
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1976 – 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 7th November, 1978.

Pursuant to the adjournment the House of Assembly met at 12.25 p.m., o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P. (Speaker); Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment); Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, M.A., (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning); Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD, M.A., (Econ.); Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Health and National Insurance); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs); Mr. J. G. ODLE, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees); Mr. M. C. C. WARD; Mr. V. L. JOHNSON M.A.; and Mr. DeL. O BRADSHAW.

Prayers were read by Fr. F. A. Cayless.

Mr. WEEKES, Mr. JOHNSON, His Honour E. E. ALLEYNE and Mr. SISNETT entered the House and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of 31st October, 1978.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes for the 31st October, 1978 only arrived this morning and since they have not been circulated I would like to have confirmation of the Minutes deferred.

Mr. SPEAKER: Confirmation of the Minutes of 31st October, 1978 will be deferred.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received copies of the Accounts and Statements for September, 1978 as prepared by the Accountant General.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to fix the conditions and emoluments payable to head teachers, deputy head teachers and various categories of teachers in secondary schools.

Mr. Speaker, if I may crave the indulgence of the House under this Head, I had hoped to give notice today of a Resolution seeking to supplement numerous Heads of personal emoluments to make effective the general increase in salaries that has been negotiated by the Union for public workers. Unfortunately, I am unable to give notice of that Resolution today, but I would like to inform the House in advance that I will be giving notice of it next week November 14, and will be seeking leave of the House to go through all the stages of the Resolution that day so that the necessary funds may be appropriated in order to ensure that public officers will receive their back pay and new salaries without further delay.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$133,600 from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1978–79 Part II Capital as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1978–79 No. 14 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Michael South, his question re agriculture land brought back into production.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs:

1. How many acres of land have been brought back into agricultural production since September 1976 through the instrumentality of Government?

2. Would the Minister give the location and acreage of each such area of land, and state for what period of time that land had been out of cultivation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The same hon. member, his question re fourteen year old pupils who left various schools.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education and Culture:

1. How many fourteen year old pupils left voluntarily or were required to leave each of the following schools in the school years 1976/77 and 1977/78 respectively:

St. Leonard's Boys'
St. Leonard's Girls'
Ellerslie Secondary,
St. Lucy Secondary,
The Garrison Secondary,
St. George Secondary,
West St. Joseph Secondary,
Princess Margaret Secondary,
Springer Memorial Secondary,
Parkinson Secondary.

2. Would the Minister also supply the corresponding figures in respect of the fourteen year old pupils leaving each of the Government's all-age or composite schools.

Mr. SPEAKER: The same hon. member, his question re educational centres.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education and Culture:

1. How many educational centres were specially established by the Government during the school years 1976/77, and 1977/78 respectively in the re-absorption programme for fourteen year old school leavers?

2. Would the Minister state in respect of each such centre and for the school years indicated above:

- (a) its name and location.
- (b) the roll at the beginning and at the end of each school year, as well as the level of attendance and the number of drop-outs.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 7 is ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the day's Sitting.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

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

12.35 p.m.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Government Business be now taken, and that Item No. 1 be the instant Order of the Day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Item No. 1 is the instant order of the Day.

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORISE BORROWING BY THE ISSUE OF TREASURY BILLS

Order No. 1 was called — A Resolution to authorise the Minister responsible for Finance to borrow, by the issue of Treasury Bills, further sums not exceeding \$40 million.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, it becomes necessary from time to time, especially in such parlous times as we have been passing through in the last six years, to increase the limits which Government may borrow for the carrying on of its day to day business; and the Resolution now before the House relates to precisely this matter. There has been some public interest expressed in the last few months in the question of the Government's general financial position and Government's indebtedness in what is known as the National Debt.

From time to time, Sir, Ministers of Finance have had to feel constrained when they read or hear criticisms relating to the size of the National Debt from uninformed persons, persons who should be informed, or in other words ought to know better, and perhaps persons who are informed and know better and deliberately seek to mislead the public. Looking about me, Sir, I do not see anybody in the last category; but I must say that I see one or two persons in the intermediate category, who ought to be informed, and ought to know better.

The Government of any country, Sir with which I am familiar, generally carries on its business with a certain amount of borrowing. Even rich Governments as the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the Government of Saudi Arabia, certainly the Government of the United States and the Governments of Germany and Japan, they all borrow money to carry on the day to day business of the country. They borrow either on short term or on long

term. Short term borrowing in Barbados — we in Barbados following the traditions of most parts of the world, borrow by way of what is called Treasury Bills, which is what the Resolution before us today is about. Long term borrowing — we borrow by way of debentures, public loans or whatever we choose to make use of. Short term borrowing is effective for the purpose of meeting the day to day expenses of Government, of smoothing out, Sir, what are called cash flow difficulties.

These are a lot of esoteric words, words which really are only intended, I sometimes think, to cast dust in the eyes of the public. All that it means is that some months the Government has a big revenue and other months it has a small one. Two months ago, in August, the official Government revenue was \$14 million. In fact it was more than that, but for accounting reasons it was published as \$14 million. In a week or so, Sir, the figures for October will be laid before Your Honour, and they will show that the Government's revenue for October this year, that is last month, was a record \$36 million; and to smooth out the differences between the flow of cash in July and August which are not big months for cash, and October, which is always a big month for cash, we need to have short term borrowing which will be in the form of Treasury Bills which are repayable after three months.

But it is found, Sir, that the level of short term borrowing never really and truly diminishes. Very few countries ever undertake or have not undertaken for a long time to repay all the short term borrowing even when they can afford to do it. Perhaps at the moment — I must emphasise that — the Government is not really badly off for cash. At the end of September the Government's overdraft at the Central Bank was \$74½ million. Yesterday afternoon it closed at \$6½ million; but that does not mean, Sir, that when it comes to the Treasury Bills that we are going to pipe back in \$10 million, \$15 million or \$18 million of Treasury Bills. As a matter of fact, it is in the nature of Government financing that we do what is called "roll over". We keep offering the Treasury Bills for sale every three months.

I do not want to go into all the abstrusities and statistics. There are statistics of trade and the commercial banks are required by the Central Bank to hold a certain amount of cash in Government securities; and we therefore have to make Treasury Bills available to them so that they can find something to put the authorised amount of cash in. This is true in Barbados as it is in every other developed country which operates a system such as ours.

Sir, as time goes on it is found that with the expansion of the economy, with the quantum of deposits in the commercial banks, the general over all need for short term financing increases, irrespective of the Government's over all financial position. For this reason,

Sir we are seeking to increase the limit that the Government may offer to the public by way of Treasury Bill borrowing. We do not, I think, need for the purposes of running the Government any increase this month, next month or perhaps even in December or January. The present level of \$130 million would be adequate over the next three months, and indeed quite a modest increase might be adequate over a longer period; but we are taking a substantial upper limit at this time, Mr. Speaker, because having to return to the House every time there is a little fluctuation in the cash flow of the Government is a tedious and perhaps unnecessary expense once a full and adequate explanation is given to the House of the general need to have an increase in the level of short term commitments.

We expect that this \$40 million will safely see us through the remainder of this year, the remainder of next year and perhaps if the economy continues relatively buoyant, and the Government's revenue and no catastrophe affects Barbados, no sabotage is successful and the country continues to progress, we may be able to get through the greater part of 1980 with no increase. I am hoping that this will be enough to take us for 18 months and perhaps two years. I am hoping, Sir. I can say no more than that.

Now, Sir, I thought that in addition to dealing with the minutiae of the Resolution before the House, that I would just make a few general remarks about the Public Debt, and the Government's general financial situation. I am happy to be able to report to the House that the improvement in the Government's revenues which became apparent earlier this year has continued and gives some grounds for cautious optimism, Sir, that we will be able to weather the current financial year and meet increases for Public Officers slightly more comfortably than seemed apparent a year ago, or even nine months ago when we had the debate on the second reading of the Estimates.

12.45 p.m.

The revenue and expenditure position for October show certain favourable trends. The revenue for October 1978 was up 57% over revenue for October, 1977 and the overall Government revenue so far in this financial year is up to 22% over the last financial year. The country's figures of current revenue now stand at \$161 million for the first seven months of the financial year and current expenditure stands at \$148.5 million showing an overall current account surplus of \$12½ million.

Capital Expenditure has been \$29.7 million for this year, so the overall deficit so far this year is \$17.2 million. At the same time last year the overall deficit was \$48.7 million and so Government revenues have shown a turn around of over \$30 million in the first seven months of the financial year.

This has been achieved, Sir, without any recourse to excessive Central Bank financing, which is the modern phrase for what the generation before us used to know as printing money. You do not have to print money anymore, you resort to the Central Bank Financial Institution. So, as I have said, the Government's overdraft at the Central Bank now stands at, according to yesterday's figure, just over \$6½ million.

It has also been achieved without any reduction in the services provided by Government. Far from that, we have increased the old aged pensions. We have paid the increased pensions. We have increased the number of old aged pensioners. Despite these increases in welfare payments, despite the increase in educational services offered to the public, we have been able to maintain this situation, Sir, and I would like to congratulate all concerned in keeping the increase in Government expenditure and current account down to only \$½ million over the last seven months, although Civil Servants have got increments and so on and we have also achieved this turn around in the Government finances without any increase of employment. Far from it, the economy as a whole has shown a substantial drop in unemployment, so we have turned the Government finances around and we have done this without any recourse to those deflationary policies that are so popular with the International Financial Institutions.

It was only last week, Sir, that I met with a team from the International Monetary Fund. Indeed it was a joint team of the International Monetary Fund of the World Bank and as I sat there and heard the Head of the team warning how since 1972 the economic outlook for Barbados had not been favourable, that since 1972 the management of the economy had allowed it to fall into structural imbalance, as he expressed it, how in the year 1975 it was only, as he called it an aberration, an accident, that the Government finances appeared favourable and how we would have to do something to make sure that the legacy of the past was cleared more quickly.

As I sat there I really was dying to explain to him the difference between 1972 and 1978 is that the Barbados Labour Party is in power now and a different Party was in power in 1972, because all the faults of the economy which the IMF delights in pointing out to us are faults which we inherited, are faults which we are doing our best to put right and faults which the current figures give us some hope that we are managing to put right.

The overall debt position I would perhaps just deal with before I return to this part of the scheme in case criticism is raised on these matters. The overall debt position is that in recent years the Government's general debt has increased to -- well at the end of 1977 it was \$334 million. The most up-to-date figures are in the

region of \$360 million, I think, Sir, but it is substantial and the current part of this debt is debt which is owed by the Government so to speak to itself because it is owed to the National Insurance Corporation, the National Insurance Board and it is very important to understand that as far as the National Financial Institutions and International Financial Accounting is concerned, the debt that the Government has to its Social Security Fund is not regarded as a drag on that Government's capacity to finance its operation or is not regarded in anyway as a criticism or as a fault in Government.

I believe that the Deputy Prime Minister in exchanges with the hon. member for St. Michael South West had some time ago to point out that the United States Government, which is one of the best providers of all Governments in the world with funds, at least at Federal Government level, it is over provided with funds for the services which it is obliged by law to deliver, does not fund its National Insurance and the greatest single item of revenue in the United States is National Insurance Contributions.

Social Security contributions in the United States, in fact, bring in more than Federal Income Tax and Federal Customs Revenue. Now, our Social Security contributions do not bring that much but no matter what they bring in we do not include them in Government revenue for the purpose of financing. We adopt the system of letting the National Insurance Board receive the contributions and then as the Government needs it, issue debentures to the National Insurance Board who uses the resulting money for developmental activities.

The important indicator from the point of view of foreign financial institutions is from the point of view of anybody who deals with a developing country or with any country, Sir. It is the level of foreign debt, not the level of domestic debt. The Government debt figures, as I said, Sir, the National Insurance Board holds a good part of it, the Commercial Banks hold another part and there are institutions who hold a particular part.

Debts owed by the Government of Barbados to Government Institutions constitute an overwhelming majority of the domestic sector, but the foreign sector which was \$55 million at the end of 1977 is a true indicator which the International Institutions look at and I can only give the facts. The Foreign debt of Barbados is one of the smallest foreign debts in relation to the country's Gross Domestic Product and in relation to the country's exports of any developing country in the world.

12.55 p.m.

Leaving out the oil producing countries, you will have a far way to go to find a country with as small a foreign debt as Barbados' current level of liabilities.

In 1973 the foreign debt of Barbados was \$55.4 million; that was under the Democratic Labour Party, and it formed 12.2% of the gross domestic product, our national debt. By the end of 1977 under the Barbados Labour Party we had reduced that figure to \$55.1 million a proportion of the gross domestic product of only 6.9%, less than 7%. These are negligible figures compared to such countries which receive an abundance of praise now in the more conservative economic journals such as Brazil which perhaps has a foreign debt of 40% of GDP. The foreign debt of course is going to rise this year because of the Orion debt. We have taken a conscious decision to increase the foreign debt in order to maintain some balance between domestic and foreign debt. We feel that our economic position will allow us to borrow a little more from abroad and therefore augment the level of domestic borrowing by bringing in savings from outside Barbados.

I was trying today to work out the expected level of foreign debt at the end of 1978. We shall very shortly be drawing some of the Orion Bank loan. Putting it at its extreme, because we are going to pay back some foreign borrowings in December, but putting it at its extreme, it might go over \$80 million; that is the foreign debt level. Even at that level it will be only between 8½% and 9% of our gross domestic product, and even at that level it will be covered indeed by the foreign reserves, not that that is a particularly significant indicator in our conditions. It is significant only that it is an indicator that certainly it might not have been met in earlier years. At the present therefore I think that we are maintaining a very reasonable balance of debt related to our overall financial situation.

Now the use of the debt. I have been saying in here for many years, even though apparently that was not understood by the Leader of the Opposition in those days, that debt is perfectly all right if you are borrowing it for developmental purposes. If you are borrowing money, whether it is from the National Insurance Corporation or whether it is from the Orion Bank, in order to put up a school, build factories or whatever the case may be, you are doing no more than asking future generations to help pay for what they will be enjoying. Debt that is dangerous is when you have to borrow money to cover, for example, civil servants' salaries. This is what the Government is exceptionally set against as far as we are able in the context of the Barbadian economy.

We have inherited a miserable legacy. This is the kind of legacy known to Roman law when sometimes a court trying to get a settlement of a testator's debt used to have to seek special provisions in order to fix an heir. This is the kind of legacy that you run away from, not a legacy that you are glad to go into. The debt was obviously increased when last year we had to raise \$11 million or \$12 million to pay for seafoods, to pay off the debt at

Bath, to pay off some money at BMC trying to bale out all the previous losses.

I see an hon. member on the other side, the most inexperienced of all hon. members, he demonstrates it by gesture and voice every time he enters the House which has not been very often, throwing up his arms. What does he want us to do? Don't pay the debt for the BMC? One thing I have never heard the hon. member accused of, the hon. member for St. Michael South Central, and that is not paying his debts. He is a great payer of debts. He pays his debts and he pays other people's too if he thinks they will do something for him for it; but the Government unfortunately had not had the gold mine to dig into that the hon. member for St. Michael South Central has had at a personal level, and therefore we have to try to pay these debts.

Indeed I cannot hold out any hope to hon. members that the \$30 million turn around in Government finances represent funds that are going to be magically available in the next Estimates or in the next Budget for any degree of Government generosity. The outstanding debts of International Seafoods are still at a figure of getting off the \$6 million on the books. The Agricultural Development Corporation notwithstanding its refloating and refinancing I think in 1975, will, by the beginning of the next crop season have debts of \$4.7 million. The Barbados Marketing Corporation has debts of \$1.2 million which it is unable to pay, although I must congratulate the successive Ministers of Agriculture and the Chairman of the BMC for halving the deficit at the BMC in a matter of only one and a half year's operation. Nonetheless the turning around from a gross loss position into a gross profit position at the BMC does not mean that the BMC will be able to pay all of the trade creditors who have given it credit over a period of years, and all of these, Mr. Speaker, are liabilities which have to be met, and I think that some of the improvement in the Government finances will have to go even during this financial year to meeting some of these outstanding liabilities of the badly run Government Corporations whose debts we inherited and whose practices we have tried to change since 1976.

I expect that before the end of this financial year, indeed before the end of the calendar year, we may be coming to the House for money for ADC, for the BMC, for Seafoods, and perhaps some supplements for land acquisition, the land acquisition at the Port, the amount of money we have to pay out at the court for acquisitions which were not carried out by the previous Government when the Port expansion scheme was evolved. I am giving hon. members fair warning, a long warning that we are not accepting the responsibility for causing the debts at ADC and BMC.

It is popular to tell us that we must not look back into the past. As far as I am concerned, there is a time

when you have to say we are paying this but the debt was not of our making, and I expect that some of the surplus that we have been able to achieve in the financial year so far will have to be turned around into these areas. Indeed the debt has to be paid anyhow. Even if we did not have a surplus we would have to try and pay them, and I only thank God that in His wisdom above he has smiled on the effort of the present administration and of the Minister of Finance to bring honest, straightforward and observant Government to this country, and he has allowed those efforts which we are making to bear fruit to the tune of \$30 million to settle the past debts, we will still have \$20 million left to pay the public officers an increase. But I just want to strike a warning. Any notes of optimism which I have expressed in here have to be tempered with great caution. Ours is a very fragile economy.
1.05 p.m.

It is an economy which can be struck overnight — by a hurricane, by an increase in oil prices, or by the Leader of the Opposition once again returning to his role of Minister of Finance; it can be struck by any of these natural or unnatural catastrophies. And when these things happen who is to say what the figures will show in years to come? Therefore we are stepping very closely. Indeed, we have been given a warning by the IMF that Barbados is a society that lives beyond its means; we are a society that consumes too much and saves insufficient in general economic terms; too much of our national wealth is spent on consumption and too little on productive activity. The IMF Mission well realized that we have a low level of foreign debt. They say that is what we have going for us. But if we allow ourselves to decide that we are in a position now to resume bad habits of over consumption, we may find ourselves moving away from a small foreign debt and a general favourable position and find ourselves in a situation where the chickens of 1972, 1973 and 1974 will come home to roost and we will be yet another country that has failed to take heed in good time.

