notes I have here. I have never seen anything like this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill is one to which must be given a lot of thought. In the first place it is going to really confuse a number of motors cars that park at night between the cane fields. I hope that the Attorney General will pay some attention to what I have to say. I am no legal luminary, but I am concerned with certain modifications in it. I know it will not go to Select Committee. I cannot say it is badly drafted; I can only observe that it will confuse a few people who park between cane fields at night in their motors cars.

7.50 p.m.

I can only observe that it will confuse a few people between cane fields at night in the motor cars. That is what I know, and it is going to give the police a very difficult task. Sometimes when you see motor cars parked, a fellow might be changing his tyre or changing his oil in the car, and it would more or less confuse the situation, so I hope the Hon. Attorney General would think about that.

My colleague also gave the Young Democrats a shaking up, but it is not the Young Democrats that I am really concerned about, it is the older democrats; they are the ones, because the young democrats can only take advice from the older democrats, it is as simple as that. I used to have to take advice from my grandmother, and any young democrat would have to take advice from the old democrat, so I am not really concerned with condemning the young democrats.

What I am going to say, Sir, is that cane fires have been with us for a number of years. I

think maybe it was Bussa, if I am not mistaken, on the motivation of Franklyn who started the fires just between Vineyard and Stanford, I believe, and Byde Mill for the purpose of trying to free the slaves in this country, so we had cane fires from the days of Bussa up to today, but what we are concerned with at this stage is the escalation of the cane fires, and therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe it is the attitude of the people in this country that is responsible for this vicious, wicked and unprecedented amount of cane fires in this country. I believe that people are not told of the damage it can do to the country, and I am not going to agree with anybody that the Opposition is not encouraging this, I am going to put the blame this evening squarely on the shoulders of them over there. It is all right to come in here and say you disassociate yourself, but it is history that the Opposition when they were in Government from 1961 brought about a sense of violence in this country that is unheard of, and I believe the Leader of the Opposition when he was then a member of the Barbados Labour Party could never have associated himself with something of that nature during the days of the late Sir Grantley Adams when he had to fight the Conservatives in this country, and we did not have such a spate of cane fires, but to my mind power can destroy not only your soul, it can destroy the spiritual fabric in your body. It corrupts, and that is the problem on that side. They have been in power for fifteen years, they do not understand and they will not understand how they are to respect the wishes of an electorate.

They cannot deny, as my colleague said here, that the former Ambassador to the United Nations, Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados on one occasion, Minister of Education, High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, incited people to break up public meetings in this country, and therefore I must put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the old democrats for doing things of this nature. I believe you had something to do with it. Senator John Connell took it upon himself in the Pine — a man for whom I have great respect — to come out there and incite a crowd to try to break up a public meeting in my presence. In St. George North I saw a bunch of young people carrying the banner of the Young Democrats, and they could only have been advised by the old democrats, to come to break up a public meeting, therefore it is not beyond you all now to incite these very people to come and set the country afire. But do you know what will happen one of these days? Do you see this same clause I spoke about, the one

about between the cane fields? Take care you do not get caught between the cane fields when they are afire, then you will know you should not advise people to do these things. That is your problem.

But I want to go further, Sir. I saw many policemen, and many of them senior, in the bus stand shouting for murder about the present Government, not realising that the job they had to perform was to keep law and order in the country in spite of which Government is in power. That is their bounden duty, and I saw senior policemen – and I do not mean any Sergeants, Inspectors – who are members of the bus stand Cabinet meeting people on the road and abusing them, encouraging them in acts of violence. I recall down at Ashton Hall, St. Peter, I complained to a particular policeman at the time of how a man tore stickers off my car and he stood next to me and asked me if I could swear that the man tore them off, because he did not see him do it. That is what a senior policeman told me, and there was a bunch of young children around him, and that is the behaviour you get in this country under your regime when you were in power. What made it worse, in 1969 or 1970, whenever it was, when the wild bull of Kampala, the wild man of Kampala, and I do not mean Idi Amin, I mean the one who has Kampala here in Barbados, the wild animal, that vicious animal, the front man for the people who have all the millions, a front man, a Sidney Alleyne, the 1977 Sidney Alleyne in this country, fronting now for people, he lives at Kampala. That is the wild animal I am talking about he is one of the people on whom I will always throw the blame, because he is responsible for giving and portraying attitudes in this country for which no one can have any respect. I have no respect for that individual to whom I am referring, the wild bull from Kampala that lives in Paradise Heights.

Sir, I want to laud the police and the fire services for the hard work they have had to put in on this occasion, and moreso the Attorney General for the quick measures which he has taken to curtail this type of behaviour. I believe it is going to be a difficult job, as the lawyers say, to prosecute somebody, but if you own a bull pistle and you have it in the house and threaten a child with it, it will behave one of these days. I would have gone further. If I were in his position I would order the cat-o-nine tails for them, because it is not going to be any embarrassment to this Government, burning down Barbados cannot be any embarrassment to this Government. It is going to weaken the country's

economy and therefore the Government of the day cannot carry out its plans unless it borrows money and therefore send up the national debt, and if all of us in here are as conscious as we should be, or pretend to be, rather than for the sake of scoring cheap political points would set about and do as we did during the windfall issue, when we told the people they could get their money but not to burn the canes, we would not have had this spate of fires this year.

I heard the member for St. Michael North Central talking about social and economic discontent. Whenever you have unrest in a country it is social and economic discontent, but it is also a bit of political input, and the political input is coming from over there. I am not accusing any hon. member in here, I would not do that, I would accuse you of that in a rum shop and tell you to your face I believe it is you, I would not do it in here because it would not be fair to you. I am going to treat you as you are to be treated in here because I respect the wishes of the electorate, but I have my views on some of the members of the Democratic Labour Party. They are vicious and wicked. I hear them talk, you know, I was in the Opposition and when you chased them away they used to come to us with their problems and they used to tell us what you say they should do. Do you remember the Gouldbourne Brownes and the Ulric Fosters and the George Maloneys in prison, all of them? Do you know that whole wild gang you had called the under privileged walking around here breaking up public meetings?

8.00 p.m.

The present Attorney General and Mr. Elliott Mottley had to call on the police, on Inspector Kenneth Pile and Mr. Murphy and ask them please ask these people to move these placards out of their faces. That was never seen in this country until they got into power. (*Aside*). It was not heckling. It was right down bad behaviour by hon. members on that side.

What you should do is that when you teach the children Agricultural Science in schools as you call it nowadays, you should teach them also that the destruction of the crops of the country is a weakening of the country's economy; and therefore, when you want a hospital ambulance to come, there will be only one because you cannot buy two. The member for St. Lucy says that he wants more buses down there. You cannot buy one. As a matter of fact I will tell the member for St. Lucy now that if we are going to lose \$1 million in foreign exchange – and I am

associating members of the Democratic Labour Party with that type of behaviour — what do you want buses down there for? To come down to St. Michael or go to St. Philip and burn down there? Let them burn down in St. Lucy. I would like.....

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the hon. member would give way — is the hon. member for St. Lucy making a point of order?

Mr. GREAVES: Yes, Sir. I distinctly heard and understood the hon. member for St. James to indicate or to say that if I as representative for St. Lucy want to get transportation to go into St. Michael or St. Philip and burn down canes, then he would not suggest to the Minister of Communications and Works that they should make buses available.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG rose.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Lucy is making his point of order. He may continue.

Mr. GREAVES: What I am saying is that the member for St. James is casting an aspersion on my character, and I feel that the member should be called upon to withdraw the statement that he has made. I suggest that you get the official record and get the exact text of the statement.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will have to get the official record, and if any personal aspersion has been cast on you I will ask that it be withdrawn.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you do not have to get the official record. I will withdraw the remarks that he has complained of; but as far as character is concerned, that is not with him. What character? A Bridgetown character? He must be "Gear Box."

