

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION OF 1976 – 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 3rd May, 1977.

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

PRESENT

His Honour E. E. ALLEYNE, LL.M. (Deputy Speaker), Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Labour and Community Services); Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, LL.B., (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs); Hon. H. deB. FORDE, S.C., M.A., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of External Affairs); Mr. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M.; 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); Mr. M. C. C. WARD; 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 Culture) and Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW.

Prayers were read.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meetings of this Hon. Chamber for Friday, 15th April and Tuesday, 19th April, 1977 are available.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that they be confirmed.

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

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

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I beg to lay the Report and Financial Statement of Accounts of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year ended 31st December 1976.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Lucy, his Resolution regarding the development of Archer's Bay, St. Lucy.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Resolution:

Whereas Archer's Bay, St. Lucy is recognised and appreciated by Barbadians for the natural beauty and attraction which it offers.

And Whereas the area of land which is presently used by the public at Archer's Bay is privately owned.

And Whereas it is in the interest of the nation that the amenities of that area should be permanently available to the community.

Be It Resolved that this House urge Government to consider such steps as may be appropriate to convert and develop Archer's Bay, St. Lucy into a national park.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The same hon. member, his Bill to amend the Holidays with Pay Act, Cap. 348.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Holidays with Pay Act, Cap. 348.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Philip South.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ask the appropriate Minister:

Will the Minister state when the scheme for the payment of pensions by cheque will be available to all old age pensioners?

Mr. SANDIFORD entered the Chamber and took his seat.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Holidays with Pay Act, Cap. 348, be read a first time.

Mr. WEEKES: I beg to second that.

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to make a statement.

A number of statements have recently been made by members of the Opposition, and particularly by the Rt. Hon. member for St. John, to the effect that the former Government did not insist but gave me, when Leader of the Opposition, an election as to whether I would or would not make a reply to the 1976 Budget Proposals immediately following the presentation of that Budget. This is quite false, and I wish to lay the following correspondence which passed between the then Leader of the House, Mr. C. Edwy Talma, and myself making it clear that the then Government of the Democratic Labour Party gave me two days' notice that I would have to reply to the former Budget immediately despite protest.

I fear I will have to read the correspondence out, Sir. The first letter was dated 28th July, 1976 and it was written from the then Leader of the House to myself and addressed to the Leader of the Opposition, Public Buildings, Bridgetown, and it reads:

Dear Sir,

The Minister of Finance and Planning proposes to present to the House of Assembly on Friday, 30th July, 1976 at approximately 5 p.m. his Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals for 1976-77 and then give notice of such Statutory Instruments and other legislation as may be necessary in consequence of the Proposals.

12.20 p.m.

(2) The Speaker's permission has been sought for the Minister's speech on Friday, 30th July, and the Opposition's reply thereto to be broadcast from the Chamber by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and the Barbados Rediffusion Service by television and radio.

(3) In accordance with custom, the same amount of time utilised by the Minister of Finance and Planning in his presentation of the Budget Proposals will be accorded to the Opposition for its reply.

I received another letter next day, the 29th July, 1976 from Mr. Talma addressed to me as Leader of the Opposition as follows:—

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter, 00157 about the presentation of the Minister of Finance and Planning's Financial and Budgetary Proposals for 1976-77 to the House of Assembly on Friday, 30th July, 1976, I should like to clarify that (a) In accordance with the statements which you have made on several previous occasions that you were prepared to make your reply immediately after the Minister's presentation, it is expected that you will do so on this occasion; and therefore the same broadcasting and television facilities made available to the Minister will be made available to you on that day. (b) It is Government's intention to observe Standing Order 31 of the Standing Orders of the Hon. House of Assembly as regards the debate on the Budget Speech.

Later that same day I replied to Mr. Talma as follows:—

Dear Minister,

Please refer to your two letters referring to the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals which the Minister of Finance is due to present to the House of Assembly at 5 p.m. on 30th July, 1976.

(1) Contrary to established practice in Barbados and the accepted interpretation of the Standing Order of the House of Assembly, you state that the Opposition's reply to the Minister is expected to be made immediately after the Minister's presentation on 30th July. You should bear in mind that the Opposition has made it clear in reference to a statement by the Prime Minister that this is the practice in the British House of Commons, that (a) the British Leader of the Opposition has not been in living memory his party's spokesman on Finance. Following the Leader's reply, which is generally comparatively short a day intervenes before the principal spokesman on Finance subjects the Budget to an intensive analysis. (b) A copy of the Budget is usually made available to the British Leader of the Opposition shortly before it is delivered and (c) in Britain statistics are kept up to date and laid in the House of Commons. There has been no economic survey of Barbados for several years; and the Accountant General, a public officer under the direction of the Prime Minister, has for a long time been in default of his statutory duties to present up to date statements of Government's accounts to Parliament.

(2) Your letter of 29th July contains an inconsistency since on the one hand it states that the reply has to be made immediately following the Budget, while on the other it also states that it is the Government's intention to observe Order 31 of the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly which Order provides that the two sitting days immediately following the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals shall be the days allotted to the debate thereon.

I am therefore at a loss to know which of your two statements is correct — that the Opposition will follow immediately upon the Minister's proposals, or that the Government will observe Standing Order 31; and I will welcome your early clarification.

On Budget Day itself I received this letter from the then Leader of the House addressed to me:—

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 29th July, 1976 and I should like to observe that the procedure proposed in my letter does not conflict with the practice in the British Parliament where in reference the British

Leader of the Opposition makes his reply on the same day as that on which the Minister of Finance presents the Budgetary Proposals. Accordingly, I do not consider that there is any inconsistency in my letter of the 29th July, 1976, and therefore, cannot give any further clarification.

In the light of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that there should be no difficulty in any member of this House or any member of the public deciding that no option was given to the Leader of the Opposition in July, 1976 other than to reply immediately following the Budgetary Proposals. I would like to contradict with all the force at my command the repeated untruthful statements to the contrary effect made by the member for St. John in the House of Assembly and on political platforms on a number of occasions, and also a number of allegations made by other persons — I regret to say including hon. members of this House who should also have known the facts. (*Cheers*)

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice that Oral Reply to Questions Nos. 26 and 27 asked by the member for St. Michael South West are now ready.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice that the reply to Question No. 34 asked by the member for St. Michael South is now ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Order No. 1.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had hoped to be able to move the second reading of this Bill; but there are two amendments to the Companies Act; I had hoped to be able to move this one in at the Committee stage in Order No. 8 today; but it transpires that due to various errors, some of which I will have to take on my own shoulders, others of which can fall to the Drafting Department both under the present Attorney General and under the previous Attorney General, and partly because, I believe, of the Registrar of Companies aided and abetted by one of Her Majesty's Judges. So I err in good company.

In view of these various considerations, I am asking leave of the House to withdraw this

Bill altogether. I would like to give notice of a Bill in similar terms. In due course I hope to move a Schedule in terms similar to that which was sought to be moved by this Bill in Committee stage of Order No. 8. I would like to reassure all those who are anxious for the amendment relating to redeemable preference shares that I would like to have that done next week; and in good time I will circulate the new Schedule to hon. members with the indication that it will be so moved into the Bill which is now pending its Committee stage.

There being no objection, the Bill was withdrawn.

12.30 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Item No. 2.

THE PROFESSIONS (REGISTRATION FEES) (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1977

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this amendment arises out of the Budgetary Proposals. The Bill itself is a short one because the scheme of the present Professions (Registration Fees) Act very largely except, I believe, in the case of Real Estate Agents, refers to professions which are organised by a statutory charter and, therefore, the amending paragraph of this Bill has to do no more than alter the appropriate registration fees. The principle which I am seeking to have endorsed upon second reading, of course, is that fees which are charged in money terms are subject to inflation and may reasonably be expected to be amended from time to time. It is my intention, in due course, when more comprehensive legislation is passed for the purpose of the registration of self-employed persons, to provide that the fees may be made by Order, but we are not yet in a position to take that step and we are, therefore, coming to Parliament for a specific raising of the fees upon this occasion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to correct, and it is in the circumstances necessary specifically to correct by legislation, and error, I humbly suggest a very minor error, in my presentation of my proposals in the Budget Speech in which, apparently, I said that these fees will come into force by the 1st January, 1978. That is a mistake, Sir. It arose because it was intended that nobody who has paid a fee for this year will now have to pay an increased fee, and it was intended to make this clear, but new registrants will have to pay the new fees as from now. Those who have

already paid in January for 1977 will not have to pay any increase, but anybody who comes in to any of the professions this year will have to pay the increased fees.