So, Mr. Speaker, there it is. We are asking for an increase in the authorized level of Treasury Bills to \$170 million. We have explained that this should be enough to take us through many more months of Government activity.

I am glad that I have been able to give the House a little preview of the Government's instant financial situation and I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I thought we had heard the last of those suggestions that the difference between 1972 and 1978 is that the Democratic Labour

Party was in power in 1972 and the Barbados Labour Party was in power in 1978, as far as the economy of this country is concerned.

The Resolution that we are dealing with calls for some \$40 million to be borrowed by way of Treasury Bills, and I believe that at this time when we are discussing fundamental economic matters we should try as far as possible to speak in terms of the actual situation and avoid as far as possible the types of distortion which come from partisan politics which may not only be an inaccurate analysis of the economic factors but might also be an attempt to score political points which are not worth scoring.

Now this country has an intelligent electorate, and to reduce the difference between 1972 and 1978 to the difference between the management of economy by the Democratic Labour Party then and the Barbados Labour Party now is to suggest a grave distortion in the economic analysis of the factors operating in this country.

I would like to say that I am not privy to any discussions with any team of World Bank officials or IMF officials, whether singly or jointly. Such discussions tend to be cloistered with Ministers of Finance, and the general public and even Parliament are not normally given any information except by way of tidbits; no full insight is given into such discussions except such tidbits as we have had today.

We have heard that the present Prime Minister sat and heard a team from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund commenting adversely on the bad management of this economy. I am submitting, Mr. Speaker, that the difference between 1972 and 1978 was the difference between a world economy that was battered in 1972 by the twin problem of the quadrupling of oil prices and rampant inflation. That is the main difference between 1972 and 1978 with the main economies of the world, including those in the Caribbean with the possible exception of Trinidad and Tobago, and then only in the oil sector. But most of the world's economies were battered by these two problems, and to come and state to an intelligent public in Barbados that the difference was that at one time you had Barrow and now you have Adams, to suggest that this is the difference as far as the economy is concerned, is really a distortion which is not worthy of political and economic analysis.

If the Minister of Finance wants to claim credit — and I believe that any Minister of Finance is entitled to claim credit for any improvement in the country's economy — I do not think, however, that it is good for the political development and in the best interest of the country to try to draw conclusions which the facts of the situation cannot draw.

I read somewhere in the Press that the economy was well managed; a statement by someone who should know and who was in a position to understand how the economy was managed.

I have said before, and I repeat now. If that was a statement by officials of the World Bank and IMF, it is time that this country and this Parliament ...

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wishes me to give him some more material on which he can base his speech, I will do so because he seems to be running out of steam. But I have not said that the IMF officials said the economy was badly managed. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition really must not tell him what I said, for he was not here. I said that they pointed to certain underlying trends since 1972, which they described as undesirable. I am the person who took it upon my shoulders to say that there was bad management.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the matter has been clarified. So now we know that the World Bank officials have not said that the economy was badly managed. I think this is an important point to get clarified; it was the hon. member for St. Thomas and the political opponent of the Democratic Labour Party who is saying that the Democratic Labour Party badly mismanaged the affairs of the country.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I can assure the hon. member that the World Bank did not say that the economy was well managed.

Mr. SANDIFORD: I will leave that point Mr. Speaker, because I think now that we have had the necessary qualification and retraction, the matter is now clear and we can proceed.
1.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear. We have heard about the National Debt. We have heard about domestic borrowing and foreign borrowing; and I think that it is true to say that, as the Minister of Finance has indicated, borrowing is part of the business of modern Governments. The only trouble is that it has taken the Barbados Labour Party to get into power to realise that borrowing for the purposes — financial purposes and development — is part of the business of any modern Government; because when they were in Opposition — I am not saying necessarily the member for St. Thomas because as I have said over and over again, you can read his speeches and sometimes you believe that he has said one thing, and when you read the text the juxta position of words does not necessarily indicate what you believe has been said; but certain members of the then Opposition used to criticise the Government for too much borrowing.

I believe that if we look at the statistics now we will see that the total national debt of this country, far from decreasing as one might be led into believing, has been on the increase. I suspect — may be wrong — I will take a clarification on this particular point. I believe that since assuming power in the two years since 1976 that the present Barbados Labour Party administration has borrowed more money in that two-year period than the Democratic Labour Party administration borrowed in any similar period; but I will take a clarification on that particular point.

What I do know is that when you look at the economic and financial statistics for October 1978 as put out by the Central Bank of Barbados, I note that in September 1976 — note the date — we were at the point of a change of Government. At September 1976 there was a total national debt of \$241.1 million (Bds). Thereafter — December 1976 — \$258.8 million. January, 1977 — \$263.9 million. February, 1977 — \$272.6 million. March 1977 — \$271.2 million. December, 1977 — \$334.6 million. January, 1978 — \$338.1 million. August, 1978 — \$364.7 million. That was the total national debt of this country.

Now for those months as set out by the Central Bank we have the statistics; and if you draw the graph it will show an increase rather than a decrease in the national debt of this country; and the same pattern is seen whether we look at it in its component parts, or for the domestic debt — that is the one which the Minister of Finance says we owe ourselves, or the foreign national debt. So, whatever statistics we look at, we go by the statistics that are put out from month to month and we see that ascending slope, if that is the phraseology that one would prefer to use. Rather than any decrease, we are seeing an increase in the national debt according to these statistics.

Now what we have to be concerned about is the purposes for which money is borrowed. If it leads to efficiency, we must as legislators set out to ensure that the money that we borrow is used efficiently. That goes not only for the management of the affairs of our country, it goes also for ourselves as legislators because efficiency must start here. I was highly critical in the past of legislators who, in order not to form a quorum, remained outside of this Chamber. That was my position when some of the then Opposition M.P.s used to hang around outside saying that it was Government's duty, or the Party in power to form a quorum.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that part of the \$40 million?

Mr. SANDIFORD: It is 24 out of it, Mr. Speaker. I was critical then. I did not agree with the position and I do not agree with it now; and I consider it my public duty if I am here and the House is in session, and I am not detained for good and sufficient reasons, to be

present in this Chamber. That is how I view my public responsibility; and I make no apology for that position. I was critical of you when you did it in Opposition; and I am maintaining consistency in that — although one politician has said that consistency in politics is a virtue of fools; but that is my position, and I stick by those principles.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have got to look at efficiency within the economy and the borrowing; and what we have noted in the last quarterly report — it is for June I believe — it indicates that inflation has crept up again and prices were up some 12.3 per cent over the 12 months ended March, 1978.

1.25 p.m.

The rate of inflation had crept up again and prices were up some 12.3% over the 12 months ending March, 1978.

This is a Quarterly Report of the Central Bank for June, 1978 and on the first page in the overview, the first paragraph, the last sentence "the rate of inflation quickened. Prices were up 12.3% over the 12 months, compared with 9.9% for 1977".

These are the types of indicators that we have got to look at, not necessarily meekly congratulating ourselves but perhaps other aspects of the economy which may be more ephemeral but on the basic problems within this economy one of which is the rate of inflation and that Report...

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, if the hon. member would just look at the same Table he will see that March, 1977 was an aberrant month when there had been an unexpected and unexplicable drop in the Retail Price Index. It fell to a lower level than it would when we came into power and I will like to assure the hon. member that the annual rate of increase is nothing like 12%. It was 6.8% at the end of September, 1978. He has chosen by chance — the Central Bank has chosen and he has repeated....

Mr. SANDIFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Central Bank chose it by chance. They are doing things by chance now. Anyhow, I will take that clarification if March, 1977 is like 1972. If 1972 was a bad year I will accept that 1977 might have been a bad year by chance. We have got to look at that and try as far as possible to contain that rate of inflation and then it may be by chance that that Report referred to sluggish production, by chance.

Apart from Tourism itself, the performance of the Island's leading sectors was disappointing with no growth in industrial output, by chance, and a decline in sugar production was definitely by chance.

I think, Mr. Speaker, these are two of the twin problems of production levels. The rate of inflation, apart from the management of our money, these are the main factors that we certainly have to look at.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this money is not going necessarily for projects, development projects that can even out the cash flow problems. In other words they will be used in order to meet general revenue purposes to even out the cash flow problems and some of the purposes for which such money is spent is that of drainage, and I will like to draw to the attention of this Honourable House that there is a serious problem as far as the expenditure of Government funds on drainage works is concerned.

There are a number of houses in the constituency of St. Michael South which I have the honour to represent where there is a body of stagnant water surrounding these houses and it is impossible to date to get that water pumped off. Before there was no problem, funds were provided and the Fire Service used to respond promptly, but to this date, there is that body of water there and I am warning that if there are further heavy rains in this country, there can be serious property damage and health problems to the residents of Clarke's Avenue in the constituency of Bayville.

Mr. Speaker, I know you are very indulgent whenever it comes to constituency matters and I would not trespass upon your goodwill and understanding any further.

Mr. SPEAKER: All I am asking is that you stick to the Resolution.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and under your guidance I believe I have done that. I have drawn their attention to the fact that up to now we cannot get even Public Health people to come and spray the water and put some chemicals in the water for health control purposes and I hope that with the improvement in the economy these matters which do not call for any great expenditure on money will not be met by any procedural parliamentary reply to questions but will be tackled and dealt with as the residents of the constituency would expect.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have pointed out some of the inconsistencies and felicitous arguments in the propositions by the Minister of Finance and I have also pointed out the matter that is nearer and dearer to me, the welfare and wellbeing of my constituents of St. Michael South.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I believe that in order to put the debate of this Honourable House in their right perspective, it is necessary at some point in time for someone to make it absolutely clear that certain persons give the impression not only to members of this

Honourable House but also to the general public that they have some special knowledge and some special training in the area of public financing and economics.
1.35 p.m.

Many of us as part of our training, for example I myself am trained as a surgeon, but I think I should be prosecuted if I should attempt to operate on anybody except in an emergency.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you referring to the \$40 million surgeons?

Dr. HAYNES: Yes, Sir, I am getting on. Similarly there are certain persons who may have a smattering of economics in a PTE degree that can't even qualify you for a job on British Rail without further training, and yet will come before this Honourable Chamber and parade as though they happen to be expert economists. I would doubt very much, Mr. Speaker, if even the hon. member for St. John who is trained as an economist and who to the best of my knowledge has had no further professional activity in that field except as Minister of Finance would want to parade before the public as any particular expert in economics. However I do not wish to detract from the fact that the hon. member for St. Thomas with all hon. members of this Chamber have a given level of intelligence, and it is such intelligence which is required for a proper understanding of the economic problems facing this country and how they should be tackled, and once we get it perfectly clear that no one has any special expert knowledge of any of these matters in this particular house with the possible exception of the hon. member for St. John.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I would much prefer to hear something about the Resolution.

Dr. HAYNES: Yes, Mr. Speaker, but it is most important that we should get this thing in clear perspective and stop this kind of parading before this Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the privilege of any hon. member to parade that he has this knowledge, that knowledge or whatever.

Dr. HAYNES: We have been told, Mr. Speaker, that this economy is a very fragile economy. With this I would concur. We also have been told that dependent on who happens to occupy the position of Minister of Finance, that that can have the same effect as a disastrous hurricane on the economy. I would like to concur with that because it is not often appreciated that when you look at all the economic statistics available in respect of developing countries throughout the world, that Barbados weathered the oil crisis during the period 1973 and onwards better than any other developing country, it has always been my contention that the severe restriction and

several strictures that had to be applied to the economy were due to gross mismanagement during the period September, 1976 to March, 1977, and this is clearly reflected in the statistics of the Central Bank.

Now on the question of the public debt, I believe that the people of Barbados should clearly understand that in the fifteen year period when the Democratic Labour Party was in power that debt rose, I think, from somewhere in the region of \$20 million to \$241 million which is an increase of about \$220 million, and I think since the general view has been expressed that borrowing should be for developmental purposes, I am quite sure that when one reflects on the transformation of the economy during that 15 year period, whether it be in the social services such as health and education, or in the productive areas, in the manufacturing sector, in agriculture and in other areas, then you can see where that \$220 million was spent. You can see how it has contributed to the transformation and development of this country.

Now we have a situation where in a period of 24 months, in a period of two years, Mr. Speaker, we have borrowed some \$120 million. I repeat approximately \$220 million in fifteen years and we have now borrowed \$120 million in 2 years; and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, when you look around this country what kind of economic development, what kind of improvement have you seen in this country. I would daresay that there is hardly a single person with the possible exception of the hon. member for St. Thomas who would claim that his standard of living has not fallen substantially over the past two years. I do not want to blame anyone in particular, but what I am saying is that no matter what particular part of this society you occupy, no matter what your social standard is, the fact is that your standard of living must have fallen over the past two years and yet we are borrowing more and more. Indeed I have said before that the situation looks to me as if by 1981 this country would have a national debt somewhere in the region of \$½ million. That is a staggering figure and it would not surprise me if by that time our major charge on the current revenue will be debt repayment.

It is one thing to talk about justification for borrowing money to build for future generations. In principle this is right, but you have to see what you are building, and this is not taking place because you have had an increase in the national debt of over 50% in twenty-four months, Mr. Speaker, and there is no way that anyone can come to me and say that there is any distinct justification for this.

I was also very concerned and I think the hon. member for St. Thomas must desist from this kind of presentation. He quoted a figure of approximately \$50 million as being the foreign debt of this country in 1972.

What he omitted to tell you was that in 1974 the foreign debt in this country was \$42.7 million according to these figures here, but he quoted the 1972 figure and did not quote any subsequent figure when there had been a substantial fall since then. But we pick these things up very readily on this side, and it is important not to indulge in this kind of distortion because it is not fair to hon. members and it is not fair to the country as a whole.

I am also very concerned, Mr. Speaker, that we have not been told what this \$40 million we are borrowing now is for. We have been told that it is to even up cash flow. Is it being borrowed to pay salaries? Is it being borrowed to meet the increases in pay of civil servants and the expected increases of pay to the Hon. Prime Minister and Ministers of Government? (Hon. L. S. Craig: And members of Parliament.) I did not know that we were going to get some too, but I am not in favour of it anyhow. (*Asides*)

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us have some order, please.

Dr. HAYNES: I just want to get the records straight that as far as I am concerned when those on the other side I want to say this too, that I feel very strongly that you should get your ministerial salary too if the others are going to get.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, with great respect to Your Honour, I know you are inclined to give hon. members a little latitude, but the hon. member surely is not dealing with the Resolution before us. Your salary and this body's salary is not his concern. We understand his position. When the salaries revision comes down all he has to do is not to draw. Please draw his attention to the Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: Point well taken.

Dr. HAYNES: I was only wondering whether the urgency of borrowing this \$40 million was to cover expected increases in a wide area of Government spending of a recurrent nature, and hence the relevance of my statement. Now we will be borrowing in Treasury Bills something like \$170 million, and I rather suspect that we are heading for a situation where we are going to be unable to pay our debts, and where the economy of this country is going to be severely compromised by borrowing.

1.45 p.m.

Now it is one thing to say that wealthy countries borrow money. It is true that Trinidad borrows money but it also lends out money at a higher rate of interest than it borrows at. So it is no use coming here saying that wealthy countries borrow money; they also lend money; and the only justification for borrowing other

than for development purposes is if you are borrowing at a cheaper rate than at which you are lending. So it is quite fallacious to come to this House and suggest that there is some kind of mythical factor involved in borrowing.

We also heard that there was a \$30 million improvement in relation to government revenue and expenditure in the first seven months of this year. What the hon. member omitted to tell us is that although there was no reduction in Government spending and there has been no increase in Government revenue there has not been the projected increase that would have maintained the development of former years in the social services of this country. For example, in the area of health and in the area of education. When we look back and see the rate at which these services were developing over the previous years, the fact is that you have not had that accelerated rate of development that characterized the development of those services over the last twenty years. And that is the reason for the \$30 million floating around and nothing to do with the reasoning put forward by the hon. member for St. Thomas. There has been a tremendous rate of cut back as compared with the last twenty years. I am not saying that this is the only Government to have done that. The previous administration in 1975-76 had to cut back the rate of expansion. But health and education could do with a lot more money; there are a lot of areas for development. A lot more money needs to be spent on drugs, for example in the health service; a lot more needs to be spent in the Ministry of Communications and Works; look and see how the roads are deteriorating. We can understand some of the constraints in spending but come and tell us what the reasons are; do not come and make the kind of statements made which in my view are completely misleading. (*Asides*) Mr. Speaker, we understand that the hon. member does not understand anything in here that does not involve abuse.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish the hon. member to desist from that kind of behaviour; address the Chair on the Resolution.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I am also very concerned about the effect of this borrowing on the economy. I have seen little evidence of economic expansion. I have seen some tidying-up of the figures presented to us from month to month by the Central Bank, but I think it will be very difficult for anyone to say with any degree of honesty that there has been any significant impact on the unemployment situation in Barbados, unemployment being perhaps the major social problem of this country. And while we feel that the Government may in its own way have been trying to keep a tidy kind of housekeeping, I doubt very much whether this is the fundamental reason for the existence of a Minister of Finance. For example, it is possible that if you are working for \$20 a week you can put \$18 in the bank and

keep your children starving. But surely the purpose of a Government is to extend the services and create confidence in the economy, so that not only the Government sector is expanding but every sector within the community; but we find the ridiculous situation in Barbados where the banks are even reluctant to accept money for deposits. The banks are loaded with money, and yet although the interest rates are down they cannot disburse all of the money because there are no projects; people are not interested or they do not have avenues for expansion or development.