There is no doubt in my mind, and I believe that unless the attitude of people in this country change, and as long as I have the strength and health I am going to be in the political battle and I will be keeping this flag flying. When you all over there tried an offer I said I did not want you then; and I do not want you now at all. So I am going to try to keep this flag flying over here and we are going to battle publicly. Some of us may get slander

cases and newspapers may get libel cases; but I feel that in the national interest, in the interest of us all, we should not encourage this type of behaviour. That is my firm belief.

I am in the Cabinet and I have access to certain records. I have received certain information, and I have no doubt in my mind that the Democratic Labour Party is associated with part of the behaviour which we have seen in the acceleration of cane fires over the past months.

There is another thing too — that famous cane blades speech. I think that my colleague gave a picture of cane fires over the years, and long before 1971, the year of the cane blade speech, you did not have that sort of fires. You had people coming out with hoses to help out the fires. Today people are afraid to come out. They have to stand by to protect their own homes.

I am told that in some areas it will be three years before the soil can catch itself again. What has become of the pea trees that used to be around the hedgerows? The fires have burned them up. The moth borer will come again and destroy the canes. So if they by accident get the Government in 1981 they will have the same problem because they will have the after effects of the burning. We will have the after effects of the burning in 1980 because it will take three years for the soil to catch itself again.

I would advise that instead of going to the Academy of Politics and talking nonsense at night that they should teach the people. You and Dr. Hutson and that crowd and the Chairman of the Community College.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am dealing with this Bill introduced by the Hon. Attorney General and I was on the point of dealing with the attitudes of people and how they must be educated. I look into the newspapers about the Academy of Politics and I do not see one topic about the burning of canes. There is always something about the nation and people who nowadays do not even turn up. You get 18 people there. I am vexed with the Minister of Education appointing him Chairman of the Community College because I do not see how he can carry out the Government's policy and then preach for the

Opposition at night. The former Minister of Education working at the Community College. Cammie Tudor at Lodge School; and now the member for St. Michael North Central is saying that it is the workers who are responsible for burning the canes. Do you think that the workers do not have enough sense to know that they want to buy a stove and a fridge which will cost them less now than when the other side was in power? They just have to pay down a little more and make the time less which makes the economic structure stronger.

When you put up an argument or criticise, do it constructively. Do not come with the rat trap argument that we have been hearing from the other side which does not test the mettle of members on my side. I am appealing to the Attorney General to look at some little things in this Bill. An old man 55 to 60 years old may be going to get rabbit meat and smoking his pipe. He is not intending to burn any canes, but he is smoking his pipe. What are you going to do with that fellow? You will have to ease him up.

8.10 p.m.

I know this is a deterrent. This is to make sure that you do not have a lawless approach to it. I am a smoker, too, So I have to be careful now when I am smoking. Mr. Speaker, you are no smoker, but in case you have a piece of Kentucky in your hands and you want to wipe your mouth, be careful when you throw it outside you are not throwing out a cigarette end. I have to be very careful now with my habits, but it will probably do me good in the future. I am going to support this Bill. I am sorry that I did not have a chance to discuss the matter with the Attorney General so that I could ask him to ease certain areas in it relating to the young people whom I have to protect. If they go and park near a cane field they must not put out their hands. The Minister of Health says that she is off the pill, but the young people may be on it, and you have to give them a chance.

With those few words, I hope that the members on that side will join us not only in here as a national effort, but at the Academy of Politics when they are discussing the burning of the country's major crop. The sugar cane crop will bring money to this country. The Leader of the Opposition's pension will have to come out of that, too. If they burn the canes, you cannot get any pension. The other hon. member will be unable to get money from the Community College. (*Asides*) I have been self-employed for years. I have a business going. Do you think I am you? The Workers' Union cannot come and say

that they want a piece of change. David Seale would not be in a position to employ the former Minister of Trade although he has applied already for a job.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, sometimes you get debates punctuated with some trivialities and all kinds of jovialities that make coming to Parliament somewhat interesting. At the same time one has to examine very carefully and pay very careful attention to the kind of emotion which can develop and creep into discussion of the nature that we are dealing with here this evening. This is a very important matter that we are dealing with, and we have heard a number of charges being made. I want to say that, if I did not listen to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Labour, I would not have believed that the Bill we are considering now is directed against the young Democrats and, as the Minister of Labour indicated, the old Democrats. This was made very, very clear. It is a very strange situation with which we are faced here today. When we listen to the inflammatory speeches made from the other side, one has to question and wonder what is happening in this country. What are we trying to do?

It is important for me, Mr. Speaker, to just give some background and, indeed, express the way I feel about the charges which I have heard coming from the other side, or the Government side, on this particular matter. Throughout the debate charges have been levelled at the Democratic Labour Party as being responsible for the fires. This kind of emotional or political approach cannot get us anywhere, because it has also been suggested, Mr. Speaker, that members of the Barbados Labour Party and supporters of the Barbados Labour Party are behind the cane fires and are doing so with a view to discredit the Democratic Labour Party because they feel that members of the Democratic Labour Party would want to do this kind of damage to the economy. What I am saying is that we are not going around indicating that this is the situation or that we believe this kind of nonsense, because it is a matter which should be bereft of as much emotionalism as possible. We should try to discuss this matter very, very carefully because we have to look at what we are doing.

I have certain reservations and certain concerns about this Bill, and I will express these concerns. The more one hears the more concerned one must become because if the Attorney General was the only person who had spoken that concern would not really be there. When one listens to the Minister of Agriculture and to the Minister of Labour one must become

concerned about what will happen after this Bill is passed here and it becomes law. The Minister of Agriculture ventured to bet that as soon as this Bill becomes law no less than 50% of the young Democrats would be hauled before the courts, and he hoped that they would live in prison. This is the kind of situation that we are getting. This, I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is a very dangerous situation. It is dangerous from the point of view of the implications and what, it would seem to me, is being planned. I would think and I would hope that this Bill which we are considering would, if possible, put a stoppage to the burning of canes and indicate the seriousness of this particular matter.

It is true that the member for St. Michael South pointed to various bits of legislation which are already on the Statute Book which takes care of arson and so on and where the penalties are probably even stiffer than the one which we are seeking to impose in this Bill here. Be that as it may, let us look at some of the points which have been made by some of the speakers on the other side. I would like to state very, very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that all evening and I think last Tuesday or the last time there was a meeting of the House there was a suggestion and an attempt to throw some blame or some responsibility on the Barbados Workers' Union. I want to say this very clearly, Mr. Speaker. If one were to examine the wage rates which were concluded between the Barbados Workers' Union and the Sugar Producers for workers in the sugar industry one would see very clearly that the Barbados Workers' Union could never be in support of the burning of sugar cane. That is very, very clear. Furthermore, the differential is there and has been pointed out.

As far as the Barbados Workers' Union is concerned, we took a policy position on this particular matter and we have indicated by our negotiations and the fact that we have always struggled to ensure that the workers in this country, and most particularly the sugar workers, get as good a deal as they could possibly get out of any negotiating or any work situation wheresoever we had to do that.

Now, the member for St. Michael South East displayed an ignorance — (*Asides.*) I have been asked to soften it a little bit. I will say innocence or ignorance on which I would like to enlighten him.

8.20 p.m.

The hon. members talked about preference money and back money and that the lack of

these was probably the cause of some workers burning canes. Now he indicated.....

Mr. BRADSHAW: On a point of order, I never said that the lack of preference money was the reason behind the workers burning the canes. If he cannot hear I would like him to understand that he must not come in here and mis-inform the House. He must sit down and learn to listen.

Mr. SPEAKER: Point taken.