It will, therefore, be observed that we are seeking to bring the Act into operation on the 16th April, 1977, but I would like to assure all members of the learned and other professions embraced within these provisions that they will not be called upon to pay any further licence fees this year. I would also like to take this opportunity of reassuring the public that a danger which I feel is much overstated, but which has been canvassed at least outside this House by the hon. member for St. Lucy among others that the increase in these licence fees will result in a massive increase in the cost of living. I would like to reassure all hon. members that this seems to me to be an unlikely consequence. As things are, the cost of living index does not carry any weight which can be related to the fees paid to Lawyers, Real Estate Agents, any professions that I can think of other than the medical profession and druggists. Druggists, I think, have been raised from \$10 to \$50. I do not believe that this will reflect in any increase in the retail price index. Doctors have been raised from \$120 to \$300

In the fullness of time general practitioners' services to the public will be free and, therefore, the opportunity of a general practitioner passing on an increase in his licence fees to the public will be non-existent. The great majority of doctors in Barbados are, however, doctors in the employment of the Government. I believe that there are getting on to 130 doctors in Barbados; 45 of them are in private practice and the remainder are in Government employment one way or another. The Minister of Health, unfortunately, is not here to correct my statistics, but if I err I err in good company, for these are the figures which she gave to a luncheon of the Barbados Registered Nurses Association of New York at which I had the good fortune and honour to be present two weeks ago.

It is, therefore, only as I conceive it, the 45 persons in general practice who ought to be immediately affected. There are one or two specialists. I would say this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my impression is that specialists fees individually are already so near to the annual licencing fees that the percentage increase represented by this is negligible in terms of the other determinants that must go in to the make up of what you pay specialist

doctors at present in Barbados. I would respectfully suggest to the hon. member for St. Lucy that he should refrain from such irresponsibility as trying to characterise all the doctors of Barbados as persons who, immediately they have to pay \$180 a year more, will add on one, two or three dollars to their present fees and pass this on to the public.

Just in case there are any such doctors, I would remind them that President Nixon imposed a pay wage and salary and fee freeze on all persons in the United States some years ago, in pursuit of a pay policy, and when he found out that, notwithstanding this, a number of doctors in the New York area were increasing their consultation fees, he had it pointed out to everybody that the freeze applied to professional persons as well as to employees and employers, unions and everybody else and he insisted and enforced the return of excessive fees from persons who had collected them. Lawyers are subjected, strange as it may seem to hon. members and to some members of the public, to a system of fees enforced by the Bar Association. Former Solicitors will have been familiar with this for many years. I myself do not think that, at the present time, other professions have shown such irresponsibility that it will be necessary for the Government to enforce the provisions, for example, of the Medical Registration Act. But if that Act is examined as, perhaps, it should have been by the hon. member for St. Lucy, he would realise that no member of the public is obliged to pay any fee to a doctor other than a reasonable fee or a fee which had been agreed beforehand. If you will refer to the Medical Registration Act you will observe that doctors can collect only reasonable fees by process of law. I think that all of these are matters which more deserve to be brought to the attention of the public than the possibility — it is not possible in my opinion to say probability — that the cost of living can be increased by these very modest licensing fees that have been placed upon the professions in this Island.

I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

12.40 p.m.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did intend from the outset to speak on this Bill, and of course the Hon. Prime Minister in his introduction sought at least to ensure that I

reacted to some of the things which he spoke about. It was interesting listening to the Prime Minister because I am sure that if you are asked to judge what he had to say, you would have to conclude that he did recognise that as a result of the increase in the fees which are going to be paid by professionals, there is a very strong possibility that this would result in higher charges to their clients. As a professional yourself, I do not believe you would be involved in this kind of thing, but I am sure you will recognise that there is a very strong possibility and a very strong urge for them to ensure that they recruit what additional fees they might have to pay by charging a little extra to their clients. Of course I would not expect you to put on extra fees on the clients from the constituency of St. Michael North West, because after all that is your constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the very week after these proposals were made in Parliament, there were a number of doctors around Barbados, and this is as a result of some investigation, who indicated that they would in any event be collecting the additional fees which they had to pay by way of charging additional fees to their clients, and I want to say that the Prime Minister himself recognised this and this is why obviously one saw him in a mood where he had practically challenged me that if this does happen, that he would have to impose certain regulations on them, and as far as doctors are concerned, the Prime Minister indicated that the Medical Registration Act made provision for doctors to charge a reasonable fee. Now I do not know really sometimes what the Prime Minister thinks or how he thinks. When one talks in terms of a reasonable fee, we are in an area of discretion, and obviously what might be reasonable to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, might not be reasonable to the hon. member for Christ Church West or to the hon. member for St. Joseph or to myself; but the point is that when we get into this area of discretion we are on very uncertain ground, and it is in this kind of area where we are saying that this gives an opportunity for people like doctors and indeed those who are covered by the Medical Registration Act to pass on this additional charge.

Now if one were to examine the kind of people who are called upon to pay this additional fee, one finds that they are dentists, land surveyors, doctors, solicitors, vets, and druggists, and you will see that the range of services which they provide cover a very wide area, and if one examines for example the scarcity of people like land surveyors, you would find that this is going to mean that the charges are going to go up. I take the point which the Prime Minister makes

that as far as the cost of living index is concerned there is nowhere within the index properly for this kind of professional service, but when one adds up the whole range of services, then I am of the firm view that this is going to make some measure of difference to people who have got to use these services, and this is where I am saying that it will therefore make it more expensive for people to have access to these services. This is the point which I maintain, and I am sure that the Prime Minister recognises this, and it is as a result of that recognition that he had to issue the kind of warning he issued here today.

What I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whilst on this point, and as I said this is an Act to amend the Professional Registration Fees Act, we have got in Barbados to insist on a higher standard of services by the large number of professional people who are registered in the society. I know there are various bodies which control the ethics of the various professions, but often one finds that the bodies do not function as efficiently as one would expect, and consequently there are a number of people who suffer at the hands of professionals. I can think of a situation right now where in St. Lucy there is a land surveyor whose name I will call, because I think this is the kind of situation that should be drawn to the attention of the powers that be so that something can be done about it. He is a person by the name of Corporal Fraser who has land in St. Lucy which he has sold to people in that constituency; people have paid down money as long ago as four years and they have not as yet got possession of the land, neither have they been given an indication as to when they are going to be able to get the land, and furthermore they do not seem to be able to get any kind of communication from him on this. When you get this kind of rape which is being carried on by certain professionals within the society where tremendous advantage is taken of poor people who do not have the kind of access to the legal and advisory services which would enable them to demand fair play and proper services from that kind of profession, then I think we have got to look at this matter very carefully, and I would hope that the Prime Minister and indeed the Attorney General would look at any kind of legislation which they might be able to bring in order to control this kind of exploitation and serious advantage which is taken of people who do not have access to the kind of services which would prevent them from being taken advantage of in the way I have outlined, because I think that is very important.

12.50 p.m.

I really am upset that people could so bare-facedly take this kind of situation and exploit people in this way. This is why I say you have to demand a better service from the professionals both from the point of view of their relationship with their clients and from the point of view of honesty and integrity, because I think that the integrity and honesty of a number of the professionals who are practising in this country can be called into question, and if we are going to aim for the kind of society where these qualities are important, then obviously we must insist that people who are under the law have the right to deliver certain services with the kind of honesty and efficiency which would normally be associated with and which one would expect from the professionals in the particular field we are talking about.

As I said at the beginning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I maintain, and I am sure, the Prime Minister will be able, maybe in another six months or the next time around, maybe at budget time, to admit that the fees of these professionals that have been identified here have risen over the period of time.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the hon. member who has just sat down has made one of the best speeches for the control of incomes. In other words, a policy for the control of salaries and incomes in this country; and indeed, I want to know how he squares his argument in this respect with his general statement that he is opposed to a policy on incomes, rents and dividends in those terms, certainly on incomes.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of elucidation. I am sure that the learned Attorney General — and I use the term learned for obvious reasons — cannot by any stretch of the imagination interpret a speech which essentially dealt with the ethical or unethical practices of professionals into something to do with incomes. As a matter of fact, I would say without fear of contradiction that at certain levels of income in the society there is need for control, but certainly not at the level of people at the Transport Board and the lower paid levels; at the level of people like you and the top paid lawyers and solicitors in this country.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The hon. member must understand he is either having an incomes policy or he is not; where of course different people come down within that incomes policy is a matter for argument; but the moment he preaches his blanket policy against any incomes

policy at all, he cannot get up and argue as he has just argued before. I can assure the hon. member that I agree with everything he has said before he qualified it a moment ago. That is why I said it is one of the best speeches he has made for an incomes policy. Of course, we all know that as soon as you try to operate an incomes policy in this country you are liable to run afoul of the trade unions. Now the hon. member is fortunate in that, by and large, the union of which he is the assistant secretary represents the more lowly body of people in the community. But I am sure that if there was a union representing professionals in the country, you would hear the same argument that an incomes policy should be applied to people other than themselves, because it is typical of any section or group in a community that they see these matters in terms only of their limited self-interest without regard to the community as a whole. And I want to speak on this very seriously for this reason, that one would hear the argument that the politician must accept for himself an incomes policy but the newspaperman must not; or the person in free enterprise must not be controlled. It only shows how selfish a community we deal with; and indeed those of us who are in public life must become repeatedly disgusted that sectional interests are always pushed ahead of the overall public view of the community as a whole.