I gather that deposit rates in Barbados are in the region of 3% or 4% today. In North America deposit rates are 10, 11 or 12% and money is in tremendous demand in North America. But here no one wants to borrow money; it is all tied up in the banks. If you had \$25,000 tomorrow that you wanted to put on deposit, you would have great problem in finding a bank that would want to take it; that is the kind of situation you have here. And the reason for that is not because the banks are only interested in consumer lending at 25% as was said in this honourable House; the reason is that people have lost confidence in the economy and are no longer interested in any kind of equity bank borrowings in Barbados.

So Mr. Speaker, I want to make it perfectly clear that we on this side do not accept that we are seeing anything other than a paper tidying operation as far as this country is concerned and there is no evidence whatever of any improvement in the economy of Barbados; on the contrary, there is significant evidence that the economy has continued to deteriorate over the past two years and that the measures taken by the Government from June 1977 were purely to correct the serious errors they have made from September to December, 1976 in their payoff to the merchants of Bridgetown.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I was not unfortunate enough to be present earlier to listen to the fulminations of the hon. member for St. Thomas. It is impossible for the hon. Minister of Finance to rise to his feet without looking over his shoulder, not to his back benchers but to the former Government. He ascribes all the defects of his administration to what he put in his Manifesto as mismanagement and tries to verify that by saying that a joint team of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had made such an accusation against my administration. When I came into this Chamber he changed his tune.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure the hon. member will recall being present when the hon. Prime Minister denied having made such a statement.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: He did not deny; he recanted the words used by one of the eminent Clerks at the Table.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am saying that the Prime Minister denied having made the statement.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You said the Prime Minister denied making the statement. The Prime Minister said it is not true that members of the World Bank said that the economy of Barbados was mismanaged during the administration of the previous Government. I am saying the impression which was given.

Now in the first place I took Barbados into the World Bank and into the International Monetary Fund. At no time has there been a joint team from the World Bank and the IMF in Barbados at the same time, although there are now joint meetings of the Fund and the Bank. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank operate separately and distinctly.
1.55 p.m.

When I came in here, the first thing noted was that I was going to write to Mr. Macnamara himself; and ask the hon. member for St. Thomas (*asides*) I hope that the Rules of the House will be observed by the now Minister — I forget what he calls himself — Minister of Communications or Acting Minister of Labour. I understand that he may be taken in at 3.30 this afternoon before...

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the \$40 million Resolution that we are debating now?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, I am asking you to desist from that kind of debate. Get on with the \$40 million Resolution.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You see, I am being interrupted by sotto voce remarks all the time and useless points of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has risen on a point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I did not make myself acting Minister of Labour. The people of St. James gave me a seat and the Prime Minister appointed me, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. John may continue.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: What I was saying, sir, was that I intended to write to Mr. Macnamara, and ask him which one of his assistants came down here and made such a statement. I invited the Hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. member for St. Thomas (*aside*) I am trying to make a speech and I am constantly being interrupted by the member for St. James who is not rising to his feet on points of order all of the time, but is continuing an endless rumbling. I draw it to Your Honour's attention. (*asides*)

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us have some order, please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Sir, if you want the hon. member for St. James to speak, I will sit down and let him make his speech, and then I can make mine. I was under the impression that Your Honour invited me to make a contribution. If I wanted to tell the hon. member what I wanted to tell him, I would then be accused of being unkind. (Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You cannot tell me anything).

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. James, please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I did not say anything about training or upbringing. I do not know where they are getting this from.

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

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I would say this: when I challenged the hon. member to produce the reports of the World Bank he said that they were secret; but I will tell you something, sir. I will produce the reports of the World Bank during the years of my administration right up to the reports of 1976 to refute what the hon. member is saying; and I will say this: the hon. member for St. Thomas, the Hon. Minister of Finance, has never given evidence on oath on this subject; but the Governor of the Barbados Central Bank gave evidence on oath, and said that the Barbados economy was well managed up to September, 1976. He said that on oath.

Now, what the hon. member does not remind the general public about is that when he made this kind of silly, childish, unjustified remarks about mismanagement, that he is criticising the whole Civil Service. No Minister of Finance signs any cheques, not even for his own salary. A Minister of Finance acts in co-operation with his advisors in the Ministry and the members of the Central Bank, particularly the Governor and the Manager of the Central Bank in managing the economy.

At no time did I have to make a decision which members of the Ministry of Finance or the members of the Central Bank, particularly the Governor and the Manager of the Central Bank, all the members of the World Bank team except one — and I will call his name — did not concur in. There is a Prussian, obviously an offshoot of the National Socialist dispensation of Nazi Germany, called Mr. Gunther Veiser, who came down to Barbados at the time of the crisis in 1974 or thereabouts; and the hon. member knows about this. He said that I must stop imports into Barbados. I must devalue the Barbadian currency — two things — and he also mentioned two other matters which I do not remember offhand.

I have not asked the World Bank to lend Barbados any money, so I took his advice as purely gratuitions. He

came into the Conference Room at Government Headquarters with two of his cronies who were also on a joy ride from Washington and said that the coach had to have on all four wheels or it could not go anywhere; and I told him that when I got up to Washington for the World Bank meeting I would give him my reply; but he thought that I meant that I was coming into his office to reply to him; but I replied to him from the platform and I told him just what I thought about the World Bank officials. Do you know what the people on the Other Side told me? That I went up in the white people's country and abused the officials of the World Bank. The hon. member for St. James particularly, and the member for St. Thomas. Mr. Robert Macnamara called me at a quarter to six the next morning; and I said "Mr. President..."

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is an outright lie to say that I have ever criticised the Leader of the Opposition for his dealing with Mr. Veiser. If he used to come into the House more often he would know that I have told the same story that he has just told as an example of how arrogant World Bank Officials can be. It is a dangerous and wicked and malicious lie for him to say otherwise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Prime Minister...

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg your pardon. I should not have used the word "lie". It was a terminological inexactitude. (*Asides*)

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us have some order, please. (*Aside*) If the hon. member for St. John — just a minute. We do not want to hear about anybody's father or mother as long as I am in the Chair. If the hon. member for St. John is rising to talk about somebody's father, I do not want to hear anything about somebody's father. I do not want to hear it. I will not be having it. The hon. member for St. John may proceed on the Resolution.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order, sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. John does not have...

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am objecting to words which the previous speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: That is what I want to speak about.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The hon. member said that the words were a terminological inexactitude used by a member of this Chamber...

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. John will please take his seat. That is exactly what I wanted to speak about for the benefit of the hon. member for St. John, and all other hon. members. If a member should use words that are not parliamentary and the member wants the offending member to withdraw, he must rise

and draw it to the attention of the Chair that the member has offended against the Standing Orders of the House; and he must draw it to the attention of the Chair immediately; but if he continues to carry on a debate and continues to make any comments on the words of the offending member, the offending member no longer has to withdraw. He must draw to the attention of the Chair what the offence is and take his seat. The Chair will then rule on the matter. But any debate, this side or that side or the other side means that the offending member will not be called upon to withdraw by the Chair. The hon. member for St. John may address the Chair.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I would like to ask if the Standing Orders have been suspended.

Mr. SPEAKER: When we take the break a motion will have to be made.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I notice that we have no more exits and entrances.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Yes, sir. Mr. Macnamara said "Mr. Prime Minister, I did not know that you were having trouble too." I said: "They are your employers." I am very glad to hear now for the first time that my ignorance is due to the fact that I may not have been in the House; but it certainly would have been a completely different approach from what I have heard before that the hon. member is now himself complaining about the arrogance of the members of the World Bank. But yet these are the people with whom he said he was in consultation within the past four weeks, and had sort of underscored and underlined his criticism of the former administration, although they did not say the words themselves, but had noticed certain trends.

So having said that, and the hon. member having withdrawn and says that he takes full responsibility for what is now palpably an erroneous, misleading and inaccurate statement which has been refuted by the Governor of the Central Bank himself, I can only recommend one thing — that if the hon. member feels so strongly, he should dismiss the Governor of the Central Bank whose assessment as to the value of Barbados is in direct conflict with his own.

2.05 p.m.

One of them has to go. The two of them cannot stay there because they are diametrically at opposite ends of the Table in so far as their assessment of the performance of the economy in different administrations is concerned. I do not feel that it is necessary if you find yourself in a predicament, whether this predicament is a result of the world trend or of your own natural creation, as a result of promises you have made irrationally to a narrow sector of the economy of this country, or you to come into the Chamber like this and insult the intelligence of not only the members of this House, but the public at large, by

telling them that you have to borrow \$40 million now because of previous mismanagement.

Two long years have past. As the hon. member for St. Michael South Central has so elegantly and accurately described it, the National debt has risen by \$120 million. I have never at any time fulminated against a national debt. It is the other side who put it in print in their Manifesto and who got on the Radio and Television and discussed the National Debt because comments have been made eloquently by the hon. member for St. Michael South Central so we do not have to go into the 50% increase in two years.

The point is this that you cannot walk away from current deficits and no matter what kind of juggling is done, it is very clear to me that the money which we have borrowed, most of the money, the \$100 million that we have borrowed during the past 12 months, has been borrowed largely for current consumption because no breakdown of figures has been given to us and we have been coming back in here with supplementary appropriations.

For current consumption, even the increases in the Civil Servants salaries, \$20 million is for current consumption. The Honourable Member may have been right. I am not saying that he was not right when he said that the economy could not afford the increases but he did not stick to his guns. He turned and ran away from the battle as soon as he heard the first shot fired from the other side. Not being from the political side, I mean from the Unions, so that the \$20 million more added to his deficit of \$40 million and the amount of borrowing he has borrowed for this year is over \$100 million.

The amount of money which was borrowed during my tenure of office was for capital expenditure of one kind or another. Sometimes the revenue appropriation was able to contribute in some areas as much as \$14 million contributed from current expenditure towards our capital projects but since we have the new dispensation, we find that we have been contributing from loans towards the carrying out of ordinary services.

Let us take the Orion Loan. That is not even in the figure. As far as I know up to August 1978 it was quoted below \$364.7 million which will give you an increase of \$123.3 million since September 1976. The \$20 million from the Orion Bank, according to a statement which was alleged to have been made by the hon. Minister of Finance, part of that money is for higher consumption.

It is true that there is some kind of obligation to the Anglican Church. They have contributed \$800,000.00 to some building scheme of the Anglican Church according to what he says, but even those capital sums were ordinary public works spending which we call non-recurrent, but there are still potholes in the road. The Public Building clock, Sir, does not work. The lights at

Eagle Hall are never working. The ones at Eastlyn Corner have stopped. The Public Buildings clock is never correct now, and I do not want that to stop now.

I remember a former member for St. Joseph who was continually being interrupted by the Chairman of Committees asked the Chairman of Committees whether he was wrong all day long and the Chairman said "everytime I have had to interrupt you, have been wrong," and he drew it to the attention of the Chairman of Committees and he said "Good Lord, Mr. Chairman, even a clock that stops bound to be right twice a day and I am wrong all day long?" The Public Building clock would not even stop and be right twice a day. It is wrong all day long, because if it stop it-bound to be right twice a day.

Well nothing is working in Barbados now. Nothing is working. There are lots of potholes all over the road. It is true that deterioration is due largely to heavy rains but also watch the containers that the merchants want us to drag through the streets of Bridgetown and the surrounding districts to add further destruction and help to break up the roads. This money is not even being spent properly for current consumption but it is not being spent on capital projects.

The time, Sir is advancing and I think that the point which I wanted to make, since the hon. member has now explained himself is that he is taking full responsibility for the statement which we all know to be unjustified and incorrect. I do not think it is necessary for me to elaborate any more on that particular point and I think that the two hon. members on this side have adequately covered what I wanted to say.
2.15 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, we suspended the Standing Orders, so we still have a little time and the Prime Minister will deal with the other work now.

Mr. SPEAKER: When the Standing Orders are suspended, it is expected that you would take into consideration what is a reasonable time, remembering the Hansard Reporters and things of that sort, with a view to taking a break.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I have taken this into consideration, but in the light that the Prime Minister, if no other member wishes to speak, is going to wind up, I think immediately after we may take the break. I do not know if the other members are interested in speaking. Of course after the hon. member for St. Michael South, I do not think the others would have spoken anyhow.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I should like to wind up very quickly.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, on this question of the suspension it is the habit to suspend

at 2 o'clock when we have the House meeting at 12 noon. It is now after 2.15 p.m. It seems to me that on many occasions on Resolutions such as this, even if the Prime Minister is about to reply, he does not reply in any five or ten minutes. I think it is only reasonable that we should consider the other parties other than ourselves.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am quite sure that the Prime Minister is very conscious of the Clerks at the Table and the Reporters, and when I move the suspension of the Standing Orders, it was precisely for this. The Prime Minister, if no other person wishes to speak, is going to wind up. I do not see there is any problem, and then we will decide if we are going to take the break or not. We are only wasting time with this. The Prime Minister is quite willing to wind up.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not wasting time. I do not agree with the hon. member.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I apologise for saying we are wasting time. I withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Prime Minister may now reply.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Sir, we have had a number of speeches on this situation. I think every point that could reasonably be made was made, and many that could not reasonably be made were also made. The hon. member for St. Michael South Central surprised me. After a speech which lasted perhaps for 25 minutes, for 23 minutes of his speech he talked what would in other forums be described as sheer unadulterated nonsense, and in the last two minutes he made a very good point. It just shows that sometimes self interest can lead a man into commonsense when a more cerebral exercise merely exposes the inadequacy of the cerebral cells. What I am referring to is the fact that having talked about we are heading for a situation where we are going to be unable to meet our commitments, which is utter nonsense, having said that Trinidad lends out money at a higher rate of interest than it borrows it, which is also nonsense, the situation is the other way around; it borrows commercially and lends out on concessional terms to Caribbean countries. The situation is exactly opposite to what the hon. member for St. Michael South Central sought to say. Having said that we increased our borrowing by 50% in two years, and unprecedented amount, he failed to look at the figures to see that the Democratic Party regime increased the borrowing from \$123 million to \$202 million in two years, more than 50%, having made every conceivable mistake on the figures that he could possibly make.....

Dr. HAYNES: On a point of order, I was most particular to quote the figures for 1961-1976 as against 1976-1978.

Mr. SPEAKER: I really never heard the hon. member mention 1961.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The hon. member cannot understand the criticism which I am making, and I am not going to attack him for selective quotation of figures either. The hon. member was emphasising that in two years we had borrowed 50% more than the debt was at the start of the two years. I am telling him that between 1973 and 1975 the Democratic Labour Party borrowed 60% more, and if he says you cannot point to anything that was done in those two years, equally you cannot point to anything that was done in those two. If the hon. member for St. John said that they borrowed money for capital works and never for current consumption, let him call on the Clerk for a copy of the Estimates and he will see that the highest current account deficit ever enjoyed in this country was under his regime and not under me, and they formed a greater proportion of the Government's revenue than they could ever have formed under me. The \$18 million deficit was his, not mine. That was money being borrowed in 1974-75 period. (*Asides.*)

Mr. SPEAKER: There will be no cross-talking. The hon. member for St. John had his opportunity to make his contribution.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The Government's deficit last year was budgeted for \$40 million and we came in with \$15 million. The year before the hon. member budgeted for \$50 million and he came in with \$7 million or \$8 million. The hon. member for St. James tells me that it is \$9 million, and this year the Leader of the Opposition obviously is suffering from not having been in the House, otherwise he would have heard that up to the end of October, which is a time when you would expect your current account deficit perhaps in ordinary years, we have been able to have a turn around of approximately \$30 million in the Government Financing. If he was here he would have heard that said. People from all corners tell us that we must look back to the past and that we must not reflect on the hon. member for St. John. The real trouble is that the hon. member for St. John likes to listen to a lot of news, but I think he only listens to bad news. He only listens to bad news that people have said about him, because he has come in here and he has repeated the Guitra Veiser story, a story that I believe I have told in here more than once as a reflection on what Ministers of Finance have to put up with from so-called experts, and yet he would come and reflect on the hon. member for St. James using the pejorative expression like "we say he should not have gone in the white people's country and criticised them". That is his commentary on an incident on which he has received nothing but sympathy from this side. I am really

astonished in respect of that particular aspect of his criticism.

We know they have holes in the road. We have had a very rainy year. Mobil cannot deliver the amount of bitumen necessary to repair the roads. That is the explanation certainly given to me for the fact that there are holes in the roads. We hear from the hon. member for St. Michael South that the reason why we have turned around the finances is that we have not had that accelerated development in health and educational services. Barbados spends a greater proportion of its national income on education than any other country in the world, and yet we are now being told to spend even more.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I never made any such statement during my contribution to the debate.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am sorry. The contribution of the hon. member for St. Michael South was characterised by good hard-working commonsense. The hon. member for St. James turned and said "he is giving you some good blows there", when he was speaking, but he could only laugh when the other hon. members were speaking. The fact is that you must expect a decelerated rate of increase in expenditure on health and education as you move towards saturation at the educational level. By the end of the year 1981 this Government intends to have a secondary school place for every child that wants it in this country, and when you reach that, obviously you are not going to accelerate education spending any more. We are getting nearer to that point.

Similarly in health we spend more than any other developing country that I have been able to find, as much indeed as the Soviet Union proportionately to our GDP on health.

2.25 p.m.

We cannot now expand that. We have a scheme for the National Health Service which will branch out into a different direction.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for St. Michael South Central made one good point — perhaps I have been a little unkind in putting it down to self-interest....

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I believe I tried to explain to the hon. member for St. Thomas that the lack of accelerated expenditure in those two years was not only characteristic of his Government but also of the last two of the Democratic Labour Party regime and that that is part of the paper improvement of which he is boasting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your point is well taken.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Point well taken. I am not saying the criticism is invalid because he is a member of the Democratic Labour Party. The criticism is invalid because as you reach a peak you do not accelerate so quickly in matters of development expenditure; that is the answer. I do not know why the hon. member is worried. Is it that he does not want me to praise him? I am trying to praise him for the one matter on which he has said something sensible since he was in this House. I am trying to give him praise and every time I open my mouth he stops me. I think I had better shut my mouth and keep quiet.