Mr. GREAVES: The records will show very clearly what the hon. member said. I said I would try to enlighten him in his ignorant state. Now you know, Mr. Speaker, that there is a formula for the payment of backpay. The formula at one time was on the basis of the amount of canes harvested; it was on a tonnage basis. When it was recognised that the tonnage harvested was dropping, the formula was changed to a price formula, and as a matter of fact it is a matter of record and very clearly it was in our wisdom and against the pressures from the Sugar Producer's Federation that we negotiated a contract and sought to get as heavy an increase for the workers as possible during the good years 1975 and 1976 and that period, and of course what came at the end of the 1974 crop. It was because of that that we were able to get a substantial increase for the workers both in terms of daily rates and in terms of any extra money which was earned when the price of sugar was sold above the particular price. One should therefore not get up and try to impress by shouting and carrying on in the way that he is noted for carrying on, when obviously at the back of that emptiness flows out of his mouth with so much ease that one cannot really imagine it is so easy for one person to talk so much nonsense, though we see it exemplified in the hon. member for St. Michael East.

As far as the Minister of Agriculture is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take up the challenge which he issued. Now the Minister of Agriculture stated when he was talking about dissatisfaction among lorry drivers that it was only in St. Lucy that there was dissatisfaction among lorry owners or drivers. I would like the Minister to remember if he can — maybe his memory is so short or he has such a facility for making mental somersaults that it is really difficult to follow what he says — that it was as recent as 22nd February of this year, which is only a couple of weeks ago that the hon. member for St. Philip North brought an urgent Resolution in here which was discussed on the Wednesday, we had not finished our business on the Tuesday, and that Resolution stated:

"Whereas there is great concern among small farmers over the number of trucks allowed to haul small farmers' canes to the various factories;

And whereas it appears as if the small farmers are having an/or will experience difficulty in having their canes delivered to the factories;

And whereas the Government is being wrongly blamed for the present dissatisfaction and difficulties;

Be it Resolved that this House calls upon Government immediately to establish a system or take over whatever steps are necessary to ensure that now and in the future the small farmers will have their canes reaped and delivered to the factories without inconvenience and delay."

As a matter of fact, the hon. member for St. Philip North when he introduced this urgent Resolution drew the attention of the Minister to the dissatisfaction which he had felt in St. George and St. Philip, and indeed he indicated that even one of our mutual friends who lives in St. Lucy had indicated that this was a problem; so it was not a problem that was confined to St. Lucy as the Minister would want us to believe. I say this is rank dishonesty and he knows that.

This was an island-wide problem and when you look at the statistics which were given here by the Learned Attorney General this evening on the matter of cane fires, you will see that St. Lucy is one of the lowest cane fire areas, 52½ acres; so I do not know what nonsense the Minister is talking about.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there is a lot of emotionalism which gets into these discussions and creates all sorts of problems, and already one can see the way in which these charges and emotional statements can lead to a division within the society. I do not think that we should be in this exercise trying to throw blame one side as against the other. We could as well throw blame on the supporters and indeed on some of the members of the Barbados Labour Party, but what is the point in all that, because they are in no better position than anybody else! If you examine the members of the Barbados Labour Party, they live in Barbados, have the same feelings and wishes and commit the same crimes. I am not talking necessarily of the members who are sitting in here; I am talking about registered members of the Barbados Labour Party. They are no more christian or better than anybody else; so we have got to be very clear about what we are talking.

It pains me that we can have a situation in which one can sit down and listen to the kind of politics of division which are being preached from the ranks of the Barbados Labour Party. This is not the kind of situation we should be trying to encourage in this country if you are talking about national unity and all the various high sounding phrases you hear from the members of the Government including the Prime Minister from time to time. You will remember that soon after the elections the Prime Minister talked about national unity and made an offer, according to him for the Leader of the Opposition and members to sit on various Statutory Boards; but what do we hear in here this evening? The Minister of Labour talks nonsense about a prominent member of the Democratic Labour Party chairing the Community College Board, indicates that this was not right and that if he had his way he would get rid of that kind of nonsense. He further referred to the fact that members of the Democratic Labour Party are working with the Government of Barbados. After all they are residents of Barbados and are entitled to work for the Government of Barbados. Do you think that only Barbados Labour Party members can work for the Government of Barbados? During the time that the Democratic Labour Party held the reins of Government Nigel Barrow and other prominent people of the Barbados Labour Party worked with the Barbados Government. So what is wrong with that? I do not understand this kind of nonsense we are hearing.

Sir, I am a little worried about some of the contents of this Bill and I will indicate the kind of worry and fear which I have. The hon. member for St. James, with all his faults, sometimes makes some useful points, and he made a very significant point. If we look at Section 3A, it says "Any member of the Police Force may arrest without warrant any person whom he suspects upon reasonable grounds of having committed or being about to commit an offence under section 3(1)."

8.30 p.m.

As he indicated, a fellow might tack off the road and go between a canefield, and it might very well happen that because of that, on mere suspicion this person can be arrested. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you would appreciate the point that I am making, and I would hope that very careful thought is given to this. It is true that what the Attorney General pointed out, if you examine the Constitution you will find that that is contained in the Constitution, but I am a little

worried hearing the Minister of Agriculture and the hon. member for St. James when they indicated that now that we have this, the police could not do this before, the police did not have these powers to arrest on suspicion, but now that we have this Bill soon we will see young democrats and old democrats, and all sorts of democrats being hauled before the courts, 50% of the young democrats will go to prison and this kind of thing.

I am worried because that is a lead about what we can expect to take place, and I would hope that the Attorney General, the hon. member for Christ Church West, would allay any fears which have been raised as a result of the statements and the speeches which were made by the hon. member for St. Joseph and the hon. member for St. James.

As far as the trial before a Magistrate is concerned, again I am expressing a fear here. If I check my notes correctly, I recall the Attorney General in his introduction saying that this Bill will give the Magistrates powers to deal immediately with any of these offences, and as far as he was concerned it was a Bill which was designed to update and modernise the legislation. I do not want, and indeed I would not cast any kind of aspersions on the ability of the people who sit on the Bench to exercise their judicial duties in a way that would not lead to any suspicion or anything like this, but surely, Mr. Speaker, if one is going to be talking in terms of giving any person who is suspected of committing any crime as much opportunity as possible either to prove that he is not guilty, or indeed to have it established clearly that he is guilty, I feel that this kind of opportunity should be given to the person, and as I understand it, previous to this Bill an offence like this would be tried before a jury. (Hon. H. deB. FORDE: No, before a Magistrate).

The point I am making is that we have to be very careful. I would like to see if there is anybody who is caught and who it can be established beyond a shadow of a doubt that that person has been guilty of this offence, then that person should be punished severely, but at the same time with these wide and sweeping powers which we hear are now being put into the hands of the police — and again I know, and you would know, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that you were a policeman yourself — and you would know that the Police Force....

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member is carrying on about

clause 3(a) but it only means that the police must have reasonable grounds, and if the police come and find a car parked between two fields of cane and a lady with her panties down and a man with his pants off, there is no reasonable ground for arresting them, but if they find a man in the same track with a box of matches in his hand, Sir, stooping down by the khus-khus grass, then there would be reasonable ground to arrest. That is all.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I accept the explanation from the member for St. Philip North, but if it so happens that the woman in the car was the woman of one of the policemen, what would the policeman do?

Mr. SIMMONS: Enjoy it.

Mr. GREAVES: I have every reason to believe that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force will endeavour to use the powers which will be placed in their hands as carefully as possible, because as I said, it can be a very serious matter, and when you realise that again policemen are human beings and have the same kind of feelings, the same emotions and can demonstrate a whole set of human characteristics, they are but human beings, then you could recognise that there must be certain precautions which must be taken in a matter like this.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that some of the speeches which were made in here this evening and which could only be described as an attempt to further create difficulties and lead to divisions within the society, that members would desist from this kind of irrational speech, from making irrational speeches of this nature. I would hope so.