I welcome the hon. member's remark to talk a little about the professionals. There is nothing to complain about in these increases in professional fees — nothing at all. If you take it as it stands, it amounts by and large to an increase of \$180 a year, which is at gross fifty cents per day and which is at net, taking into account that it is allowed as a business expense, and assuming that most of the people are in the fifty percent bracket, we are talking at something about twenty five cents a day. Now what possible case can there be for passing on a twenty five cents per day additional charge for registration to the public at large? Indeed, if the hon. member is serious about this, and he does have a list of names of doctors whom he alleges have started to do this, I would be prepared as Attorney General to advise people not to pay their fees and to take steps to defend them in the court for any breach of contract which they may bring; because under the Medical Registration Act, as the Right Hon. Prime Minister has pointed out, their fees must be reasonable, and there is a standard of reasonableness which the court has understood from time immemorial, looking at all the circumstances. And it is not a matter of the wide discussion of the individual practitioner as the hon. member thinks, but there is an objective test

applied under the breakdown of a *quantum meruit*, and the hon. member must understand this.

I want to make a few other comments about professionals in Barbados. I believe that the professionals in Barbados are reasonably well paid; indeed, if one looks at the medical profession, contrary to the view held by some people, including the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, if one looks at the distinction with Q.C.'s and other people within the charges made in the schedule of fees, I think it is a mistake to assume that doctors are not among the highest earners in this community; they are certainly some of the highest earners that one can find in the community at large; and I believe that increasingly they must understand that they have to make some sacrifice for the public just as other people are making sacrifices for the public. And the same goes for the legal profession. Unfortunately, the legal profession is usually attacked by everybody; but I want to say that many more lawyers in this community have got involved in public life, sometimes sacrificing their own financial position, than I have seen in any other profession in Barbados. I look among the members in this Honourable Chamber and there is only one doctor of medicine — I am not talking about a doctor of philosophy — one doctor of medicine who has come forward. And if you look back down through history — particularly the history of the battle for the working class in Barbados — you will find that there are probably only two or three doctors — Dr. O'Neal and Dr. Hugh Cummins — who sacrificed their financial positions to go into public life and offer themselves. On the other hand if you look among the lawyers you will find that many of us in the legal profession have come forward — and I cite as an outstanding example, Sir Grantley Adams — who sacrificed heyday of their high earning period in order to make some contribution to public life. And that is why when I hear a blanket attack on lawyers at times — and there are things that we lawyers are guilty of and I admit that — I am surprised at the community not looking at this. How many accountants have made a sacrifice? How many surveyors made a sacrifice of their time? These are things one must look at very seriously, and indeed I think it is to the credit of the legal profession that many of us have been prepared to go into public glare to take all of the unwarranted and scathing and sometimes filthy attacks from the public platform on our integrity; to take all the sly remarks; and yet we have been managing to stand up. I am happy that in due course the Government, as the Prime Minister said, will be in a position to bring a comprehensive Act dealing with the registration

of the professionals and quasi-professionals, and to go ahead to regulate the conduct of professionals. I think we need to enforce codes in the professions, particularly in some of the professions that at the moment people seem to be afraid to sue. I have heard of lawyers being taken to court, being struck off the register, being disciplined; I myself have brought similar cases, although I am sure there could be more; but I have never seen, other than two current matters before the court, people being bold enough to sue a doctor for negligence, to haul an accountant before the court for bad advice, to take a land surveyor, as the hon. member has said, and get them struck off the register — as though these professions are sacrosanct; and the only people who have the bricks thrown at them have been the few lawyers, whom a few of us have managed to bring before the courts of law. I am happy that during our period of office we will be able to bring a comprehensive Act which will show that the fees we are charging for licences are highly justified.

1.00 p.m.

While we do not seek to control the day to day workings of a profession, I believe that the public demands that there should be high standards in professional conduct and we are seeking to achieve this in due course.

The hon. member and I agree, as we do sometimes on matters of this nature, he may want to get in the things that are on his chest in the debate as he always uses the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker to get matters off his chest, and today of course he has transport on his chest and he would not have missed the opportunity to make a comment about a matter which is *sub judice*, and he knows it is *sub judice*, but when he speaks on the wider issues other than that I agree with every word that he has said.

I am hoping that I will not witness the bombastic and fiery figure as I saw on television last night of a leader well recognised for his ability of course as a Trade Union leader, but that I would see a more restrained and statesmanlike approach coming from the leader of the Union, of course, and the hon. member giving him wise counsel — immature in age but not immature in content — and saying let us sit down and reason together about the future of our country.

It is a mistake to represent the Government's position as saying that we are asking for a 5% increase at the lowest ranks in

Barbados. It is just not true. What the Prime Minister says is that he would like to see the overall national average being 5%. If it is a three year agreement it amounts to 15%, but in addition to this it is possible not to have any increase at all at the upper ends of the scale. None for your doctors, lawyers, high earners in the Civil Service, none for the high earning business people in this community — and I wish E.L.C. would sometimes advert to them, he is always willing to throw stones at politicians, but not very often does he look at what people in business earn. Unfortunately I have got knowledge about that which might be privileged of course — but I would like to see when the Union is looking at these matters it would sit down and reason with the Government.

It is obvious that if somebody is earning \$25 a week as a domestic that the percentage of increase that any reasonable Government would approve for her must be higher than for a person who is earning something like \$2,000 a month. The hon. member knows that, but unfortunately because the hon. member wears two hats he must sometimes get a bit confused, but I am begging him not misrepresent the Government's decision. Our position in this is that lowly paid workers must be allowed to progress, to get a proper living standard, and anybody who looked at the provision of abolishing income tax for those people giving you a tax credit and cutting the income tax of taxpayers in this country in half will be well satisfied that not only our hearts but our heads are in the right direction, and we will level up this community, if you want to put it that way. Regardless of what the Union says, regardless of what the Democratic Labour Party says, I do not believe that they are any more democratic socialists than any one of us over here. I do not believe it at all, in fact nothing that I have seen from the Opposition in the last 15 years convinces me that they were any more progressive or any more radical than the people on this side are. Sometimes I was amazed at some of the retrogressive steps taken by that Government, and then I only used to hear muted sounds from the hon. member. He spoke up at times, Sir, and I backed him up at times, but his sounds were muted in the interest of party unity. I am asking him in the national interest now to use his advice to sit down and reason with the Government about how we can increase productivity, about how we can remove inequities and inequalities in the system, and how we can raise rapidly the living standards of those who are down at the bottom rung of the ladder. That is what we would like to see. Any measure that takes away income from those people who have a lot and makes it available to help the welfare

services and the other people at the bottom is a step in the right direction, and I know the hon. member knows that too.

I agree with him that we must now police it to see that the measure is not abused, but I hope he would welcome a measure such as this, and I see, Sir, I have got his tacit consent of welcome on this occasion.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see that in your own inimitable words on another medium the head of the Attorney General may be in the right place. It is not only that of the Prime Minister but the Attorney General as well, so your words are getting some more permanence even though the ancestry has not been acknowledged. I hope you will give me as much latitude as you have given members in this debate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I always try to be fair.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to make a brief intervention here. As far as the profession in this country are concerned, I would like to say that the development of our country has been dependent, to a large extent, on the way in which they have carried out their responsibilities, and that the future growth and development of the country will also depend to a large extent on the way in which they carry out this function, the expertise which they bring to bear in their relationship with their clients, and indeed generally with the public at large.

I would like to take this opportunity not only in respect of those professionals listed for the payment of higher fees, but also those who have not been embraced for the contribution they have made towards making this country what it has become. I think there is no doubt at all about this, for any country to grow, to develop and to prosper a level of service is expected and we certainly do hope that that level of service can be improved upon. A good contribution has been made so far, but I do not think anyone, not least of all those in the professions themselves, would deny the fact that there are also areas in which this country can be better served by its professionals.

I am not here to criticise or to pass judgement upon any particular professional, what I would like to say is this, that there seems to be some feeling that the only type of public service or public life in which professional can make a

contribution, that this level must be public political service, and we have had instances whenever we speak about public life we think in terms of public political life, but there are other areas of public life in this country to which the professionals who have had the advantage and the benefit of greater education, more exposure can make a decided contribution towards raising the quality of public life in this country.