But the point is worth nothing. It relates to bank deposit rates. We are part of the dollar system and no system that shelters behind a particular currency wall can exist comfortably if there are wide differences of interest rates within it. We are being advised even by the IMF that people who have funds to repatriate to Barbados, if they can get 10% on these funds in New York and only 2½% in Barbados, will keep them in New York up to the last possible moment. There is some evidence at the Central Bank that this is being done. People who have investments to make follow the interest rates.

The hon. member is obviously speaking from the heart when he says that if you have \$25,000 to deposit you cannot get the banks to take it and that they offer you a very low rate of interest. The hon. member is in the class of persons who have large sums of money to invest from time to time and I am glad to hear that he is looking for Barbadian outlet at this stage.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Surely the hon. member must know that in that situation when you say "you" you mean "anyone".

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Sir, this is not the sixth form at Harrison College; we passed that long ago. The hon. member is in a field where perhaps he has personal experience, and I am not critical when I say that. And he is aware of the fact that bank deposit rates in Barbados are too low. I have already raised the matter with the Governor of the Central Bank and it will be raised again at perhaps greater length.

One more point. I am sure that poor Dr. Blackman would much rather he had not been asked the question about management of the balance of payments. He was not asked about the economy; he was asked whether the balance of payment was being satisfactorily managed now, and he said yes.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is not stating what took

place. He was not present, and I advise him to read the record before making statements like that.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I would like to assure the hon. member that I have more opportunity of reading the transcript than he has. But he is saying that when I reflected on earlier management I am reflecting on the Civil Servants in my Ministry and not criticising him alone. But the hon. member accused the Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of political amnesia in respect to an answer he gave to the Duffus Commission. Let him deny that. The man who stood at his right hand the Director of Finance and Planning — he accuse him of political amnesia because he did not give an answer that suited the hon. member. I will never be so unkind and unjust to anybody who stands in public office doing his best for the country, as the hon. member was on that occasion. And in due course we will see whose amnesia it was, whether the Director of Finance and Planning or the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. So I am not taking from the hon. member any suggestion that I am critical of public officers in these matters. The Government over a period of time assume the expansion of short term debts such as represented by the issue of Treasury Bills. This has been going on for many years, ever since we had the Treasury Bills system. This is an appropriate occasion to permit some expansion in Treasury Bills. I am asking for a reasonable limit but the actual expansion is expected to be small. I said before that the increase in Government liabilities at this time has been extremely modest.

Just one other point I must deal with. The hon. member for St. Michael South Central said that the standard of living has been falling. I can only go by figures, and international institutions come here and tell us that the GDP is showing a real rise. Both the Barbados Workers Union and the Barbados Confederation of Employers report 10, 15 or 20% wage increases but the retail price index up by 5, 8 or 8½% in the three years 1975–77. I have figures to show that earnings since 1975 have doubled while the retail index has gone up by 15% over the same period. I see that we eat more meat proportionately speaking than the people of Great Britain. I see that we are one of the best fed countries in the Commonwealth. I see from figures produced that unemployment is falling and wages are rising. Imports of consumer goods are rising. I see people are building houses; residential building is certainly not in decline even though hotel construction may be when compared with ten years ago.

The hon. member must have his means of knowing that the standard of living has fallen. All I can say very humbly is that the means available to Government for estimating an intangible like the standard of living shows every single economic indicator

suggesting improvement. The hon. member has not even done what the hon. member for St. Michael South did, that is, take figures in order to produce a cogent argument.

The figures relating to industrial production upon which the Central Bank report is based show improvement. Industrial production in March 1977 was at its highest peak almost for the entire year. March, 1977 showed a peak of 162% over 1971. Indeed it declined the next month and remained in decline except in the traditional high month of November. But then you come to the following year and find there was an exceptional month in March 1977; then you see that March 1978 showed a decline from March 1977. But that is the only month in 1977 that shows a decline. If the hon. member looks back he will see that January 1978 was above; February was above; April was far above; May and June were above; July was about the same — a point or two below; August was way above. So that the one month in which it can be said that industrial production had shown a decline over the twelve month period is the one month that the Central Bank and the hon. member have chosen.

2.35 p.m.

For one month in which it can be said that industrial production had shown a decline over the 12-month period is the one month which the hon. member and the Central Bank have chosen. Any other month you would have seen that there was a steady growth in industrial production in this country, all through 1978. There has been a growth in industrial production, a growth in the exports of manufacturers, a growth in corporate profits, a growth in corporate employment, a growth in wages, a growth in tourism. All of those things have shown a growth, but the hon. member for St. Michael South Central says that the standard of living has shown a decline.

I do not know of any other way to estimate these things and speak with any accuracy of them except by examining the figures; and all the figures which can be examined — and they are as available to the hon. member as they are to me — show that his statement cannot be justified. Mr. Speaker, this has become an economic debate. All that I can say is that I stand by the books, by the facts, by the proven matters. That is all I can possibly say. They are not written by me. They are written by Public Officers and I do not believe that any of those Public Officers have been guilty of political anomalies either towards the Leader of the Opposition or towards me. Not the ones who are immediately dealing with the presentation of figures. The figures are there and the public can read them and estimate the accuracy of the facts presented by the hon. member for St. Michael South Central and also estimate the usefulness of his judgement in any matters. I sincerely

hope that he does not diagnose his cases as he seeks to diagnose the economy of this island.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, it is now 23 minutes to 3. I beg to move that this House do now stand suspended until 3 p.m. The luncheon break will be relatively short, but we have a few matters here which we would like to discuss. (*Asides*) Relax. I would concede — Sir, if hon. members on the Other Side would like to indicate what time they would like to adjourn to, I believe that members on this side can take care of themselves. If they want to come back until 7 o'clock tonight, they can.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is regrettable that this matter was not settled between both sides of the House.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I quite appreciate that; but I saw no one at the time to discuss the matter with.

Mr. TAITT: Sir, if the hon. member would give way — I would ignore the remarks about not seeing anyone to discuss it with. I think that it was totally uncalled for. It has been normal for us to have a minimum of 45 minutes for lunch. We discussed, as you will recall, that when the time was a quarter past two there was the probability of our getting into this situation. Now the hon. member suggests 20 minutes for lunch. If they have a problem, and if they wish for the sake of convenience to arrange the business of the House in a particular way, we on this side do not feel disposed to oppose them; but we feel that whatever arrangements they make must not only take into consideration the hon. members of this House, but other persons who work within the confines of this Chamber; so that if the hon. member would come up with a reasonable suggestion about time, if it is 45 minutes or an hour, we will accept it.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I am prepared to do whatever lies in my power to assist all sides. Sir, I could suggest that you leave the Chair and the Deputy Speaker take the Chair. I am sure that the Clerks are in a position where they can have lunch, Sir, as well as the Reporters. All of this we can do and work through or we can come back at 6 o'clock. All of these are just suggestions. We are prepared to go on with it. You can call the shots now. We are going to form a quorum again. We would not run away from it.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, again if the hon. member would give way with your permission — as to the question of forming a quorum the hon. member

need have no fear that we on this side would not help to form a quorum. If that is the problem, let us come around behind the Speaker's Chair and let us discuss what their problem is; but it is not in my opinion reasonable for him to suggest a 20 minutes lunch break or some relay system. This is not of our doing, and therefore we cannot contribute to it. Tell us what the problem is instead of this cat and mouse game and instead of telling us that we call the shots. There are no shots to be called.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Sitting be now suspended until 6 p.m. today.

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

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, having taken what I considered to be a reasonable position, I am now driven to the wall. I feel that the suspension of the House until 6 o'clock is no indication of the state of business of the House at this time, and can only be considered to be either ludicrous or ridiculous, and if I was not here, I would say vindictive. I do not accept 6 o'clock as a reasonable statement of what the present situation in this House is.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, there is a motion before the House, and you can put the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that the sitting be now suspended until 6 o'clock p.m. today. Hon. members in favour will please say "aye" and those against will please say "no". I think the "Ayes" have it. (*Asides*). Let us have some order please.

The question that the sitting be suspended until 6 o'clock p.m. 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. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. SISNETT, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. ALLEYNE, Mr. BRADSHAW and Mr. ODLE — 10.

Noes: Mr. TAITT, Dr. HAYNES, Mr. SANDIFORD and Mr. WEEKES — 4.

Mr. SPEAKER: Ten hon. members voted "aye" and four hon. members voted "no". I now declare the ayes have it. This sitting now stands suspended until 6 o'clock p.m. today.
2.45 p.m.

On resumption —

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am proposing that we resume Government Business and that Order No. 2 be the instant Order of the Day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 2 is the instant Order of the Day.

To move the passing of the Resolution to approve the Shops (Amendment) Order, 1978.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am invoking Your Honour's permission to move this Resolution that the House of Assembly approve the Order entitled the Shops (Amendment) Order, 1978 which was made by the Minister responsible for Labour on 30th October, 1978, and appears in the Schedule hereto; and that the Senate be invited to concur herein, and if concurred in, be it resolved that His Excellency the Governor-General be asked to assent and take the necessary steps to give effect to this Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment comes before this Honourable House largely because it has been considered that the difference in the Opening hours between urban shops and rural or country shops are not justified.

The hours of opening and closing which currently exist, Mr. Speaker, are felt to cause more hardship, in particular to those urban shops which happen to be located on the periphery level between what is adjudged under the Act to be the margin between urban and rural districts and it seeks to extend the opening hours of urban shops on ordinary closing days and late closing days to be the hours of 8 o'clock in the evening and 10 o'clock respectively in the evening as now is presently enjoyed by rural or country shops.

This amendment seeks to make these provisions most especially on account of the opening hours for urban shops during the coming Independence Christmas season in view of the general extension of opening hours for such shops.

I therefore move, Mr. Speaker, that this Resolution be now read a first time.

Mr. WARD: I beg to second that. Can I speak now Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. WARD: I feel quite confident that this Resolution will receive the support of the members of Parliament. I say so because it is very necessary that this advancement in labour and provisions of work to the people should come to pass in Barbados at this time and it is not just because of the Tourist Season, as the

Minister said, but rather it is legislation on a permanent basis.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to say a few words and especially in connection with the employers. I hope that employers are not just going to use this legislation to extend the work of certain favoured employees in their companies in the way of overtime. I am not saying that the employers are not entitled to pay overtime to their workers, but I hope that with the amount of employment we have in this country, that now young people would be given the opportunity to get employment.

I am not even saying that they should work in the extended hours because they could work earlier in the day, but I would hope that the employers in this country would see fit and in the knowledge of the unemployment situation use this legislation to remove some of our young, intelligent, energetic young people from idling and give them some kind of occupation.

At the same time, I am not opposed to certain workers who they have as supervisors if they receive overtime. I would also think that the employers would take the opportunity to cash in on the legislation that was brought here by the Prime Minister in the way of Employment Levy because this is an occasion when the employers, who seem so critical of the Government with this Employment Levy, now have the opportunity of employing people and getting their rebates on the amounts levied either in weekly or monthly as the case may be, so here is an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for the employers of this country to seize upon what the Government has done to employ more people and get back some of the money that they paid.

Now one last point, Mr. Speaker, is this. Again, it is at the employers. Gone are the days when you employed a girl to work behind a counter merely because she is pretty. Employers in this country need to have teachers to come into their businesses and teach people how to serve. It is a most regrettable thing. Of course, Mr. Speaker, some of the employers and the Managers want training, but as far as the workers are concerned, it does not appear that these people in shops realise that when a customer steps through the door he is the most important person in there. If he only has a dollar bill, and it is a ten year old boy, he is still the most important person because all of them are waiting for him to buy so as to pay their expenses.

Too often people go to a counter being attended by a girl and then suddenly she breaks out in a conversation with the girl next door. "Hey man, girl what happen, I saw so-and-so last night and we had a licking down time" and the customer is there standing up wondering, Mr. Speaker, how important he is or whether they wanted him in there in the first place. Often times they will be attending to you and they get called off to a

telephone and they carry on this big conversation forgetting that you are there at the counter.

So, Mr. Speaker, a great responsibility lies with the employers of this country to see that the person selling their goods in their store just does not come by good looks or age, but they certainly would do them a favour to train them with the little courtesies to be metered out to a customer.

I have experienced coming to a shop and the gentleman attending to me and another girl come in and take out of his pocket a picture and he went scrambling behind her to get the picture, and enjoying himself and I said, "wait, if you do not mind, carry on that after I have left."

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is good legislation. I do not believe anybody on the other side will be critical of it. All we want to do is to make sure the employers do not take advantage of the employees by making them work extra hours. Some employers like their staff to work extra hours long time before this legislation was up, but in any event, I am talking about legitimate work, not to make them work extra hours to take advantage of them, and at the same time if there are employing not to look for the family.

A lot of people in this country now take Harrisonian children and the girls going to Queen College and make them work from 4 o'clock right through. 6.10 p.m.

This is foreign to our society. I am not going to get into anything I hear on these platforms around here, kicking up and getting on and causing strife in this country. You know what I am referring to. It is a very unfortunate thing that young people can get work and people are taking up their children in Fourth and Fifth Form at Harrison College and Queens College and putting them to attend shops; so that is taking advantage of the working people of this country and at the same time letting them employ somebody to train these young men and young women so that they do not start off on the wrong foot.

I had a complaint this week from a gentleman, Mr. Speaker. He was a tourist and he said it is the first time he has been to Barbados and he is returning here without a shadow of doubt, but he said there are few little things; and he mentioned two stores in Broad Street. He said that one he went to and got magnificent service, but they did not have the item he wanted and he went further down the road and the lady treated him like he was nothing. But the point is that he had to buy the item because the particular vase matched some other crockery or glassware that he had at home, but he commented to me about this matter of service in shops. Let me emphasise, Mr.

Speaker, that when I talked about workers knowing how to treat customers, I am not referring to tourists because we do not set the standard of performance of a society on how it treats tourists. The standard of performance is how you treat people regardless of whether they are tourists or otherwise, and this is what we have got to understand. Admittedly, Sir, people are inclined to treat tourists better because the tips are a little heavier. In fact from a Barbadian you do not get a tip at all, but at the same time tips do not govern how a person performs in his job.

Mr. Speaker, this country is likely to have the largest tourist season that it has ever had coming up in the near future. Already it is difficult to get a small car, the roads are jammed with traffic and believe me we are heading for great things. Fortunately for us the Opposition were once the Government and they know the value of the tourist industry, and therefore I am sure that their remarks would be similar to mine, that the greatest courtesy and hospitality be given to our visitors. They are invited here. I have said before that Barbadians are a very proud people, and one of the remarkable things about them is that in the country districts they like to share our country with the visitors. They seem delighted that somebody enjoys their country and they extend great courtesies to them. We want this to happen in Bridgetown as well, in the shops. I have already said I am not setting the standard for tourists, but since we are on the eve of what may be our greatest tourist season ever, I would suggest that the owners of businesses in Bridgetown go about and make sure that their staff are well prepared. I would also like to say for the benefit of the Press that for God's sake do not start putting in the Press "Barbados sold out, Barbados bumper season". Although the season is looking excellent, Mr. Speaker, I cannot see into the future, but we still have room in the hotels. A hotel may have 100 rooms and 95 are sold, and you regard the other five rooms as the gravy on the food. You cannot just ignore the last five rooms. (*Asides*). You know, me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will try to see that you are not interrupted.

Mr. WARD: I am like a woman, very nice when I am nice and terrible when I am bad. When my side jeers me and I let go a blast at them, some of them will jump through the window and see if they can catch on to something passing outside. I have told them already to keep off me when I am speaking, I have a flash point very low.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I am going to finish with that, but I am sure this House will be happy to pass this Resolution. It is progress and I do believe it will provide employment for a number of people in this country.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I must say that it looks a lot different when one gets up to speak across the other side than it has hitherto, and I would rather look now than I would earlier on. But on this question of the Shops Act.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the hon. member is now a shop assistant.

Mr. TAITT: No, Sir. But if she was, she would be the kind of shop assistant that would get a lot of customers.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the lot fell to the hon. member for Bridgetown in her capacity as Acting Leader to introduce this Shops Act, because I myself would have preferred that the Act had been introduced by one of the persons responsible for this particular portfolio in the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the point. It has been introduced.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, what I have to say bears some relationship on the administration of the subject matter in this regard. First of all I am told that this particular piece of legislation is being introduced and has been introduced without any consultation with the Barbados Workers' Union and the other Unions concerned. Now, Sir, if that is so, I think a glorious opportunity would have been lost for the Government to have the views of the Union, or put the other way, the views of the workers on this whole question of the extension.

Secondly, let me establish very early that everyone who has been involved in administering any country must have some view on the opening of shops and the hours during which those shops should open, and at first blush what the hon. member for Christ Church North Central said on introducing this Bill might appear to be the *prima facie* position that one would normally take. But, Sir, this Bill has more in it than at first meets the eye. The hon. member who seconded the Bill suggested, if I recall him correctly, that he hopes that employers will not take the opportunity to take advantage of workers. I think it is a laudable expression, but Sir, when the Government is about to introduce legislation which is going to change a particular custom in the community, it seems to me that it is desirable, certainly more desirable than the Government would examine 33 of the ramifications of the particular change before introducing it, rather than introducing it on the hope that persons will behave in a particular way.

We who have lived in Barbados for a long time are aware of the attitude generally speaking of employers to employees, and there is nothing in the history of

Barbados' industrial relations and commercial relations which suggests that employers in Barbados are over-burdened with any generosity towards their employees. I myself believe that little businesses, small businessmen, small shops ought to have the right, and I usually especially family shops to be open almost at will because they are utilising their own labour, they are utilising their own expertise and generally speaking many of the small shops in the country and in the urban areas are shops which help to supplement the family income rather than their being shops that are by definition the main income-bearing activity of the family and for that reason no one could be against the opening of such shops for as long as they feel like. Generally speaking, they are people who go to work in the morning, they probably work from 9 o'clock until 5 o'clock, they go home, they get a rest and then they open the shop in the early evening and keep it open until such time as customers fail to come in.
6.20 p.m.