The hon. member for St. James is in the habit of referring to a peculiar sense of values, presumably a deterioration of values during the regime of the Democratic Labour Party. I was not in here last Tuesday, but I read a report from Parliament where the member for St. Philip North had to point out that this was an international phenomenon, it was not anything that was confined to Barbados, and we have to recognise that we are part and parcel of an international situation. This does not mean that we should not try in our country to set as high values as possible, and try to set a standard of behaviour that young people and other people in the society would want to emulate. I am saying that this kind of situation cannot develop and cannot grow if we are going to be getting the

kind of approaches that we are seeing constantly coming from the Government side.

8.40 p.m.

As far as the Bill is concerned generally speaking I have certain reservations about it. I am really worried since I heard statements which have emanated from the hon. members for St. Joseph and St. James; because I know that it could very well in the final analysis end up in a big political issue in which there can be spite and victimisation can be done and political hatchetery; and I would hope that the Hon. Attorney General will ensure that proper protection is given to people who might be arrested on suspicion or who might fall under this Act, that they can have an opportunity to represent themselves.

Mr. SPEAKER: And the hon. member is at the end of his opportunity.

Mr. GREAVES: In summary, Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate the points that I have made, that as far as I am concerned I think that we are, generally speaking, in agreement that something should be done. It has been pointed out that cane fires have occurred before and cane fires will occur after this; but we have got to ensure that when all is said and done we devise a system which will try to get to the root of the problem and devise a kind of strategy which will solve the problem. I am not certain that this punitive measure is necessary to solve the problem which we are experiencing in Barbados as far as cane fires are concerned.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to be very long. I do not on this occasion mean these words to be a prelude to an half an hour dissertation. I have listened to this debate and heard the speech of the hon. member for St. Michael North Central, an exercise in rhetorical nonsense, if ever there was one, and to the speech of the hon. member for St. Lucy which I have concentrated on and I cannot extract from him whether he is for the Bill, against the Bill, for the cane fires or against the cane fires, for the Barbados Labour Party or for the Barbados Workers' Union or what.

I think that we should have called on the Opposition rather than on the Leader of the Opposition and his prospective displacer, the hon. member for St. Michael South. We should have called on all of them to express themselves clearly on this matter; and what makes me rise to speak is that part of the speech of the hon. member who has just sat down in which he

attacks the Barbados Labour Party for attempting to divide the country.

Now, there are certain ways of carrying out attacks. The first time that I have ever heard a political party accused of attempting to divide a country and the first evidence that you can bring in favour of your accusation is that the Leader of that party called for national unity and appealed to the Leader of the other party to supply the names of persons who could continue to participate in the process of Government is now. Apparently we are to be blamed for the cane fires because the Leader of the Opposition refused to allow any of his M.P.'s to sit on any of the statutory boards to which we are prepared to nominate them.

I have never seen such hypocrisy, Sir. Not hypocrisy on the part of any individual member, but hypocrisy of thought, because they can only be fooling themselves. I am sick and tired of hearing this talk about discrimination and being against the Democratic Labour Party when the hand of non co-operation has been turned to us at every single possible time.

I reject utterly that these cane fires had anything whatsoever to do with the wage settlement or prospective wage settlement; and why do I reject it? The hon. member for St. Lucy will know and Mr. Frank Walcott will know that the Barbados Workers Union exercise enormous restraint at the time when it is more likely that you will get cane fires during a wage dispute, which is before the dispute is settled. That is the time that you get cane fires. When you have a wage dispute the workers light the canes in order to bring the employers to their senses.

That has been the burning pattern in Barbados for years; and it is a matter of commonsense too, Mr. Speaker, that is the time if you wish to exercise an industrial grievance, that that is the time to exercise it; and the hon. member for St. Michael North West had obviously carefully prepared a speech in which he came precisely down in the sense of accusing both sides of it; because he suggested that it was the employers burning down the canes; but even the employers if they did not want to pay the increased wages, would have burned down the canes from the first day of the crop; but it is significant that the crop started and progressed perfectly well for a couple of weeks — without trouble for a couple of weeks. It was a matter of wonder and remark that there were no cane fires, that we had reached this stage of maturity on the

side of the employees — I do not know if the plantations were very mature because I do not think that the Producers Federation were realistic by any means; but that we had reached a stage of maturity that a dispute in the Sugar Industry could be carried on without social unrest.

The crop was started without social unrest, and all of a sudden the cane fires began. To me, Mr. Speaker, that bears all the marks of a deliberate decision taken at a conclave of wicked persons. That persons hostile and angry because the Prime Minister had been able to settle the wage dispute in the Sugar Industry, got together and argued and decided that one of the ways in which to bring down this Government was to burn down the canefields.

I make this accusation, with some knowledge I may say, Sir; but even apart from the knowledge, secure in the belief that it is the only thesis to fit the observed facts. A sugar crop that starts without trouble, without hostility, that progresses without trouble — and all of a sudden in the parish of St. John you begin to get cane fires breaking out. I have been told by someone whom I sent to the Commissioner of Police that sources in that parish informed him that they were going to light the canes at Society Plantation because Mr. Reece, the lessee is a supporter of the Barbados Labour Party, if you want facts. And in the parish of St. John the fires started, and spread into adjoining areas, St. Philip and St. George.

There must be some significance in the fact — when you talk about the sugar producers burning down the canes — that the first spate of cane fires had not affected the politically solid areas of the Barbados Labour Party in the north of the island. There is some significance in that fact, that it is only in the immediate surroundings of places where one may presume that there is some political discontent.

I cannot help but seeing a political motive behind these fires; and while I am willing to absolve the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for St. Lucy, the hon. member for St. Michael South, really all hon. members because none of them live in particularly agricultural constituencies except the hon. member for St. Philip South; and I do not think that agriculture is sufficiently well developed in St. Lucy to regard it as one of the major agricultural any more.

I am prepared to absolve these six who are in here or who have been in here at some time

today, Sir; but there are persons at a lower or different level who undoubtedly feel some vengeance for what has happened politically in this country on September 2nd last year and this spate of cane fires.

8.50 p.m.

There is no possible industrial reason for lighting canes. There is no conceivable reason why either a worker or plantation owner has to light canes at this time. If they did not have to light them last year when the price was the same, why would they have to light them now? If anything the price is going to go up, and last year was singularly free from cane fires. Last year neither the workers nor the employers found it necessary to decide that Barbados had to go up in flames for economic reasons. I hear talk from the hon. member for St. Michael North Central about adversary politics has gone on in this country for too long, but I have never known the sub-currents of abuse that I have seen in politics day after day.

After 1971 nobody on that bench could say that we behaved in the divisive way that supporters of the Democratic Labour Party have behaved after 1976. It is true that it is worst to lose a Government than to fail to gain one. It is true that it is more bitter to be cast down from the seats of the mighty than to fail to be elevated, but we accepted the verdict in 1972 and we fought and fought again until we are where we are today. There is a hard core of extremists who support the Opposition, and it is they, who in my opinion, are lending aid and comfort if not actual organisation to the present cane fires. Evidence, which is not going to be revealed in here, in the hands of the police has pinpointed a number of persons with known connections with the Democratic Labour Party, although I say instantly with nobody in here or who has been in here today.

I would like the example set by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for St. Michael South to be heard and remembered by all of those persons rather than the inconclusive speech of the hon. member for St. Lucy who, I think, means well but is hesitating to come out on our side in this matter. I really give him all the benefit of good intentions. I think it was a rather unfortunate speech by the former Minister of Communications and Works and the hon. member for St. Michael. When I heard that speech I was very disappointed because it was a speech that could only, by trying to condemn the plantation owners, have been prepared with the view of lending comfort to those who might, for wicked and political reasons, do this.