1.10 p.m.

It is a source of regret to me that more professionals, whether they be lawyers, doctors, or pharmacists, whether they are dentists or land surveyors — these are persons who have had greater training than the general run of persons in this country. They have been exposed, some of them, to such training in this country and some of them outside — and I would like to make a call to them to make a greater contribution not only in their profession but outside of their profession, whether in the field of social work, the field of youth, in community development areas, so that they can bring their disciplined minds to bear on the total problem of this country, in a way which will enhance the benefits at all levels.

I do not believe that the people of this country have been served as well as they should be by the professionals; and I am not speaking in terms of their relationship with their clients, but in terms of giving more of their time and talents to all aspects of public life in this country, so that the people can benefit from their greater knowledge, expertise and so on. I think that this is an area in which the public life of this country will be greatly enhanced and I make the call for professionals to become involved in public life.

The second point that I wish to make is a small one, but it is important, nevertheless. Any Minister of Finance who increases the fees payable by professional persons runs the risk not only of bringing criticism upon himself, but the risk that the increases may be passed to the clients and users of the services. If it is calculated at 25 cents a day, the professionals may charge us 50 cents net or gross. I do not know how you will actually determine that these fees will not be passed on; because I believe that certain professionals have a schedule of fees for certain services; but the majority of professionals, including Attorneys at Law, have no such schedules; and when an Attorney at Law says that this particular service will cost you \$300, it is that.

I am calling a figure. I do not know what the fees chargeable are. I do not know, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, if you can give me any information. Let us say that the fee is \$300. Anyone in this country will know that when he goes to an Attorney at Law and finds that the fee is now \$350, it will be put down to the increase in fees. I wish to indicate that although these things do not go into the cost of living index it does not really mean that they do not affect the cost of living; and it may be a very real burden on someone having to use the services of these professionals to meet the increased fees.

Anyhow, Sir, we will have to wait and see. I will not be dogmatic on this particular matter and say whether there should be an increase or not. It seems to me that we have an exercise in the future tense — we will have to wait and see; but I know that professionals are not in business for charity. I say that even though I know that some of them do not charge for some of the services they render; and here I would like to pay tribute to those professionals who sometimes waive their fees. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker that you are well aware that this happens in certain circumstances — I would not like to detail those circumstances — some professionals sometimes waive their fees and often the poor of this country benefit; but that does not mean that this measure will not result in an increased in the fees charged.

Just one small point. The Prime Minister corrected himself on some statistics arising out of his budgetary proposals. I think that he said that there were 145 doctors in this country, using statistics given by the Minister of Health in New York.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of elucidation. I do not think that this arose out of my Budget Speech. I just said that the figure is roughly 130.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I was not indicating that it came out of his Budget Speech. I have the Report of the World Health Organisation for 1975, and this indicates — there is a whole list of health personnel in the country — and the number of doctors in 1974 was 160, and in 1975 it was 166. It might be that the figures quoted in New York are the most up to date. It is just a small point by way of correction.

I know that the Prime Minister and his Ministers like to speak from the standpoint of very accurate statistics and information as is possible. I just pass on that information so that when he makes comments he will be aware of the published information. My time is not yet up,

and just before concluding I would make a passing reference to the Prices and Incomes Policy. I would like to issue a warning. There is a temptation for Ministers of Finance to speak in terms of a prices and incomes policy; but we have people in this country who deserve, when we are talking about such matters which affect the individual lives of the people, that the rationale of these policies should be clearly spelt out so that there can be no doubt at all as to what the policy is.

1.20 p.m.

I am just giving a warning here because problems have arisen out of the implementation of prices and incomes policies, and these problems can be difficult for the society. You have a number of elements involved, and I would like to give a warning that if there is such a policy, or that one is being devised, that before there is any statement that there is a prices and incomes policy in Barbados that that policy should be clearly spelt out in terms of what it means for all the people involved. I think this is a principle which should be followed. There must be consultation first of all, and I certainly welcome the indication that steps are going ahead for consultation with the major interest involved in terms of a National Economic Development Council, or however the body may be styled, and I do hope that full consultation on these matters would result. I know that is a temptation to start to talk about a prices and incomes policy, but the country must be given full opportunity to consider this policy and what are the planks of the policy and so on in order that we may come to some determination as to what policies are best for this country. There is a danger.

If you have a prices and incomes policy and the cost of living index has gone up only some number of points and that, therefore, wages should not go in excess of that, dangers result because you have inequalities existing already in the present system of wages and salaries, and certain categories of workers may be behind hand and they may be due for certain increases. But if you bring in a freeze or control at existing levels there are dangers in freezing salaries at that particular level. I do not wish to go into this matter in any detail at the moment. I merely wish that, in due course, we would get a full statement and a paper I would hope on this particular matter about a prices and incomes policy and exactly what it is the Government has in mind on this matter.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to comment on a point which was made by the hon. Prime Minister when he spoke not so long ago. The point is that he said that, in the very near future, the general practitioners will not have to charge fees to their patients when the introduction of the free Health Service comes about. I would like to say that to hear such a statement was, indeed, a tonic to my mind. I say that, Sir, because I realise the effort many people in this community make to pay the doctor's fees and, therefore, when he makes that statement in the House of Assembly, I can assure you that it has my blessing.

On the other hand, I have been thinking about the repercussions when it comes to the doctors. As you know, Sir, medicine is a lucrative profession. As soon as this free Health Service is introduced and doctors are paid by the Government, we have to be very, very careful owing to the fact that there may be other countries which do not have a free Health Service and some of our doctors may leave and go to those countries where they can carry on private practice. For us to expect a doctor, who can make now approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 per month to work for approximately \$1,800 per month, as some may receive who are employed in the Health Service, would be calling on those doctors to make a big sacrifice; therefore, we have to be careful about the brain drain and people leaving this country and going to other countries where they can carry on private practice. The point I am trying to make is that we would have to upgrade the salaries of doctors so as to encourage those who will have to give up their private practice to remain and work with us. 1.30 p.m.

It is true, Sir, that especially those who have been awarded scholarships should return to their country and do something for the benefit and in the interest of the masses, but as you are aware, Sir, self-interest comes first, and therefore we have to do something tangible when and if this free health service is introduced in this Island so as to retain the services of certain medical practitioners.

Now, Sir, I would like to draw to the attention of this House the dire need for training of surveyors in this country. There is a shortage of surveyors in Barbados, and if Government can introduce some kind of method to increase the number annually, in the long run I can assure you that it would pay dividends. There are some people who come in this House and in some cases

make it a duty to criticise certain people who have been elected here by the people to serve them, but I have no fear of those people or of their criticisms because they have not put me in; they have not voted for me and they will never have, to vote for me, and therefore when I am given an opportunity to speak in here, regardless of who it pleases, that is a matter entirely for them.

It is known that surveying in this country is a lucrative profession, and it is a colossal task now for a person who has a small portion of land to have it surveyed at a reasonable price, and therefore if Government can introduce some kind of system whereby the numbers could be increased, it would be in the interest of the masses of this country. Now it has been drawn to my attention that approximately 24 candidates three years ago started to study this profession, and from information received I understand that annually a number of these candidates dropped out, and now you only have approximately five candidates. I am saying, Sir, that that is not good enough. The time has come when we in this Island should be producing a minimum of two to three surveyors annually whereas at present we are not even producing one. It is a serious matter. I am saying that firstly either the standard is too high, or secondly it is a closed shop, and therefore I am asking the Government to go into the matter fully and try to do its utmost by introducing some special scheme whereby the number of surveyors can be increased in the interest of this country.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not intend to speak on this Bill, but after listening to hon. members of the Opposition, I must make my contribution. I have heard the hon. member for St. Philip South calling on this Government to do something about the shortage of professions.

Mr. WEEKES: On a point of order, I particularly mentioned surveyors, but you said professions. While it is true that a surveyor is a professional you gave the impression to this House that I said professionals in general. I particularly stipulated surveyors.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Surveyors are professionals, and I was thinking in terms of more than one surveyor, hence professionals. The position Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the Democratic Labour Party was in power for 15 years, there was always a shortage of surveyors, and yet we in 1977 still have a shortage. What I am saying is that during their regime they had

adequate time to do something about it, and it is rather regrettable today to hear a member from that side who was also a member of the Government for 15 years making a call to this Government for the increase of surveyors.

Now it seems to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Opposition has got short memories. All of them have agreed in this House today that there is a fear that the increase of professional fees would mean the passing on of those fees to the people who attend these professionals. Let me say this: it was not the Barbados Labour Party or my Government that introduced these fees, and if there is a fear today among the Opposition that the fees would be passed on to the clients, they should have realised that when their Prime Minister, the hon. member for St. John, slapped on the professional fees that these professionals would have passed on the charge to their patients or clients.