However, when it comes to the larger outlets, Broad Street and the larger supermarkets for example, they employ the most abundant labour in Barbados. I include some of the Swan Street shops — they employ workers from the area of greatest abundance of availability, and it is known that there can be found among them some of the greatest exploiters of labour in this country. For these reasons, when you come to open these shops for long hours, merely in the hope that these people will behave in a particular way, we are merely — as the Trinidadians say — spinning top in mud.

I believe, Mr. speaker, you yourself have spoken in this Chamber of some of the abuses practised in some of these so called shops, on young people, on our women folk and other Barbadians. And when, Mr. Speaker, you arrange for a young lady to leave home at 9 o'clock in the morning with the possibility that she may not get back home until 9 o'clock in the evening, if she has to pick up her child at 4 o'clock — I am not suggesting she will have to work from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., although this is not unheard of — but suppose the hours are "staggered", what about the ancillary facilities which will have to be geared to the opening of shops in Barbados? What steps, if any, are they proposing to take into account for this kind of problem?

Mr. Speaker, when this kind of legislation was introduced in the United Kingdom, you will recall that it caused a tremendous out cry because it was recognised by those whose responsibility it is to look after the welfare of the working classes that this kind of legislation would be used by employers at the employers' will and would tend to disrupt the normal lives of the people.

Mr. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful if the hon. member could tell us the year of that legislation.

Mr. TAITT: I would be glad after the debate to take the hon. member outside and instruct him in a number of things.

Mr. SIMMONS: No, now.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must be aware that when this type of legislation was introduced in Great Britain it caused controversy. Mr. Speaker, in truth and in fact this legislation will be seen by some of the trade unions as a retrograde step. This may seem strange if we are talking about opening shops for longer hours; how can it be retrograde? But let us take a simple example. Let us suppose there is a young lady working at a supermarket from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. She is entitled to work forty two hours a week. Now under the Wages Council Ordinance there are certain factors which must be present during her work. But not all persons who work in supermarkets and shops are members of trade unions. Many are members and would be functioning under the aegis of a collective agreement. But for those who are not, I don't think anyone would tell me that they have not got a right to look to the Government for protection, but it can mean that they could be told "your hours will be from 10 to 6; or 11 to 7; or 12 to 8." This is a distinct possibility and insofar as this becomes law there is a distinct possibility that many employers will take this attitude.

Mr. Speaker, one cannot get up and oppose this legislation to the point of voting against it, but one can oppose the methodology used in introducing the legislation. One does not wish to believe that this Legislation has dropped into this House hot and sweaty as a result of some little dialogue in the newspapers — those of us who read the newspapers must be aware of the minor contretemps which occurred between one supermarket and another because of where a milestone was located. And I hope that I can be assured that this legislation did not find itself in here because of that little movement between two supermarkets.

Mr. Speaker, when you are bringing in legislation that will have grave consequences on the people of the country, then the people have a right to expect that that legislation would only be introduced after all the ramifications had been examined in detail and steps taken to make the necessary changes as least disruptive as possible.

I would like to mention that the hon. member for Christ Church North Central may have fallen for a particular piece of fallacious argument presented from

time to time on this type of legislation that it will increase employment. Mr. speaker, the only way this legislation would necessarily increase employment is if the turnover is there to be done. You know, Sir, the saying that if you hold a pint pot under a pipe for two weeks, at the end it will still only have a pint. So if you take the total business available to be done in the area of the whole of commercial Barbados, that business when done and completed will not multiply itself like some kind of organic creature that can self-multiply. Increased employment will have to flow out of increased activity, so that this piece of legislation by itself will not herald an increase in employment, and I think that inadvertently the hon. member may have been unfair to employers by saying to them that now they have this legislation they had better employ some more people. I do not think it will necessarily follow that because you have this legislation that will occur.

6.30 p.m.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I support the hon. member for Christ Church North Central when he calls upon employers in this country; and as I heard him, I started believing that there is hope in this country – when he called on employers to stop the pernicious habit of bringing their little tiny children to rob heads of households out of reasonable, good and sufficient employment. It is a very wicked habit, Mr. Speaker, for people to let 9 or 11 years olds come into their businesses and perform jobs or appear to be performing jobs which ought to be filled by people who might be seeking to get employment for weeks, and months and years.

I know of one young lady from my own knowledge who wrote 35 applications for work. She received responses from 17 up to last Thursday. Each one of them told her “no vacancies”. She has not yet heard from the rest of them, but, Mr. Speaker, she has five “O” Levels. Mr. Speaker, think how you can have a young lady 18½ years old in this community with 5 “O” Levels, 35 applications and no job! (*Aside*). I know that headmasters of this country can be pedantic. I am speaking about 5 “O” Levels.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member does not have to worry about that. There is many a headmaster who does not have a masterhead. (*Laughter*). Let us have some order, please.

Mr. TAITT: There are times in my life when I wish that I had not only the wit which Your Honour has, but the ability to express that way in such a form. I mean five genuine “O” Levels, five real real “O” Levels at Grade C or above. The hon. member for St. Philip North can confirm that during the by-election campaign he had walking around with him a young

man who had two “A” Levels and raffle of “O” Levels and had no work. That is true.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the point is that the hon. member has not yet addressed the Chair; so there will be nothing to elucidate.

Mr. SIMMONS: I want to elucidate his speech.

Mr. SPEAKER: That would be contrary to the Standing Orders.

Mr. TAITT: Sir, if the hon. member believes that I am not accurate in my description, I would happily withdraw the information but he had eight “O” Levels, two “A” Levels. (*Aside*). Yes, we had the Government. How can I deny that we had the Government? When I look at the clock I see the time for what it is, so I cannot deny that we had the Government; but, Sir, the point that I was making was that here was a young man with that type of qualification. There was this young lady that I was speaking about; that hon. members could point to other persons in the community whom they know are in the same predicament; and yet, Sir, we find that there are commercial houses in Barbados either under-staffed, or they have their staff packed with unqualified persons whose only qualification is the family tie.

Now, Sir, it would be silly for anyone to suggest that if any of the hon. members in here had a family and they had a business, and there were vacancies which their family could fill that they would not give them employment. That is not the point I am making. The point that I am making is about the Barbadian habit that has persisted where attempts by ordinary Barbadians to move up in the commercial structure or even the social structure have been blunted at every turn by the kind of attitudinal arrangements which the hon. member for Christ Church North Central spoke so eloquently about. Mr. Speaker. I was very sorry that the other hon. members did not permit him to go a little further, because we might have heard a declaration in this House about how the hon. member feels about some practices which he knows about and I know about and which we have talked about on the beach.

We find it in the Hotel Industry too. Sir, we find unqualified persons masquerading on the basis that they put on a suit, go up to North America and join the band wagon. We have it all the time, and the hon. member knows what I am talking about. We have a number of square pegs in round holes, and a number of fresh, nicely varnished round pegs out there who cannot find a hole to fit in.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked about the Tourist Industry. I do not wish to speak about the Tourist Industry, except in as far as it relates to the opening of shops. We in Barbados must look at ourselves. When we look after ourselves well, Barbados would then be good enough for a visit from almost anybody.

I have heard the hon. member indicating that he only wishes to have a certain kind of tourist coming into Barbados.

Mr. WARD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I think that what the hon. member is saying is in the reverse. It is not that I only want a certain type of tourist in Barbados, but there is a certain type that I do not want. There are certain ones that we could do without.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not those with the bad habits.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that in the context of the opening of shops people who come in, especially on visiting ships, expect to find some commercial activity set aside for them to enjoy. It will not be competitive for Barbados when these ships arrive and if these visitors came in at 5.30 o'clock in the evening that the shops were closed and that they left early in the morning, at 7.30 for St. Vincent just before the shops in Barbados were opened. That could not be of any benefit to Barbados.

So, no one is going to contest or question any arrangement that is made for an extension when a tourist ship is in. No one is going to question the extension of the opening hours; but, Sir, sometimes you have to legislate for people against themselves to protect themselves. There are many persons who work in stores and who consider that it is beneath their dignity to join a trade union; and they put social pressure on other persons who wish to join a trade union, and stop them from joining. The result is that we have a number of people who should know better who are not members of a union. In some ways that is their own business; but sometimes you have to protect people against themselves. As you know, Sir, there is that marvellous game of Soccer. Sometimes the referee will blow whistle when there is no man marking you; and when you ask him why he blew the whistle, he says that it is a foul against yourself.

In this respect, this Resolution ought to have provisions to amend the Act. They should make a provision in this Resolution that no single person should have to work longer than the prescribed time without a break. (*Asides*). They do not understand what I am talking about. Mr. Speaker, in North America there is a provision clearly that if you are going to be working in

a place that is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., for example, that there must be a specified number of hours given to the employee. (*Aside*). Show me where that is in the Bill. I understand what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, and I know that you understand it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not understand it in the way that the hon. member understands it.
6.40 p.m.

Mr. TAITT: I now begin to understand why the hon. members on that side are having some difficulty with it. The fact is that if we are going to have this kind of shop legislation, and thank heavens I see the hon. member for the City seems to be picking up the point I am making. If we are going to have this kind of legislation, do not let us go in and say, Mr. Speaker, early closing days 6 a.m. to 1 p.m., 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., no early closing at 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., that means Sir, that from 6 a.m. until 10 o'clock an unscrupulous employer could force, by psychological force, a young lady to work from any hour he decides that she must work and in a time when there is unemployment people will want to say I better take this before I lose my work and there are foreign people these days before you can say Jack Robinson they put people through the door and they know they can do it because there has been no evidence so far that that Government is prepared to go to battle for the working man, but, Sir,.....

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I do not think that that is a fair and proper statement. I believe that that violates the Standing Order of the House where you are not supposed to attribute improper motives and I think it is unfair and unfortunate for the hon. member to say that this Government has sat down and make no attempt to represent the workers in Barbados.

Mr. TAITT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to make one last point on the Unemployment Levy. On the Unemployment Levy a lot has been said about the effects of the Employment Levy. I must confess that I have seen no authoritative statement put out by any agency that I trust that would indicate that the Employment Levy is functional.

I maintain that logically it is not the way that businessmen work. The businessmen do not decide in advance before they make a profit how they are going to deal with the tax. They first set out to make a profit before they deal with the question of what tax they are going to pay, and in another time and on another occasion we will deal with this question of the employment Levy, but I have heard and seen in the Press that there is some indication of a projection that the Employment Levy will be bringing in a certain

amount of money. I hope the hon. member for Christ Church North Central who referred to the Employment Levy would recognise that until the figures are in, until we are absolutely certain of the facts, that it would be fool-hardy to enjoin anyone to use this particular Act to get the benefits of the Levy. I do not think it is on the cards and I do not think any other hon. member should risk to recommend it.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the hon. member who is closer to the Trade Unions is not here and no doubt if he was here would have a lot more to say on the failure of the Government to consult with the Workers' Organisations before bringing this piece of legislation to the Floor of this Honourable House. Let me say that if it is true that they were not consulted, if it is true that the input from the Workers' Organisations have not been heard on this, then, Sir, we can expect not to have heard the last of this Bill merely with a debate in this Honourable House.

I believe that if the legislation did flow out of the little discussion that has been going on between two supermarkets, the Government would be wrong to have brought it up for that reason. If they did not bring it up for that reason, the Government is wrong to have brought it up without studying and comparing all of the ramifications relating to the consequences of this piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, this amendment has my wholehearted support. As you are aware, Sir, I represent a constituency which is in the rural area and this Bill deals more with the urban area. I am sure that if the businesses in the urban areas allow they businesses to be opened later is stipulated by this amendment, I am sure, Sir, that businesses in the rural areas will be obliged to follow their businesses in the urban areas.

This, Sir, leads to a very important point and it is employment. It would generate more employment, I presume, for the youngsters in this country and as far as I can see, Sir, if special emphasis is given to training, it is quite possible that in the urban area the shift system may be possible.

6.50 p.m.

I support the views of the previous speakers who have stated that the amendment should be the means of creating employment for youngsters who are unemployed and not for those who are presently employed at these various businesses.

Mr. Speaker, if you want to see the problem which this Government or any future Government will

have to face, just take a look at some of these newer secondary schools on evenings when you see the large number of pupils who are around the ages of 14, 15, 16 and 17, and you will then see the trouble that this Island must face, and to which some solution will have to be found for this grave problem. Disgruntled educated youths can do this country no good, and therefore it is our duty to do everything possible in which we feel that employment would be created for the youngsters of this country. It is my view that if the employers accept this amendment in good faith, and if they realise the responsibility which they carry, I am sure, Sir, that it will be the means of alleviating the hardship which some of these school leavers are facing at this particular time.

Mr. Speaker, it can be very frustrating when a child leaves school with a reasonable number of certificates at ordinary level and in some cases at advanced level and there is no employment for that child. It is heart-rending to the parents, it is also heart-rending to some representatives of the people, and I will include myself in that number, and therefore when the Government sees fit to introduce this amendment, I have no doubt that it would have dealt with the repercussions from this new piece of legislation. I am not in a position to state if it has discussed the matter with the Barbados Workers' Union or with unions in general, and therefore I am not in a position to comment on that particular point, but as I see it, Sir, it is the means of creating employment, and therefore it would be folly of me not to support this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the youngsters of this country, you, Sir, I have no doubt are aware that pupils from these newer secondary schools and from the older ones look to the employers and the owners of these businesses for employment. While it is true that some of them must cultivate the land, you I have no doubt will agree with me that some will not cultivate the land, and therefore we the representatives of the people must do everything possible when it comes to legislation to assist these youngsters. I feel, Sir, that gone are the days when big businesses should employ only their relatives, close friends in the top ranking positions when all the others who are employed are subordinates. In this age with education going to the masses, the man in the street's son has the same opportunity as the son of any businessman to assimilate and learn and be educated to a higher calibre to look after business than the relatives of these people.

7.00 p.m.

Therefore the time has come when employers should no longer discriminate but should do everything possible to generate employment and assist those who are in dire need of work.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased indeed that I caught your eye on this occasion because I was wondering whether the colours did not necessarily

register on the Regiment. However, I must say that this place is remarkably uncomfortable; when you sit for any length of time you get a backache, and the height of the microphone gives a neck ache if you speak for any length of time; and the only relief that you get is when the hon. member for St. Thomas is with us and in a situation like this where you find a Bill being presented to this Honourable House by a Minister in the form in which I think a Minister should present himself or herself when bringing legislation before the House however important, defective or otherwise.

I want to say, Sir, that I totally dissociate myself from the remarks of the hon. member for Christ Church North Central as regards the behaviour and activities of people employed in shops. For generations these people have been selected from a certain social category which has treated the black people of this country with utmost disdain, and the kind of performance that you see in the shops around Barbados is what they have inherited over the years. Nor do employers clearly understand their responsibility to the training of such persons.

Mr. WARD: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it quite clear that when I spoke of the attendants in shops I am not speaking of black people; I am speaking of people who are black, white, brown, blue or pink or any kind of colour; they all have got to be trained to deal with people; I am not referring to colour.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I regret very much that my remarks were interpreted in that way. I too refer to black, white, green or any colour that happens to be shop attendants and I am quite satisfied that these attitudes towards shoppers in Bridgetown are things that have been inherited right down the ages and because the economic control of commercial activity in this area lies in the hands of people who are the owners of capital but not necessarily experts in the selling of goods. They do not really understand that, because they have a captive market and a lack of competition and so feel that there is no need to change their attitude. I just want to shift the burden of responsibility for such behaviour from the employed to the employer.

This brings me to another important point. It is my view that the people employed in shops in Barbados are grossly underpaid. We know that there is a minimum wage applicable in these areas, but even that minimum wage is in my view most unsatisfactory and I would certainly be much happier if legislation of this kind before us was linked with a provision that no one should be employed as a shop assistant at less than \$100 a week taking into account today's prices. Although there is existing legislation, it is an incontestable fact that many people are employed in shops in Barbados for hours longer than they should be employed by law and for

wages well below what they should be paid by law. Consequently, in any kind of rearrangement of working conditions for people employed in these shops, adequate provision should be made for the protection of these people and there should also be a minimum guaranteed wage of not less than \$100 a week. It is important to bear this in mind because many of the people who employ shop assistants make fantastic sums of money and also successfully evade income tax, and it would be my view Mr. Speaker.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, but I want to tell the hon. member that while I appreciate his mentioning about the minimum wage, he is trying to step beyond what this present Resolution is about.

Dr. HAYNES: I appreciate that to a large extent but.....

Mr. SPEAKER: You don't have to appreciate it, you have to accept it.

Dr. HAYNES: I appreciate it and accept it, Sir, *in toto*. The point I was trying to get across is that when legislation of this kind is brought in, it is important to look at the total area of those employed in the shops because the immediate impact is going to be borne by the people employed in those shops. They have very little protection, and the reason for this little protection is that unionization of this category of worker has been traditionally difficult throughout the world; difficult for a variety of reasons; one, because of the very nature of the type of establishment who employ them and secondly because of the personal loyalties and relationships and the job dependency situation that often exist within this type of industry. It is my view that legislation of this kind should be coupled with an effective inspectorate, and I think that Government has a responsibility when it introduces legislation of this kind to ensure that there are inspectors who would see to it that people working in these shops are not only paid an adequate wage according to the law — a wage which should be increased to \$100 — but also that the hours of work should be hours which would be mutually agreed to between the employer and the employed. I myself work in a service industry and I can assure you Mr. Speaker, that it is a very different matter when someone goes to work at 8 o'clock in the morning and goes home at 4 and the situation where one works at different times, as in shops and such places.
7.10 p.m.