Sir, I said I was going to speak for a short time and I have spoken already for longer than I had intended. In ending, I will just say never mind what may be said about the Chairman of the Community College Board of permitting employment to Mr. Glasgow and to the hon. member for St. Michael South and so on. We on this side are not condemning all the members of the Democratic Labour Party. The one phrase in the hon. member for St. Michael North Central's speech that has to be accepted by all of us is that adversary politics has gone on in this country for too long. We have the adversary system. None of us can believe that by destroying the country we are benefiting one political party. (*Asides.*) He probably does want a one-party State, but the phrase may still have its own validity.

Without detaining the House too long, it is not even out of place to mention that even last year there was evidence that persons were speaking at private conclaves of the Democratic Labour Party of riots and disturbances. At a meeting in St. Lucy, not very long after the election, a constituency branch meeting attended by the hon. member for St. Lucy, one of the speakers made references to disturbances in March and was interviewed by the police and asked to explain his statement, if you want to know a few things. Do not think.....

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am the most dumbstruck person to hear that statement coming from the Prime Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: What Standing Order has been abused?

Mr. GREAVES: Regardless of the Standing Order, I am saying that the statement made by the Prime Minister is definitely untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order!

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: What insolence of the hon. member to get up and say that! I tell him as a fact that somebody resident in Paynes Bay, St. James, at one of his meetings; what he said came to the attention of the police; the police interviewed him about it and he did not deny it. He has the nerve to get up in the House of Assembly to contradict me! I call that insolence and ignorance. One of the worst things to do is to speak from a viewpoint of ignorance — you do not know, so you say it is not true. I tell him as a fact, and if he wants to know the name I will tell him privately because I have no intention.....

Interruption.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us have some order.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The explanation which the man gave to the police was that he did not really mean to say that disturbances would be started, but that the people would be so dissatisfied that they would rise up against the Government. He never denied saying it. He gave that explanation to the police, and the hon. member would have the nerve to come and say it is not true. I am not going to push that any further. All of this sort of talk is what has been creating a sense of crisis. There is another person. There is another person who has been holding many political meetings and this has been his perpetual theme: the constant repetitions about 1937 and what happened in 1937. There has been a political meeting twice a month or three times a month since we have been in power, and invariably at every one of those meetings close to the end of a speech a certain person has talked about the people are going to rise up, it will be 1937 over again, but the police do not bother with the outpourings of a particular gentleman who mouth has to work for his pocket. We do not have to worry about that.

Mr. Speaker, when we hear about dividing the country, it is not we who are dividing the country. That is what the Democratic Labour Party has to understand. We will all go down. Mr. Neville Boxill, an earthy man but one full of common sense, used to say in here about a certain gentleman in Station Hill who demolishes houses that he has never seen him pull a house down yet when he was actually inside. All of us are inside the House, and we cannot afford to be knocking it down to fall on us. It is no use pulling the wool over our eyes and fooling ourselves. The cane fires are not being set for ordinary economic motives. They are not being set in the course of the troubled sometimes and smooth sometimes relations between the Sugar Producers' Federation and the Barbados Workers' Union or the sugar workers. I believe that the influence of the Barbados Workers' Union has been uniformly admirable in this entire matter. I do not believe they are in any way to blame. Far from being to blame, I think that their influence has to be scored a plus on the positive side in this particular matter. In all of this, Mr. Speaker, I very much hope that the House will support the principle of the Bill after it has heard the reply of the Attorney General and give the Bill a Second Reading.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, it is about a minute to nine, and I would not like to start and after I go for a minute the suspension is taken.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Standing Orders have been suspended.
9 p.m.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the capacity of the Prime Minister for the easy phrase and some brands of sophistry is well known to most people in this country and sometimes to the uninitiated, to those who are not familiar with his technique, he can be very devastating in his descriptions of other persons and sometimes in his own outpouring which, couched in a certain style of language can mislead if you are not careful.

In rising to speak on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I shall not bother to spend any time dealing with some of the statements which the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister made, but I will make this point; it is getting increasingly difficult for normal humans to accept that we in the Opposition can come here Tuesday after Tuesday, week after week and hear the innuendos which are thrown out with the overlapping statement "Oh, I do not refer to any of the hon. members who now I can see in front of me!" Mr. Speaker, that kind of approach is certainly not lost on me. It is a form of attack which does not augur well for the same unity of which my colleagues on this side spoke, and of which the Prime Minister attempted to speak. I wish to say at the outset that as a person I have an aversion to fire.

Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest tragedies of my life occurred and was brought about by a catastrophe of fire, and I am one of those persons who does not run to a fire, I run away from it. I wish to say furthermore that if ever discovered that any organisation to which I belonged would use fire as a weapon, I would wish immediately to disavow such an organisation and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I would seek to sever my connections with it. You see, Mr. Speaker, it is extremely difficult for a person who has been elected into this House of Assembly to accept the innuendo that the Democratic Labour Party has a policy, and indeed it goes beyond innuendo, and we hear direct accusations made by hon. members in here that the Democratic Labour Party has been somehow involved as a matter of policy in the destruction of the sugar cane crop in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I deny that for the Democratic Labour Party. I am a First Vice-President of that party and I stand here and I say for this Honourable House and for all

Barbados that I categorically deny that for the Democratic Labour Party. I swear that never at any time in my knowledge has the Democratic Labour Party ever adopted a policy of destruction of any of the economic resources of this country and in particular the sugar cane crops of this country. I have listened here tonight and during the afternoon and I have heard some good presentations from members of the Government side; but I have heard some unfortunate ones as well. I heard two Hon. Ministers in here making statements that can only be described as reckless in the extreme, when a Minister, not an ordinary member stands up in this House and makes statements which suggest that they have hard evidence of involvement of another political party, a party that got over 48 percent of the votes — so that the Prime Minister will not question my statistics, let me say, a party that got in excess of 47 per cent of the votes in this country — a responsible political party that has been running this country for fifteen years could become so warped in such a short time as to have a policy.....

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: On a point of order, is the hon. member saying that to say to this Honourable Chamber that factual information fed to a Minister by the Fire Service and the Police Department is reckless? Is he really telling this Chamber that when I make statements which have been fed to me by the Police Department and the Fire Department that that was a reckless statement?

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, if I may continue to indicate.....

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of my integrity and the integrity of the Government, that if I am given information by the appropriate authorities.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Michael South West is only expressing his opinion and he is entitled to this.

Mr. TAITT: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, Sir, for anyone to come to this Chamber and suggest that the young democrats, a group — and later we hear them saying the older democrats — that has been clearly identified with the Democratic Labour Party, and then I hear another Minister saying he is not interested in the young democrats he is interested in the older democrats, I say it is an insult to the 48 percent of the population that voted and can be described as supporters

of the Democratic Labour Party to suggest that only the supporters of the Democratic Labour Party are capable of setting cane fires and that further the supporters of the Democratic Labour Party have been responsible for the cane fires in this country.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: On a point of elucidation. The hon. member obviously was asleep when certain statements were made.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has not given way.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Hon. Minister, it is after 9 o'clock. I sat and listened to his harangue.....

Mr. SPEAKER: If you are not giving way, please continue making your contribution.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has already made the position of the Opposition very clear, and my colleague from St. Michael South has spoken at length, if I may say so, incisively in support of the position and the policy of the Democratic Labour Party not only as they apply to agriculture in this country, but as they apply to the economic development of this country, and I do not wish especially at this late hour to repeat any of those things that were said. I am sure that hon. members would take to heart a number of the points that have been made. But I recall in this House not so very long ago on an occasion when the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister in one of those classic outbursts of his in an attempt I sometimes believe to intimidate members on this side, said that anyone who would refuse to give information.....Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Chairman was in the Chair and you might not be aware but it was a simple matter of not stating who was the other manufacturer in this country who manufactured bus bodies, and I remember the Prime Minister got up and in that, I repeat, classic manner of his, said, to the best of my knowledge words to the effect, that anyone who would not give that information could only be described as unpatriotic and guilty of economic sabotage and worthy of being put on the gallows, and you know how he said "gallows". At that time I paid not much attention to it except to get up and try to get it withdrawn unsuccessfully.