1.40 p.m.

Neither one of them suggested on the floor of this House during any debate that this would have been so. I always wondered what sort of opposition members we have got when they stood up in this Honourable House and allowed certain measures to go pass and never said one thing, never opposed it, never made a suggestion; but they come in here because we are in power now; they have lost the reins of Government and they are coming to suggest to us today that we are responsible for it.

Now I want them to understand, and I want this Honourable House to realise today, that this question of integrity among professionals is one that will occupy the attention of people not only today, but tomorrow and for a very long time. As long as this world lasts, you will have professionals who conduct themselves in an unprofessional and immoral manner. But it is not true to feel that all professionals — lawyers or doctors — behave in a similar manner. The position is that some professionals charge a high fee; this is true. Some of them are outstanding professionals. Outstanding lawyers in Barbados or in the community and will charge a high fee. Some who are not so outstanding will charge a modest or more moderate fee. But the public has got the option to go to the lawyer whose fees suit their pocket. He does not have to go to the lawyer whose fees are too steep. There are outstanding lawyers and outstanding doctors, and at this point the members from the other side ought to realize that it was one of their members — a member from the Democratic Labour Party — who stood for election in 1976,

whose fees are among the highest in Barbados. Why didn't they get up and talk about it? And what is worse, I was never privileged to hear any one of them suggest that the fees charged by that member who ran for the other side were too steep. I remember a passing remark from the member for St. Michael West that when it was drawn to his attention that Richie Haynes was moving his fees from \$10 to \$15, he said that \$15 was not too steep a fee to be charged by a professional. Yet today you can hear them coming here talking about how they are concerned about the fees that will be passed on to the Barbadian public. I cannot understand the double dealing; I cannot understand the way they reason; they say one thing yesterday and yet they come today to distort the minds of the people of this community. It will not be this way, because they must be reminded of what they stood for during their regime; they should have got up and spoken out as they are doing today; but they were not in a position to say one thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, the people of Barbados must realize that when the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister introduced this particular measure in the Budget, he cannot be blamed for any indirect passing of fees on to the public. All that he has done is to ask for an increase of the existing fees, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and these existing fees were there, not placed on professionals by the Barbados Labour Party, but by the Democratic Labour Party when they were in power. Another point I would like to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this, the people of Barbados must also realize that we have lawyers, doctors, surveyors, and they ought to be conscious of the fact that the fees vary; they do not have to go to an eminent lawyer or more glorified lawyer and pay his high fees. As I have heard one of the magistrates in one of the courts say, there are lots of hungry lawyers about — do not let us fool ourselves.....

Mr. WEEKES: On a point of order, Sir, I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that every man likes the best for himself and to suggest that people go to fourth or fifth rate lawyers to represent them is, in my opinion, nonsensical.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have heard this idea of the brain drain; and that the increase of fees may very well lead to lawyers or doctors or other professionals — and in particular the doctors leaving Barbados or not coming here to perform duties. This statement

cannot be accurate because whether fees are charged for professionals to operate in Barbados or not, if a lawyer, doctor or professional has a function or an interest to perform in any country and has got a contribution to make, he will not let a fee prevent him from doing so. True professionalism leads to this sort of thing. You cannot be selfish, irrespective of what the fees are. He will make sure that he returns to his country or to a country and make his professional services available to the community.

And what about this brain drain? Here again I cannot understand the thinking; it cannot be logical, when under the Democratic Labour Party they put the fees on. Why did the member for St. Philip South not get up then and tell the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister then, the present member for St. John, that there could be a brain drain? Why didn't he talk about the brain drain then? He said absolutely nothing on that occasion. There could not have been a brain drain then, but he can see a brain drain now, because he wants to get up and criticise the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister for this measure. I must say that this Resolution before the House today comes as a result of the Budgetary Proposals of the Prime Minister, and I am supporting it because I feel that in a budget there have to be means whereby the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance raises money, and this is an area in which we intend to raise money so that the people will have the benefit. Let us not fool ourselves — when the fees are paid into the Treasury, the fees will go towards helping the people to be provided better services: so what nonsense are they coming in here with today to say that the Barbadian people will suffer? The money from professional fees will be taken and redistributed to the poor people of this country to provide the medicines in the various services which this Government intends to provide. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want this honourable House to understand that there should not be any talk about integrity or moral conduct among professionals alone. And I would like today to ask the trade union leaders and people who are in responsible positions, where they are professionals — teachers, doctors, lawyers, surveyors — to behave like true professionals, with dignity, realizing that the poor people will suffer and they too in the end will suffer because the immoral conduct of the people who are supposed to be their leaders will be so poor that they will eventually suffer financially and economically. This is what I want the hon. members from that side to understand; that professionalism should be confined not only to

lawyers, doctors and surveyors, but all of those people in responsible positions like trade union leaders and their colleagues.

1.50 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I would like to wind up very shortly, if no other hon. member wishes to speak, Sir. I am obliged to the hon. member for St. Lucy for his cogent and well argued speech in favour of a prices and incomes policy.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I credit the Prime Minister with a little more intelligence than he is displaying here.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I do not know, does he want me to withdraw the words "I congratulate the hon. member for his cogent and well argued speech?" If necessary I will withdraw them, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe he is referring to your high level of intelligence.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: But nonetheless, the hon. member for St. Lucy made a reasoned contribution to the debate which all concerned should thank him for. The hon. member for St. Michael South, I am less able to say what he was talking about, except that apparently the earth will now shake because the Minister of Health, or my understanding of the Minister of Health was that there were 130 doctors in Barbados but he says there are 160. This proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Prime Minister is a wicked and untruthful person. I cannot help if that is the inference which the hon. member wants to draw. He has sat too long at the right hand....

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to interrupt the hon. member, he has given a very short reply, but I am not trying to prove that he is wicked or untruthful, I was merely — and I thought the hon. member would be glad, would welcome the information from official statistics — but I was not really implying any such thing. If I want to say so, I will come out openly and say so, not at \$3,500 or \$6,000 as the case may be. I would not be caught on that one.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am obliged to the hon. member. During his term of office as a Minister many public officers told me that he was the best Permanent Secretary in the Government; now I understand what they

mean. But I would also say this, and it arises out of the speech made by the hon. members, that there seems to be a lack of comprehension of the point made by the Attorney General about professional fees.

When you increase the fees of a professional by \$180 a year, there is no increase which he should make to the fees he charges to the public which represents any part of that, because the amount is so small that if a doctor charged 50 cents more he would cover the difference in a matter of a few days. There is no amount, unless he is going to charge two-thirds of a cent, or one-third of a cent, depending on what his income is, to bring in that amount of money. The point that hon. members must make is that the professional persons must be told not to increase their fees on the pretence that it is to do with increased licence fees, because the increased licence fees are slight in relation to the weekly income of a professional person, and I say weekly. I do not believe that there is any doctor for whom \$180 represents one percent of his income, I just do not believe there is any doctor working for less gross than \$18,000 a year, I just do not see it, and therefore whatever charge he makes to cover that, even if you assume he pays no income tax at all, will have to be less than one percent of his fees. This is really the way we have to look at this, so all of us must make it clear that modest increases of this sort are not to be measured in terms of the percentage increase, they are to be measured in terms of the percentage income and outgoings of the persons concerned, and at that level they should not, and ought not to attract any increase.

If I could very respectfully say so, Sir, the profession of which you are one of the leading stars at the junior level, because you have not been put up into the \$500 a year class, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are referring to the television, of course.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: We are not charging you to appear on television yet, you only have to pay yourself on the T.V., not to appear, you have to pay a little more for that. In that profession, what kind of general increase would bring in as small a sum as \$180? If you charge every client \$5 more, for most lawyers that I know have more than 40 clients, and if you charge every client \$5 more you would cover your money in no time at all, \$5 is a negligible increase, so we are mistaken in speaking of these increases at any level.

The point made by the hon. member for St. Philip South on surveyors I think has already been adverted to in here, and he will be happy to hear that towards the end of September last year a crash course in surveying was approved at the Community College, and it is hoped very much that — and I think the number is six, I am sure the hon. member for St. Michael South will correct me if it turns out to be $5\frac{1}{2}$ or $7\frac{2}{3}$ but I think the number currently being trained in surveying at the Community College is six and will enter the pool of land surveyors qualified to carry out a limited range of functions in surveying and ease some of the backlog of surveying in the island at the present time.

I therefore beg to move now, Sir, that the Bill be read a second time.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now two minutes past 2.00. This sitting is suspended until 2.45 p.m. today.
2.00 p.m.

On resumption:

QUESTION TIME

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now Question Time.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there being no quorum, I am asking that the bell be rung.