First of all there is the internal family disruption that occurs as a consequence of this kind of arrangement. Then, secondly, there is almost an inevitable increase cost involved to the worker when he finds himself in a situation where he is asked to work outside the normal hours of working people. There may be the question of a young mother who may be a shop attendant, and who may have a young baby or children at school; and this

creates a serious problem. So that when I try to link the question of salaries and wages with changing hours it becomes very irrelevant to suppose that there will be no problem in this kind of situation.

I myself have not only worked in a service industry, but I have spent my entire life with people in service industries, and I understand the problems and the particular costs that can be generated when you create services that are outside of the normal run of employment in the society. However, Mr. Speaker, I do not want it to be thought that I am opposing the Bill in principle. It is my view that all services, not only shop services and so on should be maximised as far as possible and the most reasonable hours made available for the spending of money and the provision of other services.

For example, I notice in this Bill that there is a mandatory late closing time.

Mr. SIMMONS: On a point of order. I am getting a little tired of the member referring to this as a Bill. It is not a Bill. The Bill is there in the Shops Act that is in the Blue Book. This is a ministerial Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: That was a slip of the tongue, lapsus linguae, as they call it.

Dr. HAYNES: However, Sir, as I was trying to say it is a step in the right direction because we have to make all of our services in this country maximally available not only to the local population, but to a population that effectively doubles some time during the year. I was interested in the mandatory late closing time for the druggists; and has always seemed to me to be a very feasible proposition where at least one druggist should be available in Barbados on a 24 hours basis. That is like the Boots operation in Piccadilly or something like that. The particular reason is that most people require medicine during the night. I even go further on this situation that exists in the particular Bill. My main concern was in regard to the protection of employees. I do not think that this in itself offers the kind of protection which we on this side of the House would like to see; and I believe that those on the other side will have serious thought about the possibility of abuse; because in fact we are dealing with an area that is traditionally associated with abuse and that is something that must be said. It is an area, as the hon. member knows, which is closely associated with sexual abuse of employees in the Barbados situation; and it is an area where people can afford to pay people because of their tax deductibility status because of the money that they pay out.

I cannot understand why the member for St. Philip North should be so upset because we come in here and try to make a few points for the benefit of the workers

of this country. I had always assumed, and indeed I have seen correspondence.....

Mr. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I was trying to help the hon. member to deal adequately with the Resolution before us, because all that he is talking about is contained in the substantive law. The rights of employees, the rights of employers and the rights of the Labour Officer are contained in it.

Dr. HAYNES: I accept that. I have read the substantive legislation although I got my paper only at 5 o'clock yesterday. I accept that, but the point is do these people get the kind of protection which they would normally get in a unionised situation, or if they normally get that kind of protection from the Government of this country, whether it is the Democratic Labour Party Government or the Barbados Labour Party Government.

That, Sir, is the point that I am making. I am not concerned with the law. I am concerned with what happens, and I am no lawyer. I am concerned about when some people come to my office and tell me what happened the day before in Swan Street or somewhere else and they have to go to the Police. That is what I am talking about; and we must understand that despite the laws that come from Parliament, because of the peculiar nature of this particular industry, our citizens, our mothers and sisters are subject to this kind of abuse, despite what is on the Statute Book. That is the point that I am trying to make. I have already pointed out that I am not opposed in principle, but I think that I have every right to draw to the attention of this Hon. House the problems that can be substantial in this type of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I simply seek to draw to the attention of the House in a specific manner what can happen when you have certain limits within the urban areas and then just outside the urban areas; and we have a situation in Barbados where black entrepreneurs might be at a distinct disadvantage in relation to someone a few yards away....

Mr. SPEAKER: I would wish that the hon. member would put his case without these references to black, white, or any other colour.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I will try my best, but I have to face the facts because I was born black, born in a parish relatively urban now, some times urbane, but not prepared to be too urbane too long. The point I am trying to make is that you have a situation here in Barbados where you had someone of my ethnic origin in a situation where he was at a distinct disadvantage in relation to an institution a few yards away, when that institution was able to capitalise in extensive shareholding within an area; and I think that this Resolution certainly

by removing that kind of distinction is a step in the right direction.

I do not think that anyone, Mr. Speaker, is ever going to persuade me not to recognise my ethnic origin, because that is precious to me and very fundamental to me, else I would not be here. On the question of employment in Barbados, this Bill will not increase employment in Barbados. It was fundamental nonsense to talk about unemployment levy in the economic situation in Barbados. At one minute you hear the Government boasting of the amount of taxes that they are getting as a consequence of the employment levy and at another time about the amount of employment generated. It cannot be both ways. If you are not employing people you get money from the employment levy. If you are employing people you do not get that money. So which is it? In point of fact you can only derive employment benefits from an employment levy if the businesses are not undertaking to employ people; and you just do not employ people as a tax saving device.

7.20 p.m.

You just do not employ people as a tax saving device, and apart from Cave Shepherd in Bridgetown who has some obligation to cut out when in fact they were expanding, to say that they were able to recover their Employment Levy, I hardly know of any Company in Barbados that has made any significant recovery from the employment levy.

Now when you look at the banking situation and the hon. member for St. Thomas, and this is the first time we have agreed about anything, and about the last time we probably would in a number of years, recognised and admitted today that the balance of funds in the commercial system in Barbados is due to the non-expansion of the non-Governmental sector in Barbados, so how on earth are we going to have a non-expansion in a non-Governmental sector and at the same time talk about employing more and more people.

Let us get this straight that if you open shops 24 hours a day a man can only employ another person if he is making enough money to employ that person and make that employment worthwhile. Unless he does this, he would be crazy. His head would need examining. So the mere extension of the shopping hours does not necessarily in itself mean that more people would be employed. What would generate more employment is if there is a greater aggregate demand for commercial activity and a demand for goods and an increase in the purchasing power of the people and the availability of goods and services provided by those shops and wherever the hours of service are contracted, expanded, or remained the same, then you will get an expansion of employment in that particular area and therefore if there is to be an expansion in the commercial sector in

this country it is for the Government to look very carefully at the restrictions that they have put on commercial activities, restrictions which they have postponed from June, recognising that Christmas is really in December but wanted to bring forward December, I think, to June 1st, 1978.

When those restrictions are removed, then there is a possibility that you will see some expansion of trade in Bridgetown, so do not come in here with this kind of bogus economic thinking because it does not make sense. It cannot make sense. In fact, it is a recipe for bankruptcy, but fortunately, the vast majority of shopkeepers and people involved with shop business in Barbados have been the best businessmen in this country down through the ages.

It may be of great relevance to me. It always amazes me when a whole lot of jokers go into business and then a year or two later shout that neither the Development Bank nor the Barbados Bank or somebody else would not lend them any money whilst at the same time you see people like King James in a business for something like 25 years and a whole range of people.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I think King James engaged in late closing.

Dr. HAYNES: Well, I do not know the exact details but I must check it out because it is so near and dear to me. It is in my constituency. Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, they are those who would naturally think that contributions of this kind because they focus in two areas, predominately in the area of the protection of the workers in this particular commercial area that views of this kind should not be aired in this Honourable House and I repeat that I am very shocked, surprised, worried, concerned, deeply upset, and flabbergasted that the hon. member for St. Philip North should get up in the tone to speak in which he did. I do not think he really meant it, Mr. Speaker, because I think he was slightly misled on that particular occasion because in the absence of the member for St. Thomas I think he felt he had to try and hold the fort in that kind of a way.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Philip North ought to know a Resolution from a Bill.

Dr. HAYNES: But surely, Sir, he cannot provide the same kind of amusement as you get from the member for St. Thomas. I accept the correction I believe, of the Bill but I hope he is not opposing my position in relation to the working people in the commercial sector in this country which as a lawyer Mr. Speaker.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Philip North is here as as hon. member. He is neither here as a doctor nor a lawyer.

Dr. HAYNES: The hon. member in the capacity of his daily activities in Bridgetown would know very much what I am talking about because on many occasions, not necessarily with the particular member for St. Philip North, but in relations to many other legal practitioners in this country we have had to join together over the years to protect people subject to the kind of exploitation that we are talking about and I would urge on the Hon. Minister who introduced this.....

Mr. WARD: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, this exploitation is it only from the lawyers or the medical profession as well?

Dr. HAYNES: Exploitation is exploitation and I have always been a firm believer in the control of all professions in Barbados including doctors, lawyers, the whole lot, and if the hon. member for the City would agree.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Whether they are retailing or wholesaling.

Dr. HAYNES: Wholesaling, retailing, the whole lot, percentage, everything. When you are talking about controlling prices in this society and things like that, there is a very urgent case.....

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not now before this Honourable House.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I did not introduce it. I think that remark should more appropriately be directed to the inappropriate interjection by the member for Christ Church North Central.

Mr. WARD: I heard that hon. member speak about exploitation. I did not use the word. I only asked if the medical profession is the one that is doing the most exploitation demanding cash before they operate and all this sort of thing.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe that the hon. member for St. Michael South Central is aware that two wrongs do not make a right.

Dr. HAYNES: I do not operate and my operations do not involve cash at all, before or after. The point I was trying to make and this is the final one, Mr. Speaker, is that we welcome this Bill in principle.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is still a Resolution. You are referring to a Bill all the time and we are still discussing the Resolution.

Dr. HAYNES: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, but are we going to start all over again? We welcome this Resolution in principle. We feel that if properly organised with the appropriate inspectorate, that it can be of tremendous value both to the local population and to the expanded population which we have during the Tourist Season, which we hope will be all year round as time goes on.

We feel very strongly, however, that it opens up avenues of exploitation which is the responsibility of those who bring this Bill before Parliament to take steps in advance to protect the workers of this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not repeat yourself on this point.
7.30 p.m.

Dr. HAYNES: I am summing up and it is difficult to summarise without mentioning in brief something that you said before.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know what it is after you have been talking in circles.

Dr. HAYNES: No, Sir. Actually, summing up is at the bottom, but basically we are deeply concerned about this question of exploitation of the workers, and we would urge Government to take immediate steps to ensure that workers in this area have a minimum wage of \$100 per week. Thank you for your indulgence and patience.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not before the House at this moment.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, it was in one of Shakespeare's plays that this quotation comes: "A tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing." That is how we can aptly describe the members from that side and their contribution to this particular debate.

Dr. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation, surely you cannot describe three contributions as one tale; it would have to be tales, not one tale.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot prevent three contributions from being one tale.

Mr. BRADSHAW: From what Shakespeare did say, they were all added up meaning nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to set the records straight. This is supposed to be a Resolution that we are supposed to be debating. A Resolution differs from a Bill which is not before this Chamber at this moment. In 1969 a Shops Act was passed in this Honourable Chamber, and the Shops Act of 1969 gave the Minister of Labour the power

to make Regulations and Orders. These Orders dealt with the closing and the opening of shops. In that Act, Mr. Speaker, there were certain terms used such as "urban shops", "country shops" and "shops". What this Resolution seeks to do is to amend what was then termed as "country shops", "urban shops" and "shops" and make it more convenient, simply by saying "shops". In other words, the amendment now, Mr. Speaker, will classify shops whether they are in the country or in town as "shops". That is simple.

Now what does the Act say? It goes on to say that if a Minister wants to make an amendment to the Order, he would have to bring a Resolution before this Honourable Chamber and have it passed in the affirmative. That is all that we are seeking to do. It is not that we are introducing a new piece of legislation; it is not a matter of bringing a new law into this Honourable Chamber; nothing of the sort, and any impression which hon. members would seek to convey at this time is totally false, and it has got to be corrected.

Mr. Speaker, we have got to go slowly for the benefit of some members especially on that side, because they get in this Honourable Chamber and they indulge in what I always term as "poly-tricking", playing to the Gallery, not realising that the Gallery is an intellectual Gallery and that they would be able to understand.....

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would ask Your Honour to ask the hon. member to withdraw the remark that members on this side are poly-tricking. Poly-tricking is a pejorative term and suggests motives that are not in keeping with the motives of hon. members of the House. I wonder if you would ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. member may continue his address.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to say is that I am sure hon. members on this side after listening to the contributions from hon. members on that side may be of the impression that we are talking about a new Bill being introduced, and it is no Bill. It is simply a Resolution, but the Bill or the Act was cited. There is a law which deals with the regulation of shops, the habits and practices of shops, where a shopkeeper or proprietor can be prosecuted, whether he has insanitary conditions or not. The Act of 1969 makes provision for this and therefore it is not in keeping with a proper speech and proper explanation to suggest that this is a Bill and that there are no proper provisions in the Act. We do agree, Mr. Speaker, that the Act from time to time may need amending. That is what we agree with because every law, every statute from time to time should be looked at to see how best we can amend it to seek to improve our social and present conditions. If this was the gist of the

contribution from that side, then I would align myself with such remarks. What we must understand is that we on this side have realised that the Order which is the power of the Minister of Labour to make, needs to be adjusted to suit present-day demands. We have seen, unlike hon. members on that side when they were in power where we ought to amend it to avoid what could easily be termed discriminatory trends. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Speaker, by having a description of urban and country shops, we had situations where some supermarkets and some shops because there was a line of demarkation — you had a mere road separating a country shop from an urban shop — although some of the supermarkets or some of the shops were within a few metres or yards of each other, and we feel that this could be termed discriminatory trends. We have supermarkets, and I will mention about four of them. You have a situation where Gertz Supermarket and J.Bs which are within reasonable walking distance, within three quarters of a kilometer of each other, and you have another situation in the Worthing area where you have the Big B and Goddards where one road separates the two supermarkets, yet because of the description in the Act of "urban" and "country", there were two different opening and closing hours.

7.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only supermarkets that were involved in this practice, or some supermarkets that were operating against the law in the sense that the law applied to one as urban as against country. Shops fell into this category, and we felt that since there are two types of shops they should both be given a fair deal. It is as simple as that, that all the supermarkets and shops will be able to compete because they will all have the same opening and closing hours. The matter does not call for all this fuss and meaningless contribution. It is not a question of not looking after the workers. The Chief Labour Officer under the Act has the power to enter any premises described as a shop and to make certain inspections. And not only that; the Chief Labour Officer has the prerogative under the Act to invite the Minister of Health or officials from the Ministry of Health to look into what he may regard as insanitary conditions. So the Act has adequate provisions, but no Act is without imperfections; but this is not the time for us to suggest that Government in bringing in this Resolution is not thinking about the welfare of the people. It is not a valid criticism and should not be allowed to pass without some harsh rebuttal. If hon. members want to engage in what I term cheap politics let them do so. But it must be understood that this is not a new Bill; we are not acting in any dictatorial manner; what we are doing is giving the Minister power to regulate because we feel that the time has come for such regulation.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the advantages from this proposed amendment. I don't want to go into the nitty gritty of what I would term the intricacies of the Resolution. There are definite advantages and I would like for the benefit of the hon. members on that side who seem not to understand what is going on these days to list some of these advantages. People in this country are looking forward to proper contribution and examples from members of this honourable Chamber and we must understand this.

We are dealing with a Resolution which has concrete and far reaching benefits that must redound to the benefit of the people and the workers themselves. We cannot run a Government that thinks in terms of the workers alone; we have got to think of the proprietors as well, who are also part of Barbados; and no policy which advocates looking after the workers at the expense of the proprietors can succeed in a progressive country. We have got to look at the overall economic state of Barbados and that means that we have to think in terms of the small man and the big man, and that is what this Government knows.

Now Mr. Speaker, I have said there are advantages in the amendments to this particular order. As I said before, under the old order — or the present order as this order before us has not yet been passed — it was possible for the urban shops and the rural shops to have different opening hours. What this Resolution seeks to do is to regulate the situation so that there is a common opening hour for both, and the amendments seek to delete the term urban shops and country shops and substitute the one word "shops". All of them will be categorized as shops. That is what the Resolution seeks to do, and that is one advantage.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that there are a number of workers in town and elsewhere who by virtue of the density of traffic on afternoons find it very difficult to get from their workplace to home or to the supermarket. People have a way of choosing supermarkets and they will go to different ones wherever there is a drop in prices. This is a common trend all over the world, to go to the cheapest supermarkets, and this is something that Barbadians do. But what prevents them from taking full advantage of these lower prices from time to time is that when they get to the supermarket, because they have been delayed on the road due to traffic jams and queues, the supermarket is closed. We have seen this; it doesn't take anyone any special ability to realize this. As a result we have decided to look at the order and amend it so that people who are delayed by traffic jams or other problems will now be able to get to the supermarket at 7 or 8 o'clock and purchase what they want. So this is an order which takes into consideration the convenience of the Barbadian shopping public.

There is also another definite advantage in the amendment, and that is that when shops are allowed to extend their hours of operation, rather than paying overtime the employers will now seek to employ more people. No employer will seek to employ someone at overtime if he can get someone to work at a flat rate, because overtime is a special rate. So by the mere fact that the supermarkets will now be opened for longer hours this will redound to the benefit of employers.

And there are other advantages, and since hon. members on that side have touched on the unemployment levy and have sought to give the impression that there would be no tangible benefit from the unemployment levy.....

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe the hon. member might inadvertently be misleading the House. He keeps talking about an unemployment levy. I believe there is an employment levy. The hon. member might wish to take note of that, Sir.

7.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we can see the benefits of that. We can see how it neatly fits in to this amendment so that every shop proprietor knows that when he can extend his hours of opening, and who are now paying large sums as unemployment levy will now be able to claim. It is not an attempt on the part of the Government to get money. I did not understand it that way. My understanding is that it is an incentive to get people employed. That is the aim so that employers will realise that they will be penalised if they do not employ people by expanding to take in more people. If they employ more people, the employment levy will be vindicated; and this refund is an incentive and therefore a good policy.

Mr. Speaker, I have set out these points because I believe that in a matter like this there should not be any political partisanship. We have got to understand that. It is not a question of a member mistaking a simple Resolution for a Bill, and then when it is pointed out to him, he accepts it and gets up again and says that it is a Bill. Mr. Speaker, it boggles the mind, as one person said; but, Mr. Speaker, I have sought to deal with some of the insinuations and some of the beliefs of hon. members on that side, because this is a Resolution which, according to the Act, must be brought whenever the Minister wants to amend it.