9.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, at that time I paid not much attention to it except to get up and try to get

it withdrawn, unsuccessfully, but, Sir, in the light of the other statements made here tonight about who would be locked up and who would be in gaol soon after this Bill becomes law, I am concerned, and I wish to express that concern, about certain aspects of this Bill. Now, Sir, I have had assurances before from the Hon. Attorney General, and I believe that the Hon. Attorney General when he gives those assurances in this House is sincere, but we will not always have an Attorney General of whom that can be said...(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: You mean you will get back George Moe again?)...because as I am told, Sir, he will be leaving us shortly. But to be quite serious, in this Bill provision is made for imprisonment in clause 3(1), I believe.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We are in the second reading of the Bill, and if the hon. member for St. Michael South West would like to follow the rules he would wait until we go into Committee on the Bill to discuss the various clauses of the Bill.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the rules are very clear on the capacity of any member to make a general point relating to any clause in any Bill at any time, and the Hon. Minister knows that. His attempt to put me off from time to time is nothing more than his pernicious, constant attempt.....

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I object to that. All I am trying to do is to ask him to speak on the general matter of the Bill, we are running late, and when we go into Committee on the Bill he could deal with the various clauses. If he has amendments formulated in his mind.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Two hon. members are on their feet. Will both hon. members please take their seats? The hon. member for St. Michael South West.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I have had occasion before to say to the hon. members over there that I am going to be here for a long time in this House of Assembly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue to make your contribution.

Mr. TAITT: I will do so for a very long time, Mr. Speaker. In this Bill there is a provision for the penalty of imprisonment only. I feel that that is dangerous. I feel it is dangerous because we should have a Government of laws rather than a Government of men, and if a person, as has been said, sits in a cart road

and somebody else comes along and is willing, or even if that person does not come along and that person is willing to go and swear that he or she saw this person do something, it is entirely possible that such a person can be found guilty before a Magistrate. A Magistrate might have some question in his or her mind, but when faced with no alternative but imprisonment, it means that it is entirely possible that an innocent persons could go to gaol for a crime of this nature, but what is worse, Mr. Speaker, when you come to feel that the Government, or any Government, might in fact have certain plans as we have heard in this House, if one should come to believe that this Government has made a decision to imprison certain people, this Bill.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that the hon. member is treading on the very best of grounds. I think you could make your contribution very well without endangering the possibilities of a worthwhile contribution otherwise.

Mr. TAITT: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I am only expressing what I feel, Sir. I say that I feel some concern about this particular clause of the Bill, and that concern has been brought on merely because of statements which have been made by Hon. Ministers here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister said that the only acceptable thesis — and I am using his words — is a thesis which suggests that the fires are being started, generated or instigated by members of the Democratic Labour Party. The hon. member for Christ Church East earlier in the day made reference to a number of possibilities for the starting of cane fires in this country which I consider to be reasonable and valid, but the Hon. Minister for Agriculture eliminated them and stated almost categorically that he had evidence, and I should like to have an explanation from the Minister. I am sure the Attorney General when he stands up to reply to this debate will put the statements made by the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Labour in their proper perspective. That is a right which the people of Barbados can demand of the Government.

One must not with any legislation come to feel, however wrong one may be, that one is being threatened by the piece of legislation, and I go further. Sir, in keeping with a point made by the member for St. Philip North, if the penalty is so severe it may very well be that a conscientious Magistrate may feel constrained to

let a person go rather than have the problem of having to send them only to prison. I believe the Attorney General is going to shed some light on this, because I ask the question not necessarily because there is not an answer, we have consulted other legal luminaries on this, but I know that there are persons in this community who will be concerned about certain provisions of this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, just one last point about economic wrecking. I heard the Minister of Agriculture pouring forth and pouring forth, and believe you me, Mr. Speaker, if the importance of a speech used to be judged by the amount of noise that is made, he would be deemed to have made the most important speeches in this House, and he would be followed by his good friend, and yours and mine, the member for St. James, but we are talking about economic wrecking. I would remind the Prime Minister that when he was in Opposition sitting on this side of the House, time and time again the then Leader of the Opposition made statements about the financial position of this country, which when seen by people in the international community could only have brought a measure of economic stagnation in this country. I have heard those statements myself, I have read them in debates.

We talk about economic wrecking. Very recently the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister in his statement on television — and here I am not criticising him *per se*, I am only saying that it is unfortunate that in making his statement on television he had to make the point, and if I remember correctly, he said that we were unlikely to receive any increase from the European Economic Community.
9.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has come to the end of his time.

Mr. TAITT: In summary, Mr. Speaker, he has completely taken the ladder from under the feet of the Minister of External Trade who will have to go to Brussels to argue from a point of weakness, and in many ways he might well decide not to go. You have said that the time is up, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I am going to wind up my speech; but I cannot leave this debate without saying — and I speak not for the Opposition. I speak for the Democratic Labour Party. I speak as first Vice President of that party and I say that we have never been, are not now or ever will be involved in any conspiracy or any other plan to destroy the economic foundation of this country, and in

particular to destroy the sugar cane crop of this country.

I give the Hon. Attorney General or any member of that Government one last bit of advice. Invite us to come on T. V. with you and tell the people not to burn the canes; and we will do it much better than the Minister of Agriculture can; so invite us to come and we will show you how to stop the people from burning the canes by going on television.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, this debate has gone on for some five hours and twenty minutes, and I think that members on both sides of the House have had ample opportunity to express their various views on the issues raised by the legislation. It is now my duty to sum up the debate if possible, and try to extract from the debate the consensus which seems to arise from both sides of the House and perhaps at the same time to answer some of the questions which have been put to the Government.

If I may say so, for the first time I have heard a clear declaration from both sides of the House that both sides of the House are against cane fires; and I want this statement to go out as a very strong clarion call to the nation at large to desist from the action; and I hope that political adherents will not therefore be misguided by what may be a lunatic fringe of any particular party; so I want to say that that is the consensus which seems to have evolved from the debate; and I would like to say to the Leader of the Opposition that I welcome his statement. I wish that it had come earlier because I believe that national leadership calls in a time of crisis for a national attitude that must rise above party; and now that he has taken the opportunity somewhat late, as I offered him that opportunity last week to make his position clear. I repeat it for the purpose of the record and for the benefit of those who have heard and it will be repeated around the island. It will not be a rumour but it will be a statement of fact. I wish also to welcome the statement made by the hon. member for St. Michael South, although I am not sure that he spoke on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition when he sought to dissociate himself and his party from the comments made about the Anglican Church.

Those of us who believe in the Anglican Church were indeed saddened in the Church as a whole and in Christianity by that statement; and I think that it is a statement which the

Democratic Labour Party will live to regret for a long time to come; and they should now do penance and go and take some ashes and really apologise for what they have done incorrectly. I want to make that quite clear.

Now, there have been some fears expressed on various sides of the House as well as a certain analysis of the position. The hon. member for Christ Church East and the hon. member for St. Philip North have given some very careful analyses of the theories on which the police have been working; and I would say to them that they are theories that the police have taken into account in advising the Government on the matters before the House. It is not always prudent for Ministers to reveal the totality of confidential advice; but the police have not at all in any part of this exercise ruled out any of the theories which I have heard advanced from both sides of the House.