The bell was rung and a quorum was obtained.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Michael South West and his Question No. 26.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice that the answer to Question No. 26 is ready. I do not see the hon. member in his seat. I therefore propose to lay the answer.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That also applies to Question No. 27 asked by the same hon. member. Question No. 34 asked by the member for St. Michael South.

Mr. SANDIFORD: To ask the Prime Minister: 1. What are the exact terms of reference of the Commission set up by the government to review the salaries and allowances of Members of Parliament? 2. On what date was the decision taken to set up this Commission? 3. On what date did the Commission hold its first meeting? 4. How many other meetings has the Commission held so far, and on what dates?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 34 is as follows:—

A Commission has been appointed to review the remuneration and a pension scheme for parliamentarians as well as the remuneration of the Governor General and to make recommendations for such revision as might be considered appropriate. 2. The Cabinet decision for the appointment of the Commission was taken on the 6th January, 1977. 3. The Commission held its first meeting on the 29th March, 1977 and a subsequent one on 2nd April, 1977.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful to the Prime Minister for the prompt reply that he has given. I have no supplementary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is the end of Question Time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is one item under Private Members' Business standing in the name of the hon. member for St. Michael South. I do not know if the hon. member is willing to start this item today. If so, he may at Your Honour's request.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, with your permission, I am proposing to start debate on this particular Resolution, particularly in view of the absence of the Hon. Minister under whose portfolio this matter falls.

RESUMPTION OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Government Business be now resumed and that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on the Bill which was given a second reading.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think that the hon. member for St. Lucy raised the question as to whether or not a division was called for prior to the suspension for lunch.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I indicated that I wanted to have a division. The Clerk and the Chairman heard me. I was somewhat aghast when I heard you ask for a suspension of the House. I had asked for a division before that particular time.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you still desirous of having your division?

Mr. GREAVES: Yes.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sure that members on this side and on that side would not hesitate to allow a division to be called for. We are quite willing to have a division.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the Minister who presented the Bill, I did not have the slightest idea that a division was called for. I certainly did not hear it, and I equally have not the slightest hesitation in accepting that if the hon. member for St. Lucy said that he wanted a division he meant it and ought to have it if the rules of the House permit. I certainly have absolutely no objection. This was often done to us in the past. We called for a division and the presiding officers would contradict us. I have absolutely no intention of insulting the integrity of any hon. member or his rights as a member in this manner. I welcome the opportunity to reverse from the evil precedents that unfortunately have been set in this House.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:—

AYES: Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Hon. C. L. BOLDEN Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Hon. L. R. TULL, Mr. WARD, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SISNETT, Mr. BRADSHAW and Mr. ODLE — 10.

NOES: Mr. WEEKES, Mr. SANDIFORD and Mr. GREAVES — 3.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that you do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on the Bill to amend the Professional Registration Act (Cap. 378).

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

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

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG Clauses 1 and 2 of the Bill were agreed to.

Clause 3 was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, under Clause 3, bearing in mind the explanation I have given, I do not now intend to proceed with the circulation of amendments; and therefore I beg to move that Clause 3 in its present terms stand part. This will come into operation as from the 16th April, 1977.

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

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

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to move that you do now report the passing of one Bill in Committee.

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

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

2.55 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be now read a third time.

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

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

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill do now pass and be cited as the Professions (Registration Fees) (Amendment) Act, 1977.

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

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

ENTERTAINMENT TAX (EXEMPTION) ACT, 1977

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very simple Bill, and I can

really add nothing to what I said in presenting the Budget Proposals. This Bill covers cinemas and other places of entertainment. It covers certain open air entertainment spectacles. Since the percentage fee was first placed as an imposition, the problems of law and order have, to some extent, increased. It does seem that you get bigger crowds. Although I do not believe that anything has happened that could interrupt our calling Barbados a law-abiding society; yet there is a little hint occasionally of unruly behaviour and, therefore, although this is not a matter which inflation has any effect on — because I am not going to seek to say that you raise the percentage to deal with inflation — inflation takes care of its own percentages — yet the scope of the service which we have to supply has so expanded that we think that the public ought not to complain at paying a slightly larger amount of money for the services which the Government provide at public entertainment and also paying a slightly larger sum of money for the enjoyment of the entertainment itself.

There have been taxes on other forms of entertainment most specifically, especially those relating to gambling and, therefore, I consider that there could be a tax upon this. I would just like to deal very shortly with one matter which gives me some reason to regret that the hon. member for St. John is not in his seat. It is one of the unfortunate things that, in this entire hemisphere, whenever you talk about gambling or entertainment, somebody speaks of the Mafia, I was informed that at a public meeting held in Independence Square when the hon. member for St. John was treating the crowd to one of his usual self-laudatory, irrelevant, time-wasting and utterly boring speeches that he achieved a situation at half past ten at which the crowd was beginning to go home and he, therefore, looked around and said, "And I am going to tell you about Tom Adams and the Mafia."

There are persons who have told me that they were opening their car doors and they shut their car doors to hear about Tom Adams and the Mafia. Of course, the remaining half an hour of the speech continued to be tiresome, boring, long-winded and self-laudatory, as empty of content as of style, and there was no reference to Tom Adams and the Mafia. We have to get away from this idea that to impose a tax on one-armed bandits in some way implies an association with the Mafia. We must get away from the idea of assuming that Barbados has been visited by the Mafia in connection with any activities lawfully carried on in the Island. In my opinion those who employed Mr. Virgo and Mr. Cappadero will

better know what interest the Mafia has in Barbados than the members of the Barbados Labour Party, and I say no more than that.

I would just like to allay all rumours. The Government has not received any application to open a casino; we have not the slightest intention of opening any casino; we have not received any application from anybody whom we consider could be associated with the Mafia; we have not been asked to carry out, or permit, or take part in, or turn a blind eye to any gambling activity such as is traditionally associated with criminal elements. There are a number of gentlemen who have these one-armed bandits in Barbados. A number of them are Barbadians. Those who are not Barbadians seem to have fitted in very well with Barbadian society, for I, with my own eyes, saw one of them who, apparently, is being abused now by the Democratic Labour Party, canvassing for Mr. Carmichael in the City- By-Election. With my own eyes I saw him going in and out of houses with some of the hon. members opposite, and he told me on numerous occasions that he was canvassing for Mr. Carmichael and I think he said he was associated with Mr. Eyre Hoppin in connection with operating some of these amusement machines. I believe they were all associated with the Commercial Amusement Company. I have never said that Mr. Carmichael or Mr. Eyre Hoppin are agents for the Mafia, and I do believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that hon. members opposite could be a little more responsible and give us credit — I refer particularly to the hon. members for St. Michael South West and St. John — for having the interest of Barbados, at least, as much at heart as they, and having a little knowledge of what goes on in the world.

We, for a long time, have been looking at what we think are a number of reprehensible practices. We have established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate them. I do believe that those who are being investigated should know better than to try to drag these red herrings into the argument to try to save themselves from the public opprobrium that may be theirs in particular instances. This Entertainment Tax, we are seeking to put it up.....

Mr. SANDIFORD: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the Prime Minister did indicate that there was some member of some company he called. I do not recall the name. I think it was Commercial Amusement Limited.
3.05 p.m.

Maybe the hon. member can refresh my mind on whatever is the name of the company

who went canvassing in the city by-election with members opposite. There are three of us in here. If the hon. member would clarify his statement, I think it would lead to a greater understanding.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I see that the hon. member for St. Michael South is very conscious that his services were not called on to the extent which his abilities in his and in the view of other persons might have warranted in the recent by-election and therefore I regret that I should have categorised him or indeed either of the two other hon. members present as being those who took part in any canvassing in the city by-election. I did however see some hon. members on the other side, although perhaps not present, involved in the city by-election. I know that these three hon. members, as I said, did not find favour with the then authorities of the Democratic Labour Party, and the hon. member for St. Michael South I am sure will be the first to agree that he has expressed upon previous occasions his distress, regret or merely the fact that he was not asked to speak in the St. Philip by-election. The hon. member for St. Philip South also was taken out of the firing line at an early stage in the St. Philip by-election and never appeared in the City at all. I do not think that anybody would accuse either the hon. member for St. Lucy or the hon. member for St. Philip South of having been among the stars of the City or any other bye or other elections conducted by the Democratic Labour Party. I thought the hon. member was saying, perhaps I should not name these people if I have not given you notice and to that extent I think I should withdraw the reference to Mr. Hoppin because it was not intended to be a reflection on his conduct or anything, but if that is the objection, I would gladly withdraw it, but certainly I never saw the gentleman canvassing with any of these three hon. members.

I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when one examines the nature of this tax, one sees that it has to do with a whole set of operations including films, the Turf Club race meetings, the annual Agricultural Industrial Exhibition, theatrical performances and stage plays, etc. I just want to speak briefly on an area which would be affected by this particular imposition, and it has to do with cinemas. The point I

want to raise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, relates to the situation where obviously the person who goes to the cinema will be called upon to pay 10 cents more than the tax originally charged.