Christmas is coming and most people will want to do their shopping when they come from work. They do not want to have to run hastily into the supermarkets and take up any item. They want to have a chance to see which one is cheaper and so that they can choose. This Christmas promises to be one of the finest ever. We

anticipate this. We look forward to it. We know that the *economy* has improved and is turning around and that is why we are trying to accommodate this sort of thing.

Hon. members over there do not understand this. It is too difficult for them to understand; but, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make this point. While we are at this, we must bear in mind that complacency can set in. I am aware of the fact that some shop proprietors are not observing the law or every letter of the law. Mr. Speaker, I know that an officer who is empowered to carry out certain duties will make his little slips. What I am saying is that some of the statements may be valid, but I want hon. members to understand that it is not the fault of the Government.

What I want to say is that there should be a more stringent approach to the observance of the Shops Act. Some shops operate under insanitary conditions, and I want to say that in some cases you can get yourself into trouble with this word "some" sometimes. There are some shops which operate under very poor conditions. For instance, if they employ five or more persons, mainly females they must provide a rest room.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are now dealing with the Order for shops.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say that we could look at the Bill itself, but I do not like to trespass on the domain of other people. Before I sit, I would like hon. members to appreciate — I would like members on the other side — to appreciate the main purpose of this particular Resolution. As I have said, it is nothing new. It is just a simple Resolution that must be brought. You do not have to consult the union at this stage.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that I can speak without fear or contradiction. This was a Cabinet decision, but we do not operate in that dictatorial manner. I am sure that the unions were apprised that this was an Order. You do not have to apprise the unions about any Order; but we know and we feel that for the good harmony and good relationships we ought to give notice not only to the unions, but to the Employers Confederation, and shop proprietors.

As I said, it is within the prerogative of the Minister to make such an Order. If it was just a simple Order, it would not have required a debate on the floor of this House; but since we have looked at the Order and we feel that the social behaviour demands a look at this particular Act, we decided that we should bring a Resolution. The Order can only come into effect if it passes the House in the affirmative, and that is what this Resolution is all about, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SISNETT: Mr. Speaker, in rising to support this Resolution, I want to make a few brief comments which I think are pertinent to the matter before the House; but before I make my observations, I would like to go on record as commending the female Minister of this Legislature — the Ministry of Health — for so capably leading the House since the recess. I would also like to commend the Minister for bringing this particular piece of legislation before this Chamber today. To have an amendment to the Shops Act is a piece of legislation which, in my view, is long overdue. To have any one business in Barbados to be in a position to open its stores from 8 in the morning until 8 or least 10 in the evening is a step in the right direction, because out of this can only generate what I see as a better climate for more work. I do not believe that employers in Barbados would want their established staff to work from 8 in the morning until 10 p.m. So Mr. Speaker, I can see the necessity for the creation of the shift system; and with the shift system being introduced into Barbados, I can see some advantage for workers.

8 p.m.

I can see workers beginning or who normally begin their hours of duty at 8 o'clock in the morning can now with arrangement through management, some of them can start their shifts as from 10 o'clock. Some probably can begin theirs at 12 o'clock and others can start at 2 o'clock with the extended hours of business.

You find, however, Mr. Speaker, there are some employers who are hesitant to consider the shift-system because they claim they cannot get the kind of work generated out of part-time workers because they are not very familiar with the various concerns. This, I know, has been a problem especially in the Swan Street area where some of the employers and the Managers say they do not have the confidence of the part time worker as much as they do of the established worker.

Another advantage will be more flexibility in the shift and business hours, and a chance for businesses to generate more, and the creation of more employment.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I am particularly concerned about is you have a situation here today in Barbados where it is easier for one to have full access to shops that would be opened 24 hours and you can have your full of liquor, hamburgers, chicken, fish, especially in the Baxters Road area and Nelson Street area and it is unfortunate to say in Barbados that after 4.30 or 5 p.m. you cannot find a dress store that is opened for any specific period of time and in commending the Amendment to this Resolution, Mr. Speaker, I would want to see another look being taken at this Resolution to implement a system whereby a Pharmaceutical Society which controls the pharmacies in Barbados giving proper guidance to their various members to have as in other countries throughout the world, a 24 hour drugstore or pharmacy

service so that when people of this country find it necessary to call on a doctor and at a late hour, and he has got to prescribe some medicine, a pharmacy would necessarily be there opened so that that person can have their prescription filled and I would like to see this being done through the Pharmaceutical Society. For example, to have Knights Pharmacy on a 24 hour basis, on Mondays. If there is ...

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member really wants to specify any particular business.

Mr. SISNETT: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: You will like to see some businesses opened until certain hours.

Mr. SISNETT: Exactly, Mr. Speaker, but I was just putting that as a hypothetical case in your constituency, Sir, I would like to see a pharmacy in that area so your constituents can have access to such a pharmacy in case of an emergency and I would generally like to see the Pharmaceutical Society coming together to bring their members together so that the people of Barbados can have a 24 hour service which incidentally should be protected by the arm of the law because we have had such vandalism in other places over the past years and I would like to see these pharmacies being protected.

In addition to this, it might not be a bad suggestion to have a similar 24 hour Clinic in addition to the Hospital where doctors can be on call because it is virtually impossible to have a doctor attend a house call.

Mr. SPEAKER: This Shop Order has nothing to do with doctors.

Mr. SISNETT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have to do nothing with doctors but it is difficult to find a doctor after 8 o'clock in the evening and I believe that legislation can be brought to the House to give doctors a chance to work later in the night.

I also see, Mr. Speaker, another area where we can generate a few more Tourist Dollars with the implementation of this Resolution because you do find on occasions Tourists entering Barbados and most of the shops, whether they be in the city or elsewhere are closed, and it is one thing to spend lots of money to get tourists into the Island and it is a sad thing that tourists come into the Island and are willing to spend a few extra dollars and find that all the facilities are closed up.

One final point in which I want to end this Resolution. People working in the Industrial Estates find it rather difficult after leaving their jobs in the evening to have access to any of the City shopping. They virtually cannot find time since they are 5-day workers. They work

from Monday to Friday and they leave work at 5 o'clock and in order to have access to shopping, they usually have to ask their supervisors for time to get to the City and most of these workers are piece workers. I believe they are losing a sizable sum of their weekly salary and this Resolution before the House, Mr. Speaker, has lots of good things for the people in Barbados.

It is my view that it is a challenge to the employer to have to say in the transition from one archaic system where we have been closing our places of business at 4 o'clock probably extending to 8 or 10 o'clock as they see fit and in so doing it is a chance for them to make a contribution to generate more employment in the sense that if they are going to open until 10 o'clock they have a chance now to create that shift-system, and the shift-system, I believe, has been successfully implemented in the Industrial Estates.

There are some Government concerns that are already working a shift-system quite effectively like the Hospital and the essential services of Government like the Barbados Telephone Company and some people in the Industrial Estates.
8.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I just would like to thank the Minister for bringing this and I would hope that employers would do their best to see how much employment and how much trade they can generate out of the amendment to this Shops Act for the good of all Barbadians.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, it is now 8.10 p.m. and I know that we have to take into consideration the Clerks at the Table and the Staff.

I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 8.45 p.m.

Mr. SISNETT: I beg to second that

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

On Resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of points which I would like to make on this Resolution which we are considering here tonight. In the first place, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that having as it were listened to the hon. member for St. Michael South East indicating that there was nothing very much about this Resolution that it was only a very simple thing, that we were taking

the word "urban" and just having "shops" and just explaining for a little bit the hours of the opening of shops and that this is something very simple, I want, Mr. Speaker, first to examine very clearly the implications of what is being sought here by this Order.

As you are very well aware, Mr. Speaker, this Order which we are seeking to adjust is part and parcel of the Shops legislation which is included in Chapter 356 of the Laws of Barbados, and I would like at the very outset to make the point that the Order is fundamental in that it seeks to extend the opening hours of shops. In some instances shops are going to be opened until 10 o'clock at night, in other instances until 9 o'clock at night and in other instances shops will be opened until 8 o'clock, and if you were to examine, Mr. Speaker, the employment habits which exist in the area of shops, you will see very clearly that it will be affecting thousands of workers because these are the people who essentially are involved in the services in these areas. It is therefore my view in recognising the fundamental nature of this, that any Government which professes to have the interest of the masses of people at heart would ensure that they would have some discussion and some consultation on this. I know that the hon. member for St. Michael East indicated that under the Act there is no need for the Minister to consult or to discuss when he is amending the Order, but what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that this matter is of such significance and of such fundamental importance that it is my view that it is extremely neglectful and indeed extremely hard-headed not to have gone into some consultation and discussion on this matter.

It would seem, Mr. Speaker, as if this legislation, at least the amending Order is in response to the urgings of the business community, and I am left to wonder if the Government is really as it were responding like puppets on a string to the urgings of the business community, and when the business community pulls the string then they respond, because I think we have it quite clearly from the mouths of members on the Government side who spoke on this matter the reason why this Resolution was brought here today. Indeed the hon. member for St. Michael South East indicated that it was as a result of the problem which was experienced between two supermarkets, one on the border of the urban and the country areas that we have this here.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, on a point of explanation, I never said or alleged during my contribution that the amendment was as a result of any problem that two supermarkets had.

Mr. GREAVES: I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for St. Michael South East will get an opportunity some time in the not too distant future to

read his contribution on this debate which really was an exercise in illogic.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member never made the point that the hon. member for St. Lucy is alleging he made.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, what I say is that it is clear to me that the reason why we are discussing this Resolution here tonight is as a result of the urgings of the business community as far as the distinction which exists between urban shops and country shops, and what is very interesting is that the Government could respond so hastily and so readily in a matter like this, because the business community has been making these kinds of noises.

What I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, and I say this without any fear of contradiction is that this amending Order will without doubt operate to the detriment of the workers who will be affected by the fundamental change which is being introduced. And when you consider that there was no real discussion on this, I wish to refresh the memory of this Honourable House, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, I do not have to refresh your memory on your contribution in 1975, when we were discussing the Shops legislation. I just want to refresh because this is why I say the record is a very important thing, because what we see here and what we were able to hear here today is a BLP of 1975 and singing a different tune in 1978, because on page 5736 of the debates of the House of Assembly for Tuesday, 16th December, 1975, we talked about consultation. There are lots of things I will refer to as we go along. This is Mr. Forde, according to the Debates, who is now Attorney General on page 5736. It says as follows:

"I have had four years in this Chamber and I sometimes wonder whether or not the DLP in itself has not got serious questioning about the Constitution on this part. Anybody in this House must pay great attention to the voice of the Trade Union on Labour legislation in this country. It is a mistake to ignore them on an issue such as this particularly when I respectfully submit to this House they monitor more closely than any one of us in here, including the Minister of Labour and Welfare, conditions affecting people employed in Bridgetown."

Mr. Speaker, here you have a situation where we are now changing a very important aspect of the welfare and the working conditions of people in this country, but no discussion. I want, Mr. Speaker, to further remind the Honourable House that there is in existence at least in the Laws of Barbados the Wages Council Act, Cap. 362, and this Act was specifically passed to ensure that those workers particularly in the city area who work in areas designated as shops and who did not benefit or were not protected by the forces of collective bargaining who are

not members of a trade union were represented. This Act made it possible for the Wages Council which is made up of representatives of workers, representatives of employers and representatives of Government to sit down and to discuss wages and conditions of employment of these workers. So that we have an added situation where the very existing legislation was ignored, and I am submitting, Mr. Speaker, that a matter as fundamental as this should have been referred to the Wages Council for their advice and for their consideration. It is my submission, Mr. Speaker, that this is a hastily prepared Order and one which, as I have indicated, will work to the detriment of workers in this country.

8.55 p.m.

But we have the other point which has been made by the hon. member for St. Michael North Central and the hon. member for St. Michael North East, to the effect that this new Order by extending the hours of work in the shops of this country will make it possible for more jobs to be created. Again I think that this is a fallacious argument and a misconception of what will actually take place when the hours are extended. If you really look at the situation we are dealing with it should be recognized that an economy which has its limitations as far as the amount of business which can be transacted, as in the case of shops, the fact is that when we seek to extend the hours of opening it is not a question of creating more business because it is not a question that the business is there. So when you go down this dangerous line about the new hours creating more employment, I am saying this will not be so.

I don't want to use this as an authority but I would refer to a debate which took place in this House on December 16, 1975 in discussing extending shop hours and we had this position put up by the then Opposition the Barbados Labour Party. Mr. Forde in his debate at page 5735 said as follows: "If I could be convinced that this change would automatically mean an increase in the employment opportunities for Barbadians and a relief of the chronic unemployment conditions facing the country, without any detriment to the welfare of the underprivileged working class people, then I would happily support the Bill, but I am not so convinced." As I said, I am not using this as an authority but using it to show the position taken at that time, and I am saying without fear of contradiction that merely extending the opening hours to shops will not lead to the generation of employment opportunities. When the hon. member for St. Michael North Central was talking about the effects of this, I was watching the Chairman of Committees, the hon. member for St. George North, himself a businessman, and he was apparently making sport of the hon. member for St. Michael North Central because he knew that businessmen would not respond in that way; they would respond by staggering the working hours.

Mr. ODLE: Mr. Speaker, am I to understand that the hon. member for St. Lucy is suggesting that I came in here.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know what the hon. member understands.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, how will the businessmen respond? They are going to respond by staggering the hours; that is, they will allow some workers to come in early and others to come later.

Now on the face of it, it would appear as if this would be all well and good; but as you are well aware, this particular arrangement will obviously be disruptive. It is not that one is opposed to change; certainly we must recognise that we are living in a situation where change will come about, but we must not introduce change just for the sake of change; change must be meaningful and an overall look must be taken of the situation. And what I am saying is that this change is going to place the workers involved at a tremendous disadvantage because it is going to change their pattern of life.

if you examine the structure of the employment in shops or businesses designated as shops, you will see that most of the people employed, about 95%, are young women. A number of them have their children and family life and you will have a situation therefore where they are going to be faced with an employer telling them that they have to come out earlier or later as the case may be and they may not be able to make the kind of adjustment which would be required in this situation. I am saying therefore that this legislation has very far reaching social implications for workers affected by it. For example, if they have arranged with a Day Nursery to keep their children because they know they are going to get off at 4 o'clock and the day nursery closes at 4 or 5, you can see the kind of problems they will face. They will have to look for other people to take care of their children, and if they cannot find someone they will have to give up their job.

There are other factors involved. Suppose the employer approaches a worker and suggests that he is going to be open until 10 p.m. and wants this worker to work until 10 p.m., do you realize that there is no kind of opposition the worker can take? He has to agree or be faced with the situation where the employer can say that the worker is not interested in work. In looking at this matter there was eloquent representation made in that same debate of 1975 at page 5733. The person on that occasion began his speech by saying: "Undoubtedly only fools would argue that this Bill does not interfere with the right of the worker". That was during a Bill to increase the shop hours. I am sure Mr.

Speaker, you are well aware of that quotation because they are the words that fell from your own lips at the time. And if you go further you will see the representation made at that time on the kind of problems the workers would be faced with by businessmen whose only motive would be their pocket book.

9.05 p.m.

I think that that is something we have to be concerned with.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope that the hon. member addressing the House is not making any reference to Frank Da Silva.

Mr. GREAVES: I do not know who that person is. All that I can tell you, Mr. Speaker is that I would not try to stand in the way of a worker who of his own free will agrees to work overtime; but you will find, if this Order is passed, that a lot of workers will be placed at the mercy of their employers, being told to work overtime or will be fired. It might not suit a worker on that particular day or night to work overtime; and having refused because it does not suit him or her to work at that particular time what you are going to find is that the worker will be victimised in some form or fashion. That has happened before, and I am submitting that the situation has not changed in 1978. That is why I say that this Order is going to operate to the detriment of the workers in this country because it is going to lead to a situation where if a female worker says I have my children to look after and working until 9 o'clock will not suit me, no choice is given to the worker.

These are facts that have to be pointed out. I do not have to point them out to you, Mr. Speaker, because you have pointed them out on the floor of this House already. I think, Mr. Speaker, that when you consider the possible consequences, that this is not a simple amendment by any means, and we have to look very carefully at it.

The member for St. Michael South Central in his contribution referred to the Labour Department, and the fact that there exists inadequate inspection machinery at the Labour Department. Under the Shops Act, as the member for St. Michael South East recognised, the Chief Labour Officer has certain functions to perform; and if you are going to be serious about this, we have to look carefully at that because the Chief Labour Officer has to be responsible for the administration of this; and clearly all of those who have some idea of how the department works know that it is totally inadequate to service the needs of workers which the various laws would have it to service from time to time. The Labour Department does not have the machinery to deal with the problems that

will arise from time to time with these new shop opening hours.

I would think, Mr. Speaker, that bearing in mind that it is going to be fundamental matters.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's time? Please wind up.

Mr. GREAVES: The final point I want to end on has to do with — and I want to quote again from the Official Gazette of the 15th December, 1975 on this this aspect of the legislation where the now Attorney General said on Page 5738 "I object more strongly as a member of Parliament to the concept of delegating legislation where by delegating legislation a Minister can name substantive Acts modifying an Act of Parliament and only subject to negative Resolution.".....

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. ALLEYNE: Mr. Speaker, I want to make what I consider to be an important contribution to this debate. Let me deal with the last point first. The hon. member for St. Lucy quoted from a 1975 debate; but that was a totally different kettle of fish. As a matter of fact according to that Resolution brought to this House by the other side shop assistants could have been kept in work until as late as 11 o'clock at night. They could have been asked to work on Sundays.

What this Resolution seeks to do is simply to vary the opening hours of shops. Mr. Speaker, if one looks at the proposed Schedule one would see if it leads to the lengthening of hours, but the shortening of hours also in some respects. If one looks at the Schedule one would see that whereas under the old Schedule some shops could have been opened from 7 o'clock, they will now open at 8 o'clock. I do not think that hon. members on the other side could criticise that.