They have examined the theory of school children. They have examined the theory about truck owners. They have examined the theory of workers. I am sorry that the hon. member for St. Michael North Central is not here because he would also hear that the police have examined the theory that plantation owners themselves may well have been involved in that exercise. I think I owe it as a duty to say that the statistics reveal that the canes of the peasants were a very small amount of the canes that were burnt, and it seems that there was no dissatisfaction among peasant holders.

I think that the statistics reveal quite clearly so far as the plantation owners were concerned that the two principal causes which would have motivated them would, (1) as one member suggested, insurance money and (2) the question of using the cane fields carrying the fourth and fifth crops for quick purposes of being put back into agriculture. The police examined those theories and the statistics have revealed on the insurance point that they only get 75% of the cost of planting the field of canes if the total crop is lost. There is no satisfactory evidence to suggest that this could have been any major cause whatsoever, indeed if any cause in the reasons why these cane fires took place.

Likewise, in the nature of the fields involved in the exercise, the Minister of Agriculture and his staff have examined this along with the Police and the Fire Services Department; and I think it is true to say very few of those fields are involved. Indeed, Mr.

Speaker, there must have been some recklessness on the part of the people involved; and I think that hon. members should not dismiss lightly, although I can understand an Opposition anxious to retain Government being anxious to get rid of any suggestion that their supporters, misguided rather than directed, may be involved in the exercise.

The police have taken into account the issue of political motivation in this instance, and therefore it is important that the national political leaders should dissociate themselves from reckless statements being made on political platforms and otherwise by other people. Let me give you an instance, Sir. As Minister responsible for public order I get certain reports; and I am appalled at the consistency with which public meetings are being held in this country. Allegations are being made (a) that we are creating a police state. (b) The Prime Minister said that the people are going to rise up as they did in 1937 — and some of it coming from the Democratic Labour Party — and at least one member, not of the Democratic Labour Party — Mr. Sealy, went so far as to suggest that people should throw themselves in front of the car of the Prime Minister when he was driving along the street.

Now I do not matter who Mr. Sealy is and he can curse me as much as he likes. If he is right I would say so; but I have minuted that file and I have told the Commissioner of Police that if Mr. Sealy does not stop making that kind of statement on a public platform the file must be sent to the D.P.P. because it is creating a public mischief for a prosecution or else he will not get any licence to hold a meeting in this country. Then he can get up and say what he likes. If people are going to exercise freedom of speech, they must show some sort of restraint, and it is a fact that the evidence coming to me shows that he is being paid for this sort of exercise; and he can curse me again as he did again last night — by Dr. Richie Haynes and Mr. Darnley Greenidge. The evidence to me reveals this.

It is equally reckless for the hon. member for St. John to get up and suggest that this Government is tapping peoples' telephones and restricting freedom of speech. The only evidence I have found in my department is the former Prime Minister wanting telephones to be tapped. I am sorry he is not in here to see who is talking about tapping telephones. Since I have had the responsibility for public order, I try to ensure that every point of view is expressed in

this country, even from the radical, ill founded views of a few misguided lack o'light communists to the reformed views of democratic socialism, which when you examine the statements given to the Academy of Politics are no more than conservatism served up in a different style.

9.30 p.m.

Let them express their views because that is helping the society, but we must also do so subject to some restraint, and I think it is this lack of restraint that one has seen encouraged in the society even coming to the stage now of encouraging racial hatred in speeches, contrary to the Public Order Act. That is causing fomentation, and hon. members must realise that that has political motivation and political content. I am sorry if I speak very strongly at this stage, but that is my candid analysis of the situation.

Now, I want to tell hon. members that, so far as prosecutions are concerned, this Act is not being administered for the purposes of prosecution by the Attorney General or, indeed, by any Minister of Government. In this sphere the Director of Public Prosecutions has sole responsibility for prosecutions; he will not be interfered with by me in any circumstances in carrying out his duty under this Act. I may have the right to request that he considers a situation, but I cannot dictate to the Director of Public Prosecutions; I will not be dictating to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I have already established with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet a convention that wherever the Attorney General has a residual responsibility for prosecutions the Cabinet may request, but the Cabinet cannot direct, an Attorney General to prosecute either. I want this convention stated quite clearly, so my colleagues understand it and this is the position. On the other hand, I am not going to be — as an Attorney General I may err and to err is human, but I am not going to sit down and see the country brought to its knees because a few misguided people are going to say that we are establishing a Police State. I want, categorically, to state this on behalf of the Prime Minister. The attacks have been on him moreso than on me, although most of the responsibility that they are talking about comes under my portfolio. At no stage has he sought to interfere with any prosecutions; to direct the tappings of any telephones, or, indeed, to place any limitation on the holding of public meetings. I have from time to time drawn to his attention

certain matters as he must consult with me on certain matters of security. What else can we do? I want to give that clear undertaking.

The hon. member for St. Michael South West raised the point about the nature of the sentences under Section 3 (a), 3 (1) (a), and 3 (2). Although the sentence is imprisonment, it is not a mandatory sentence, it is only a sentence that the magistrate could convict, reprimand, or discharge, or he can send you to prison under that Section. In relation to the \$5,000 fine, he can give a penalty. The hon. member for St. James, in his usual style when he is very humorous, was very concerned, Mr. Speaker, of the rabbit meat and the slips. I am not sure which exact slips he was talking about. I am not sure which oil or which rabbit meat. The hon. member for St. Philip North explained the difference between an exercise on top and an exercise stooping down. They all seem to me to consist of firing. The only thing is that there might have been fires caused in a different direction and for different reasons.

I can assure hon. members that I am conscious of the social habits of Barbados, having myself been reared between the cane fields, and I recognise that there is still a little privacy in parked cars. Obviously, anybody administering this Act like the police will take certain things into consideration. People who are enjoying themselves innocently, although not conveniently, will not be interfered with, but those who are there not to fire but to set fire will certainly be brought before the magistrate in these instances.

I welcome the comments made by hon. members. I can assure the hon. member for St. Michael North Central that this is not an Act directed against people for social reasons. It has implications for every Barbadian be he white, black, blue, red, yellow, worker or anybody else. I want myself to join with the comment of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister. Speaking for myself and my analysis of the stand of the Workers' Union, I have found that they have been consistent in arguing against the burning of canes. They have been consistent even at the time when we were importing labour into this country. What I would advise is that at the next negotiations of agreement there should even be a further differentiation made between the price of burnt and green canes as an incentive, and also that this differentiation should not only affect cane cutters as it does at the moment, but should spread right down to everybody involved in the exercise at the field

stage. One of the views that the police have come up with in one of their careful analyses of the situation is that this could be a contributory cause although it is a speculative cause that you cannot identify specifically, but they have gone around interviewing and talking to people who are concerned.

It is a fact that the police have various persons under suspicion, but the police in this country are not reckless. Like in anything, Mr. Speaker, like in any profession you will find good and bad, and the bad ones spoil the profession; so, too, we recognise in the Police Force. I think I can say on their behalf that they have tried to exercise their discretion properly, and I hope and I counsel them that they do so. Let us be very candid about it, unless we want a military State in this country, we all must encourage law and order. Today it is for you, and tomorrow it is for me. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition would not have imagined that he would be sitting on the other side of the House. I have heard him say to the Prime Minister that the Prime Minister would never be over there whilst he is here. That shows you how short in the life-span of a politician time can be.

I welcome the comments from members. I welcome their contribution to the debate. Although it has been at some times very hard and personal, I have come to expect that now of Parliament, but I do not think it is done with any animosity. It is various and varying points of view, but I hope that the clarion call from Parliament will now be taken up by the country at large. I agree that everything cannot be done only by legislation, and I will end on this point.