I want to make the point that from time to time when one goes to the cinema, one encounters a number of difficulties and problems and I think that certain criticisms and strictures have got to be levelled at the people who operate cinemas in Barbados. Of course not all of them keep the cinemas in the same kind of way, but one would hope that at least the public who would be paying to enter the cinemas to view films would be accorded with an opportunity of being able to view any particular film in the kind of surroundings which will enable one to view the film concerned in a fair degree of comfort. I have gone into a number of cinemas in Barbados and of course not all of them are up to the same standard, and I should think that some effort should be made to ensure that the cinemas are kept and maintained in a proper condition, and that the kind of facilities which they offer to patrons are the kind of facilities which would encourage patrons to return.

Now I should also like, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make reference to the general quality of films which seems to be appearing on the market and have been appearing in Barbados for some time. I recognise that we do not produce films in Barbados and it may very well be that this is the general trend in the world, that is, there seems to be an over-excess of films which portray violence and some of the more seamy qualities of life, and one would hope that people who have got to select films to be shown in Barbados and indeed the Film Censorship Board which has the responsibility for passing films which will be shown in Barbados, will insist that cinema owners and those people who deal in the exchange of films would try to raise the general level of films and change the course of the general kind of films which seems to be appearing in Barbados.

I make specific reference to the tremendous amount of films which every week is advertised which are to do with violence and really do not portray the kind of qualities one would want to see instilled particularly in the younger people in the community, and I would therefore hope that when we are looking at the question of importing a tax which as I said would have to be borne by people who visit the cinemas and other forms of entertainment which are covered under the Act that an effort will be made to ensure that not only are the

surroundings in the cinemas the kind of surroundings which will enable one to view a film in comfort but at the same time would ensure that there is a better quality of film which reaches the public of Barbados.

3.15 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, note will be taken of what the hon. member has asked in respect of censorship of films; the matter is being considered. Indeed, at the present time the functions of the Censorship Board are being examined.

I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: In speaking of Clause 2 I would like to thank the proprietors of what I believe is the largest cinema chain here for their cooperation in respect of this matter. And indeed, Sir, I do not think there is any reason to hide a man's name if you want to thank him, and I particularly want to mention Mr. Maurice Jones, the managing director of Roodals Theatre Limited who has just given an undertaking that he will adjust the prices at the Empire cinema — I think it is the Empire cinema, I am not sure, — and the others have agreed — he is taking the lead in this matter in such a way that they will themselves absorb the incidence of tax for the cheapest tickets. These will not be increased. This is the information I have been given that the tax will be passed on only at the higher levels. I hope that this will convince the hon. member for St. Lucy that the Government has been trying to go to some trouble to ensure that these increases are passed on to persons best able to bear them.

I beg to move that Clause 2 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

BILL TO AMEND THE LIQUOR LICENCES ACT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 5 be the next order of the day. We are not ready to proceed with the amendment to the Stamp Duty Act. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance cannot deal with this Item today because of certain bits of information which he is awaiting before he can go on with this Item.

I therefore beg to move that Order No. 5 be the next Order of the day.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

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

The Clerk called the fifth Order — A Bill to move the second reading of the Bill to amend the Liquor Licences Act, Cap. 182.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very simple Act on Liquor Licences. Liquor licences are charged for in cash and therefore inflation overtakes the fees unless one is very alert. This is a relatively important area of Barbadian life, where people resort to premises where liquor is sold, and therefore it has never been thought appropriate in the past to allow for alterations of liquor licence fees by order, and I must say Sir, that I agree with that general policy. I myself took part in a debate on the occasion of the last alteration of fees, which was in 1968. A substantial debate was entered into on that occasion. In many cases, Sir, these increased liquor licence fees will really be hardly any burden at all to the person who pays them because many establishments where liquor is sold used to pay the trade tax and now will no longer pay any trade tax. However

I have increased the fees for a retail licence by only \$50. I think that shops are well able to pay a retail liquor licence of \$50, but I would not wish to put it any higher because I feel this is really a case where the few dollars a week may be of some significance to the shop keepers. There are country shops where you really cannot get a beer after the first couple of days in a week because the shop keeper literally does not have the cash to buy a large enough stock of beer and soft drinks to cover all the customers who may come; and I believe, in assessing these fees, that although very substantial increases may be in place for the bigger shops — and I will talk about them in a moment — there is so much pressure on the country shop keepers, especially those who operate their own businesses, like those who keep a little parlour open for a few friends to come in and take a drink when evening comes — all at a very low margin of profit — that I really do not wish to overburden them.

Restaurant licences, Sir, I have also left at \$150, although I think this is a more marginal area. We are looking very closely at the situation of the restaurants, but for the moment we have left the licence at the present figure.

Druggist licences—\$25 to \$50—are still very little. Members' clubs — \$10 per year — was undoubtedly a little small and I don't think that anybody takes a tax of \$10 per annum very seriously. I think if a group of people were going to get together to form a members' club, with a liquor licence, should be able to pay a little under a dollar a week. This will affect sporting clubs but cannot affect places like the Bridgetown Club, Union Club and so on. I do not think that \$50 a year is beyond the capacity of the members of many of these establishments.

Occasional licences, Sir, \$15 per day — I think that most occasional licences are taken out for dances and I think that the dance prices have gone up a lot since 1968. No doubt the dance keepers will pass on this \$15 by putting another fifty cents on the dance tickets. Again Sir, hi-fi equipment has gone up and other inputs have gone up, so I think that this is not unreasonable. The more important thing to notice is this — it costs just as much for public officers in terms of their time to make out a licence for \$15 for a dance as it does for a hotel for \$5,000, the only difference is that you do not have to go before a magistrate.

3.25 p.m.

The only difference is that you do not have to go before the Magistrate, but a public officer has to sit down, sign receipt books, send to the Police to get a clearance and issue a receipt, and all this in this day and age for a money making concern, I think \$15 is by no means too high. We still get a lot of things very cheaply in Barbados, Sir.

A general wholesale licence from \$1,500 to \$2,500 per year. Again, Sir, we do not think that this is an unreasonable increase. The heaviest increases have come on hotels. It seems to me that certainly hotel prices have increased very vastly since 1968 for the supply of drinks to customers. Since 1968 there are many more visitors to the island and the habit of resorting to hotels has increased very greatly. I should also mention, Sir, that it does appear that contrary perhaps to the public expectation that there are as many defaults in paying the licence fees on the part of hotels as there are on the part of country shopkeepers. It may seem strange, but it is surprising how often you run across a situation where a hotel sells liquor without a licence, and the increases vary and the sums that we are now charging go up to \$5,000 per annum for a hotel with over 100 bedrooms. Again, Sir, I do not think this is an unreasonable increase.

I have no doubt that the hotels are discovering that a man does not become an idiot merely because he leaves his own country and goes to another to have a vacation, and that if the hotels seek to pass this on to their customers they will discover that people who stay in the Hilton are fully capable of finding out that the drinks at the Pebble cost much less than they cost at the Hilton, and people who stay I believe at the hotels in St. James do not find it impossible to visit John Moore's Bar if the situation arises, and I recommend the new Schedule of fees to hon. members and I recommend the principle of an increase after eight years in this particular matter for the consideration of the House.

I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this particular Bill, and I am very glad that the Prime Minister did indicate that he is aware of the problems which the small shopkeepers are having, particularly those who find it difficult to get the necessary capital in order to run their business, including the

purchase of the beverages that seem to keep the people of this country going when they gather for that social drink. This is a very real problem and it has to do with the economic growth and development in this country, and I certainly would like to make a very strong appeal to the Government to examine the plight of the small shopkeepers to see in what way assistance, expertise and relief could be brought to those shopkeepers in carrying out their business and in order to try to earn their living. These are people if they were not so engaged would be on the labour market looking for jobs and employment with other people, and the more persons that we can keep in private employment who can out of their own resources provide for themselves and their families, I think the better it is for this country, so this is a matter if we can give assistance and help to these small shopkeepers who not only provide a service right within the districts where their customers actually live, but at the same time by their efforts to eke out a livelihood in private enterprise, keeping down the numbers of persons seeking jobs on the labour market, and I believe if assistance can be given to these people that it would be a definite contribution towards the development of this country.

I would like to make a strong appeal to the Government to give very urgent study to the problem of the small shopkeeper. The previous Government did attempt to look into this matter, but those efforts for one reason or another did not come to fruition, and it may be that now that there is a new Government and one which, as the Prime Minister has said, is very conscious of the problems involved, because the increases have been kept at a minimum, he says, or not moved at all for the retailers, the retail licences, I do hope that this problem will be given attention. It is a very serious problem and I hope that all the knowledge and information which the Government has will be brought to bear on this problem.

The second point which I wish to refer to relates to the question of the transfer of licences. I believe the position is that if one is interested in transferring a licence from one particular premise to another premise in the same magisterial district that there is no need to pay afresh for the licence but the transfer can be given merely on the notifications, but if one is moving from premises within a particular magisterial district to premises outside of that particular magisterial district I believe that one has to apply for a new licence afresh, even though one may have paid the full licence already, and I think this type of

provision in the existing legislation would work a hardship or could work a hardship on persons who would feel that they have already paid for a full year's licence but the fact that they are moving from one particular area which may fall under the Magistrate for District "B" and you move to District "C" the mere fact that you move from "B" to "C" means that you have to apply for a licence afresh and pay this fee which has now been increased, whereas if you were moving from a place within the same district that would not apply.

I believe that is the position but I am certain ... (A VOICE: Where is Sleepy?) I do not take my advice from that source, not that he is not capable and competent of giving it, but I have not reached the level of the Q.C.s and the S.C.s, I am in a different bracket. I think the member for St. Michael South East was talking about the different levels, so I am not in that level nor indeed when the member for St. Thomas was practising at the Bar could I get into that bracket, even though I did not think that you would have got the distinction yet of Q.C. or S.C., but certainly the qualities and the advocacy, as I have been made to understand, was up to that level, but I could not reach that level.

That is the position as I understand it. I merely throw out these points for consideration. 3.35 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, whatever advice the hon. member has received on this matter, it appears to be good advice. We have adopted many of the provisions of the Liquor Licences Act from similar provisions enforced in the United Kingdom and it will be found very generally in Common Law Jurisdiction throughout the world that there is a pattern of local authority over licencing policy and the germ of it is that while in Barbados we find it impossible to conceive that the magistrate in St. Lucy can have a different attitude towards a licensee for the granting of a licence to that of the magistrates in St. Peter; and yet in fact if you think it over, no magistrate in St. Lucy is going to tolerate the automatic transfer of the whole of Baxters Road. Clearly different districts call for different policies, and that has to inform the licensing policy generally.

It is assumed that the Licensing Justice in a particular district would know his district and would know whether another shop can be accommodated, whether this man is robust enough to conduct a business in Baxters Road. Again it may be whether that lady can carry on a business in the law abiding, sensible and

salubrious district of Porey Spring, St. Thomas, that has a keen political insight and understanding, may not be so capable of dealing with the crowd she might meet in Nelson Street.

For this reason I take it that it is assumed that the Licensing Justice who has been accustomed to giving licences in one area will be familiar with the conditions throughout that entire area and therefore can easily grant licences while this might not be so for the Justice in another district. So I would suggest to the hon. member that as present advised I cannot say that I am convinced that the law should be changed; but I have an open mind about it; and if good argument supported by the sort of statistics which will be readily available to the hon. member is given in this House it may well convince the Government; and if he feels strongly about it, I would gratuitously suggest that he only has to delete four words. He only has to delete the words "within the same district" in section 18(1)(c) of the Liquor Licences Act.

The Clerk of the House will be glad to assist him in drafting a Private Members Bill; and who knows? He may succeed in being the first member of the Democratic Labour Party ever in Opposition to get a law changed. I will not object to it. It is time that the members of the House do their homework. If they feel strongly about something like this, come and do it. When I was in the Opposition I had the age of majority reduced from 21 to 18. It is not beyond the capacity of the hon. member for St. Michael South to sign his name to a one clause Bill and say that he obtained a favourable verdict from Parliament in due course, if it is put forward the Government will certainly give him time to debate it and put up his arguments. He has had a preview of the arguments that he is likely to have on the other side. You cannot expect the Government to do everything. They pay everybody in here to do some work.

The question that the Bill be now read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on the Bill.

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

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

SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE Clauses 1 and 2 inclusive of the Bill were agreed to.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you do now report the passing of one Bill in Committee.

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

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

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE the Bill was read a second time and passed.

BILL TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Item No. 6 is the next Order under Government Business. I beg to move that the second reading of a Bill to amend the Income Tax Act Cap. 73 be now taken.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

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

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is in the nature of a left over Bill. Last year a number of alterations in Income Tax and Corporation Tax were made by the former Minister of Finance in his budgetary presentation of the 30th July, 1976. Unfortunately certain matters intervened and he was unable to act upon his proposals; and it fell to other hands to decide how far they should be put into force.

For the greater part, Sir, the then proposals have been accepted, particularly the 25 per cent imputed tax credit. This is a proposal which we want to bring into force as soon as possible so that the necessary assistance can be given to shareholders. Also, Sir, this Bill imposes a tax on the premium income of companies transacting life insurance business in Barbados. It also provides that loans to directors of companies or their

relatives have to be taxed if they are not repaid within the stipulated time.

3.45 p.m.

We are applying the withholding tax on the after tax earnings of any office branch or agency of a non-resident company. I claim no responsibility for the authorship of these proposals, except to a limit to the extent in so far as our Party pressed for the tax credit. But equally, Sir, I in no way repudiate them. They are useful proposals such as are made on the advice of your Tax Advisers in any properly-run Department of Finance. Particularly hon. members may feel that in controlled companies loans to directors — those of us who are familiar with some of the activities that go on — have begun to get out of hand. Also we may feel that Insurance Companies have not been making the contribution to Government revenue that they should be making when you consider their profitability, admittedly a secret matter, but I can assure hon. members in general terms that, judging by the documents that arrive on my desk, the Insurance business, is not doing badly in Barbados by any means. This can certainly be agreed with, and in the light of the fact that some companies have been paying next door to no tax, I think the tax on the premium income is wise.

All of us are concerned about the activities in the multi-nationals. Many of us are concerned about the activities of the Caymen Islands Companies and others. Barbados may want to be a tax haven for others but, unfortunately, this is a matter upon which the Government has to balance between conflicting principles that, as far as possible, we must try to enforce our own tax laws and protect our own revenue. That is one principle as opposed to the other principle of, perhaps, extending a tax haven to others, and this withholding tax relates to some extent to that.

This is not the only amendment to the Income Tax Act which may be expected during the course of this financial year. However, there is an urgency which can be observed if one looks at Clause 7 of the proposed Bill because in the tax credit provisions I have specifically made them retroactive so that persons covered will be able to get back their credit in respect of the returns which they have just made up to the 30th April. I think I would have been quite prepared to delay this Bill longer were it not for that, and were it not also that the withholding tax also applies to the year 1976, and in certain of these taxes matters in relation to them have to be dealt with not later than the 30th June this year. This,

Sir, effectively is the Income Tax (Amendment No. 1) Act, 1977. It is not normal that you can ever say when you are introducing an amending Act that it is going to be No. 1, but on this occasion we could almost put it into the title although I do not think that we will.

I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on this Bill.

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

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

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

Clause 3 was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, Clause 3 relates to the assessment of premium incomes. Since last year's Budget representations have been made by certain Insurance Companies relating to the assessment of CARICOM registered Insurance Companies. After some consideration was given to this matter, I have decided to treat CARICOM registered Insurance Companies differently from Companies registered outside the Caribbean community. There have been a number of developments in the Life Insurance business in Trinidad where very generally the Government is using its immense resources to move in a way that, unfortunately, we cannot yet move in Barbados although this is definitely an area where the Government considers that local control is desirable. There have also been developments in Jamaica, and it is partly on the basis of reciprocity that we have agreed to defining foreign companies in terms of foreign, if I can call it that, and Caribbean Community Companies and differentiating between them in terms of the premium income which is going to be charged.

A reference to Clause 3 of the Bill, which amends Section 19 of the Act, will show hon. members exactly what we mean at this point.
3.55 p.m.

Clauses 3 and 4 were called and passed.

Clause 5 was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, hon. members will observe that we are going to charge the Caricom companies 1½% of the premium income and the foreign companies 3% of their premium income.

I beg to move that Clause 5 stand part.

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

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

Clauses 6 to 9 inclusive were called and passed.

On motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government does not propose to do Order No. 7, and this therefore brings an end to Government Business. I am quite sure that hon. members on both sides are anxious to get back to their respective duties, and particularly the members of the Opposition since I know they have to enlighten the public on the Budgetary Proposals. However, I would like to warn them — this is a very early warning — that I am sure the Minister of Finance is almost ready, if not ready, to present his Budgetary Proposals for 1978, and I therefore would not like hon. members on the other side not to have the opportunity to prepare themselves for 1978, of course with a few modifications as we go on, though they would not have the problem of enlightening the public. They should not complain they were not warned

as I am giving them early warning in the month of May.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 10th May, 1977, at 12 o'clock noon.

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

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