The points made by the hon. member for St. Philip North were taken into account. The police advise me that it would cost \$30 a day for Island Constables to have them working on the 8-hour shift and that they did not think, in the circumstances, where they needed top-class detective powers, that the expenditure involved would be justified and it would be better in such instances to consider, as I will have to consider, whether if I have to cancel police leave completely any extra compensation should be made for them. I have considered, as the Minister whether I should advise the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to advise the Governor General to have a limited state of emergency in the sugar belt. It is one of the matters that any responsible Minister must consider, but I do not think that the situation justifies it at the

moment. I will say that if the situation does justify it, I will not hesitate to do so. I think people must make their position clear. The situation does not justify it. I hate states of emergencies, and despite the former Prime Minister, again, saying that we have a special Bill prepared, I have found in the Department prepared by the last Government Bills for updating various Acts because they recognised that the emergency provisions were not good enough.

9.40 p.m.

I am waiting for an admirable opportunity when he is not making political capital to bring the Bills and his files and minutes and show them to him, because they are there, because he recognised we need Bills being updated; but there is no need for me to give this sort of advice, and I welcome an opportunity for a general statement from members of Parliament.

Finally, the distinction between this Act and the Malicious Injury to Property Act is that the Malicious Injury to Property Act is triable as an indictable offence as a felony which must go for preliminary enquiry, then before a jury and finally to what is called the Assize Court, whereas this Act is only limited to the powers of Magistrates to try people summarily. It is because the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act deals with the powers of magistrates that we were updating the penalties which magistrates can award rather than dealing with the other Act. Speaking for myself I feel that the other Act is still too harsh. It was passed in 1868 in circumstances where the plantocracy was dominant in this community. It is about time that we revise it and I am hoping that my department will find the time to revise the whole of that Act to make that sort of legislation much more amenable and showing much more social conscience than it is.

I thank hon. members and I must thank the Staff for remaining through this long debate and really reacting to us. I would finally like to say that I wish to thank the Barbados Council of Churches and the Barbados Evangelical Council of Churches, of all the Churches in Barbados who rallied to me, called and spoke to me and asked in what way they could help, and they all consistently on Sunday made an appeal to the nation on a national basis to cease this wanton destruction by cane fires. Now that the Church and the main political parties have joined in this national act of confession let us hope that those on the fringe who only exploit the political parties from time to time will do likewise. That is my final plea,

and let us see if we can persuade them to join in this act.

The question that the Bill be now read a second time, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On motion of Hon. H. deB. FORDE seconded by Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive were called and passed.

On motion of Hon. H. deB. FORDE seconded by Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time.

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

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Attorney General if he would just look at Section 3B(3), there might be a typographical error there.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you asking that it be recommitted?

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I am asking an opinion first before I ask that. I may be wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot approach it like this. You would have to ask that it be recommitted.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I do not want it passed and then we have to recommit it. Should the "or" there be in or out?

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: If the hon. member would give me a minute. I think there is a word missing from the section. The word "by" should be inserted after the word "field" in line three, so that it will read:

"Nothing in this section shall be construed as applying to any fire which has been started in any field by or with the consent of the occupier...."

I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House resume Committee to recommit Clause 3.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: 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 resumed Committee Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that in line three of clause 3B(3) the word "by" be inserted after the word "field" and before the word "or", and that with such amendment, clause 3 as amended stand part.

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

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

9.50 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. H. deB. FORDE, seconded by Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill, as amended, in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, in moving that this Bill do now pass and be cited as the Cane Fires (Prevention) Act, 1977 I would wish to put on record my indebtedness to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition for drawing to my attention the omission of the word "by" from the particular clause. I think it shows that when we err we will admit it, and it shows the hon. member's legal knowledge as well.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Monday, 21st March, at 12.00 noon upon which occasion we hope to commence consideration of the Appropriation Bill. It is intended that notice of the Bill will be given on Friday, 11th March, that is this week, when copies will be delivered to the Clerk of the House for delivery to members, and we will then meet on the 21st March, unless we suspend the relevant Standing Order to move a motion under Order 42 Rule 5 which dictates that an interval of not less than five days should elapse between the first and second readings of a Bill, unless the House on motion made and question put, agree to proceed with the Bill at any earlier date, or forthwith.

I do not anticipate that the Leader of the Opposition will object if he gets the Estimates in proper time, with two weekends to consider them, that he will object to having the first reading and the second reading on the same day.

There is one, if I may venture to say so, very important matter I would like to raise now. It is that the Government intends to grant the Opposition, if it so wishes, the privilege of calling the Heads. All that we ask is that we must have 24-hour notice of the Heads that are wanted, therefore for the first day we must have notice beforehand, if the Opposition wish to take advantage of this privilege. It is, I believe, a standard privilege on Supply Day in the British House of Commons, and I believe it is a concession which we will be happy to give to allow the Opposition the chance of dictating which parts of the Estimates it shall call. We shall be happy to give it although we never had it, Sir. Since debate is limited and we would not want the Opposition to find itself in the position that the Government members on the back benches, for example, talk for most of the time so that we could only reach Head 6 and Head 7 when the end of the five days are out, and the Opposition will not have the chance to discuss the later Heads of the Estimates, we are not going to do as Mr. Cameron Tudor did and take advantage of the temporary absence of the Opposition on an earlier occasion, and select External Affairs first and then sixteen other difficult Head and call them one after the other until the Opposition could get here, almost before the Speaker got here, I believe, we are not going to do that. We are not afraid of our administration of any Department of Government, and therefore if the Opposition feels that it has us on a particular Head then it is at liberty to give us 24 hours' notice. We require that in order to have the files and the civil servants present. As long as it gives us 24 hours' notice of the order in which it wants the Heads called we will accommodate it.

I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to be kind enough to treat the first 24 hours as 24 hours from Friday – in other words, to regard Saturday and Sunday as *dies non* – if not it would be impossible for us to warn the civil servants unless we know by midday Friday what Heads are to be expected on Monday the 21st. If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to take advantage of this, perhaps he can just drop a note to the Leader of the House who will indicate to the Cabinet Secretary the order. If he wants to give us the whole order he can give us the whole order so that we can set the pattern of business that way.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I am happy to second a motion of this nature on the Adjournment, and I am very happy to see that we had a very good day in here today, although it was a bit long, but I regret that we did not have the presence of the member for St. John. It is true that since we have been in here for the past six months he has only graced us with his presence on four occasions totalling ten hours, at a tune of something like \$1,000 a month and his pension he is drawing, Sir, and has failed also to even pay you, Mr. Speaker, the courtesy of writing you to say that he has found it impossible to come to Parliament. To my mind it is great disrespect to the people of St. John, to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the entire august Assembly, and I would ask the Leader of the Opposition who directs and dictates the whims and fancies of his colleagues on the other side as a Leader of the Opposition, to appeal to the member of St. John and let him know that it is a bounden duty to the people of St. John and Barbados as a whole to grace us with his presence at least during the Estimates. We may be able to get a little of the advice, all the advice should not go to the Guyanese, and he should not be appearing as a front man for Guyana in the year 1977. I am quite sure, Mr. Speaker, the discourtesy which he has paid to the Chair would not be treated lightly by you, and there is enough time, I know, if he misses another two sessions he would therefore forfeit his membership of this august Assembly.

I sincerely hope this will not fall on deaf ears on that side and I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to ask the member for St. John to grace us with his presence, Sir.

10.00 p.m.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, as regards the very generous offer of the Hon. Prime Minister, I hope that he will understand that I cannot respond at this point to his offer. I do not think that the Prime Minister will depart from the established practice. Be that as it may, I will respond to the offer in due course. The Opposition wants to get the Estimates through. If you will just pardon me, I will like to join with the Hon. Attorney General in paying tribute to the staff who have laboured long and have even gone without supper.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker,.....

Mr. SPEAKER: On what are you rising?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: On the motion for adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am very sorry, but you cannot do that unless you have intimated it to the Chair.

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

10.05 p.m.