9.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this is the position. I am sure that hon. members on the other side have not checked the principal Order because we have to take the principal Order and compare it with the proposed Order to see what the true position is. What I am saying is that we are dealing with two fundamentally different things.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of elucidation. The hon. member does not obviously understand the point I am making. The hon. member seems to be suggesting that there is a fundamental difference between shops closing at 10 o'clock and closing at 11 o'clock and a fundamental difference between a shop opening at 6 and a shop opening at 7 o'clock and because he has that as a fundamental thing, he is misunderstanding the point that was made on this side.

Mr. ALLEYNE: Mr. Speaker, I do not have the capacity to misunderstand. I have the capacity to understand. Let me say this, the gist of the Resolution proposed in 1975 to which Your Honour was objecting was there was no control at all of the opening hours of shops, and further more, that the protection of the Shops Act would have been swept away. We are maintaining those protected provisions. There are even criminological offences in that Chapter 356 which are still being kept and all that we are doing is varying the opening hours, shortening some and lengthening others.

It is as simple as that and what I want to make quite clear is this, Mr. Speaker, that it is important that all of the shopkeepers and proprietors of shops be permitted to have a fair share at making profits. I want to give this Honourable Chamber some of the background of this particular Shop Order because I was involved to some extent in it. I picked up the threads of the debate.....

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir, I think the hon. member is misleading this House. The Addendum to this Resolution states very clearly "seeks to extend the opening hours of urban shops on ordinary closing days and late closing days to 8.00 p.m. and 10 p.m. respectively," seeks to extend, Sir, not to contract. He is misleading the House, Sir.

Mr. ALLEYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is a point of some fundamental importance. I have checked the principal Order which is in this Honourable Chamber, and under the principal Order, country shops were permitted to open from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. in certain cases. There are not so permitted under the proposed new Schedule.

That is the point, Mr. Speaker, because the old Schedule is going to be swept away and the new Schedule will take the place of the old Schedule. I am not concerned about the Addendum, Mr. Speaker, the Addendum must be wrong. I do not follow something if it is obviously wrong. I am stating a position which is a matter of correct application of the old Schedule into the new Schedule, so if my friend.....

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, if the hon. member is saying that the Addendum is wrong, Sir, then I think it is a matter of fundamental importance to us to know what it is we are discussing before the House. I have the Resolution which has been submitted before this Honourable House in my hand and the Addendum forms part of that Resolution as I understand it. The hon. member now states that he is not concerned with the Addendum which must be wrong. Since he spoke from that side, Sir, I am asking Your Honour to guide me as to whether this Addendum we are looking at is the one we are dealing with because he seems to know something which we in this Honourable Chamber do not know.

Mr. ALLEYNE: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to get into any cross-talk with the hon. member, but the Hon. Minister of Health has reminded me that I am correct. If one looks at the Addendum carefully they will see that the opening hours for country shops and early closing days is not to be 8 a.m. as opposed to 7 a.m. in the old Schedule and I will leave the point at that. My friend and hon. member on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue with the contribution I am making. I was able to draw this matter to the attention of the Hon. Prime Minister when it occurred to me that the National interest demanded that all proprietors be allowed to make extra profits if they were interested in opening extra hours and I picked up the threads of the public debate and discovered that they had been correspondence on the files in the appropriate Ministry and the matter was dealt with at that stage but I am surprised that some hon. members on the other side are a little concerned about the proposals because if one looks back at the same 1975 debate to page 7523, the very debate from which the hon. member on the other side has quoted, one would see, Mr. Speaker, reading from the speech of the then Leader of this Honourable Chamber that what he said was this "Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was since January 1974 that the Government was considering the Shops Act. It was felt that the current control of the opening of shops should be removed except in respect of the following days." and the member goes on to name the number of days, bank holidays, and so on. So it is clear that far from condemning the Government for varying the Shops Order, the other side appeared as long ago as 1974 to have been in agreement with the view that all the prohibitions on openings should have been removed.

I do not understand what the grumblings of the arguments are at this stage because what we are doing is this. We are not varying the whole hog. We are simply varying some of the opening hours whilst at the sametime maintaining a very beneficial restriction which ought to be placed on employers in the interest of employees.

I want to make one final point, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down because it strikes me as a little strange that there should be some objections to late openings. I remember the hon. member for St. Michael South West making several points about the shift system. I remember him making these points on the small screen of the Corporation of which I now have the honour to head, and I would like to know how it is that he can be happy with a system of shifts operating for example in the Industrial Estates and his argument then was that it would increase productivity and enable Barbados to export more. How he can reconcile that position now with his position that the extended hours.....

Mr. TAITT: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member.....

Mr. SPEAKER: You are elucidating a point that you made?

Mr. TAITT: Yes, of course, Sir. The hon. member is clearly mixing up the concept of a shift-system where the hours are fixed one shift or the other shift with the concept which I put forward on the question of the extended hours of opening of a particular shift and the two things are not on all fours at all.

Mr. ALLEYNE: The two things, Mr. Speaker, are on all fours. The point I was going to make is this that already under the present legislation there are certain shops which are permitted to open, for example, as late as 10 o'clock and in fact there are certain businesses to which no restrictions apply. For example, Service Stations that sell gasoline, spare parts for cars and that sort of thing. This is permitted under the principal Order of 1969 to open for 24 hours a day and there are, to my knowledge no problems in relation to the workers who work there.

9.25 p.m.

I cannot see how a problem is going to develop now which cannot be resolved in the manner in which earlier problems in relation to those excluded employees have been resolved in the past. I would think it is in keeping with the modern trend that we should have some relaxation in the opening hours especially if we intend to encourage our womenfolk to go to work, because I can speak of certain difficulties of which I know. People find it exceedingly difficult to get to a supermarket which closes at 5 o'clock when they leave work sometimes at 5 o'clock, and speaking as I hope a respectable family man, I have had on occasions to assist my wife in getting items at that sort of time because of the problem of early closing hours.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to make one final point. The point was made in 1975, it was valid then but it is not valid now, and it has been made again this afternoon that employees will find it difficult to get home if they work late. Under the able guidance of the Minister of Communications and Works who is not now in his seat, this country now boasts of a kind of transport system which will enable such employees working late to work late and still get to their homes by public transport. I think the time has come when we have to let the Opposition know that this Government is a Government with concerted policies. There was no point amending this Order before we got the transport system working properly. It has been amended in the right time, and I would urge all hon. members to support this Resolution.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, it has been recognised in this debate that there is a history to the

attempt by Governments to extend the hours during which shops may be open. That legislation was brought to this Honourable Chamber in 1975 in order to extend the hours during which shops may be opened, that this was brought by the Democratic Labour Party administration and that the reason why such extension did not come into operation was because members of the then Opposition, the Barbados Labour Party Opposition, as well as at least two backbenchers that I can recall from the Government side objected to certain provisions. You indeed, Mr. Speaker, as had been pointed out by the hon. member for St. Lucy, made a long contribution and a pointed contribution during that particular debate in which you were very critical of the reasons for changing the existing provisions of the Shops Order. Mr. Speaker, that was 1975. It has taken now the Government over two years to come to a position that they are now supporting the principle of additional opening hours for shops, bringing urban shops into the same position as rural shops and extending the hours during which such shops may be open from a position taken in 1975 on this question, so the matter was under discussion. It was under discussion from then and it has taken until 1978 in order for the Government to come around to this particular position.

Now we have got to ask ourselves why? Why this particular position has been reached by the Government? It is that the situation has changed fundamentally in this country? I think the answer to that is "no". There has been no change in the times that the shops open. The situation pertaining today is virtually the situation that was obtaining in 1975, so there must be some other factor other than changed circumstances which have been operating in order to cause the Government to come down with this particular amending Order and Resolution, and I submit that some Governments respond to representation made by interest groups and it must be that there has been considerable representation made by the business community for such legislation to be brought down. I do not think there is any secret about this. Some of the operators of supermarkets have been objecting to the differences in opening hours that operate in respect of rural shops and urban shops. Some of them have been critical of this. I know this, Mr. Speaker, because I have heard the comments and opinions expressed myself, but I would like to raise one particular question in respect of the effect that this particular change would have in relation to the small shopkeeper and in relation to the small Mini Marts.

We have heard and we know that there has been a contraction in the number of small shops and in the profitability of some of the Mini Marts. There have been statements to the effect that the larger supermarkets — I do not know if this includes the BMC or not — have had this type of adverse effect on the small shops and on the Mini Marts. These small shops and Mini Marts have been able to survive because they can offer a service when the

larger supermarkets are closed, and I fear that with the extension of opening hours the nail would be driven further into the coffin of the small shops and the small Mini Marts.

I throw out this as an observation. I believe it accords with the economic facts of this country, and I suspect that one of the untowards effects of this particular piece of legislation will be adverse effects on the small shopkeeper and on the operators of Mini Marts. 9.35 p.m.

I do hope, and I call upon the Government, that concomitant with the passage of this particular legislation some measures should be devised to offer assistance to the small shopkeepers and to the operators of mini-marts because they will now be open to further competition. I know that you, Mr. Speaker, shop from time to time in some small mini-marts and I think you know that they are able to thrive because at a particular time they have no competition from the larger supermarkets.

If I may imitate the inimitable words of the hon. member for St. Michael North West, I think that this is a matter of substantial importance and I do hope that considerable attention will be paid to this particular matter.

The second point I wish to make follows on a point I made recently, and it relates to consultation on matters that affect the people of this country in any significant way. There are quite a number of shop assistants in the labour force, and I believe that sending legislation to particular interest groups might not necessarily get through to those shop assistants who may not be so well organized. I believe that when legislation of this nature is known to affect people, those people should be consulted.

I believe this is a fundamental matter which as legislators we have got to find the solution to; we have got to devise ways of improving democracy in this country. And I make this point again that this legislation should not be put forward as a partisan matter because it is a serious matter concerning the further evolution of our democratic political system in this country; we have got to devise ways and means of consulting the people where their interests are involved, and simply sending off a letter or copy of draft legislation to organized interest groups is certainly not a solution to this problem. There is a large number of shop assistants in this country and some means should have been devised for consultation with those shop assistants.

Now we would like to be assured on this side that when this amended Order is approved and the Resolution is approved, every opportunity will be taken to protect the interest of the workers. We would like to be assured

that there will not be any unfair practices as far as the working hours are concerned. I am certain that problems will arise in the administration of this legislation but I hope and call upon the Government to monitor this situation very closely in order to ensure that any adverse effect upon the workers would be countered and the necessary steps take to ensure that they get a fair deal.

I would like to indicate that it was certainly a pleasure, as my colleague the hon. member for St. Michael South West observed, to see the hon. member for the City as the first female member of this Chamber to act as Leader of Government Business and to see her introduce this particular measure; and although it was only a brief tenure due to other exigencies, we do hope that between now and what period the Barbados Labour Party has between now and 1981 she may get some other opportunity so to act.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I think that this debate needs to be put in some sort of perspective at this time before the Minister makes his final reply.

I think we have got to look at several matters concerning this legislation. In the first place this is not legislation of such far reaching consequences as the legislation which was before the House in 1975 dealing with the Shops Closing Bill. That legislation, as I understood it then, quoting from the language of Mr. Frank Walcott at the time in the debate of 16th December, 1975 did in fact in some cases strike at the rights of the workers, and Mr. Walcott as General Secretary of the Barbados Workers Union was in order to have drawn to attention.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member should let us know from where he is quoting.

Mr. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir. Page 5724 and following. For example, at page 5725 Mr. Walcott said: "The removal of the closing of the shop and the opening of the shop also removes - when the worker had time to go to work - eight hours do not mean anything." (I am reading his own words even if they do not make any sense) "As it is now, your day can start at any time. Your day can start at mid-night; so you can go in Broad Street now - the people who do not work on Saturdays now in Broad Street, the people who do not work on Sundays in Broad Street can go in there and some of them would have to work."

"You say you give them overtime, because under this there would be no special provisions. Sunday was a closed day; Sunday is no longer a closed day for certain shops."

I do not want to read the confusion in Mr. Walcott's statement, but let me cite this: Sunday by this

legislation which was proposed in 1975 was no longer a closed day; Sunday now is still a closed day even under this legislation, and I need not go into any of the other differences between the two bits of legislation; suffice it to say there were fundamental differences because that was a whole Bill which came before the House and which had far-reaching ramifications. All that has happened with the legislation before the House now is that because there were certain distinctions in the opening hours of shops in urban and rural areas — distinctions which almost had the effect of being discriminatory and possibly could have led to nice points of constitutional law — these distinctions have been sought to be removed.

It has been said that hardship would be caused to the workers. There is no where in this legislation that has come before us tonight any statement that workers will have to work in excess of the statutory limit of forty or forty-two hours per week as the case may be, and there is no employer who can force a worker to work beyond the legislative maximum that that person is supposed to work. 9.45 p.m.

Any time above what you are supposed to do, is the subject of negotiation between the worker and the employer and is, as I understand it a simple contract of employment; and no employer can take the risk — or let me put it this way — any employer can take the risk, but he would be liable in an action for damages to force a worker to do overtime. So the fears expressed by the hon. member for St. Lucy about causing workers to operate against their legislative safeguards are, in my opinion, empty fears with no legal basis.

The members of the Opposition have sought to criticise the Government on the ground that this Resolution has been introduced without consultation with the union in particular. I welcome their new found interest in the consultative process of democracy. I welcome for example that we are seeing now that they are in the Opposition a different attitude from what obtained when they were in Government, when several pieces of legislation were foisted upon the people of this country; and even in one area where some attempt was made at consultation in the famous constitutional issue of 1974, those who responded and felt that they had been consulted and gave their views were wrongly abused by no less a person than the present Leader of the Opposition. If they have seen their errors in the last two and a half short years, then they are learning fast.

When the Shops Act came before this House in 1975 I would understand the need for great consultation; but this piece of legislation is not of such far reaching consequences, in my opinion as to require the same consultation which to some extent could hold up the process of Government. I want to say that we have to be careful that for example in this particular

piece of legislation we are not confusing the functions of Government with the functions of a trade union. The Government has their function in the interest of the total community. The trade union has its members to protect. It also has the function of recruiting and defending new members.

It seems to me that if a shop owner was operating in breach of this legislation to the detriment of the workers that the case would be taken up by the union. If there were cases which affected non union workers, then the union should seek to recruit those shop assistants and whatever and make out a case for them; but the Government cannot be hamstrung at every turn because a union has not been consulted.

Suffice it for me to say that as a member of the Government I am satisfied that the union was given notice of the extension of the opening hours. It seems to me as was pointed out by the hon. member for St. Michael North West when we contemplate the extension of opening hours of work, a Government has the overall responsibility to see that certain ancillary facilities are available. There can be no doubt that there has been some considerable improvement in the bus service, although it is not yet perfect. Certainly, I do not think that there is any parish in this island which does not have now a late bus from the City of Bridgetown. St. Philip, for so long neglected by the Democratic Labour Party can now boast, since I have been elected as representative for St. Philip North for having a bus as late as 11 o'clock p.m.

Therefore, from the sociological point of view, if the public transport system has been improved and ameliorated to the extent that getting home no longer poses a substantial difficulty was in the past, for those workers who have to work late, then I think that the Government would have satisfied itself that it is not introducing legislation for people to work late hours, and at the same time the people cannot get home. It is not a question of putting the cart before the horse. In fact, what has happened is that you have an organisation of transport facilities and other economic or social facilities now being provided.

I am talking about the social benefits which can accrue from the extension of these hours. I will give a personal example of how these things can work. My wife had to work in the Registry until late Friday afternoon — until 5.30. She would normally have gone to the super market at 4.30 — 5 p.m.; but she was able to go home, have a change of clothes, a cup of coffee; put the children in the car and go and do some shopping about 7 o'clock in the night somewhere in Christ Church. Now that was a boon to a working woman. That is only one case. I have observed as one who does a little bit of shopping myself that there are a number

of people who have been taking advantage of the fact that at least one supermarket has been able to stay open later than the others.

But Sir, it would not have been fair for one supermarket to enjoy that privilege to the exclusion of others in a nearby geographical location; and I think that this is perhaps the real justification for standardising the hours so that all supermarkets and shops that come under the purview of this Act will come under the benefit of this legislation, and there will be really no call for concern among those persons who were formerly victimised. Now, the hon. member for St. Michael South Central, the newest recruit in the ranks of this Hon. Chamber, for some reason or other started shouting and pointing his finger at me and trying to inveigh against me for some unknown reason, only because I pointed out that we were dealing with an Order and not with a Bill, and that some of the aspects that he was levelling against the Resolution appeared to have been already covered by the Act, and not the Order which we are dealing with tonight.

He made a number of observations which I have to deal with. He said first of all that he wanted to dissociate himself from the remarks made by the hon. member for Christ Church North Central and about the way in which some employers in shops — using the word shops as a generic word — behave. The hon. member for St. Michael South Central did not also dissociate himself from the remarks made in the House of Assembly a few weeks ago by the Leader of the Opposition about the same kind of treatment and the way they behave and talking about mercantile delinquency. So I cannot treat his attempt to cut himself adrift from the remarks made by the member for Christ Church North Central as being serious in the light of what was said by his owner Leader not too long ago in this House of Assembly. He said in a fantastic statement that he is not concerned with the law.

9.55 p.m.

If he is not concerned with the law, why did he try so hard to get in here where we make laws, or perhaps the fact that he has gone before we have even passed this law tonight shows that he really is not even concerned with the law but a fantastic statement coming from one who considers himself, and would have us consider him as a responsible legislator.

The minimum wage for shop assistants is called for \$100 a week. I do not know what the employees of Rattan used to get or even still get. I would hope that there is no employee at Rattan who is working for less than \$100 a week otherwise he must go tomorrow to the Hon. member for St. Michael South Central and tell

him that he understood that he made a plea for all workers and shop assistances and so on to have a minimum wage of \$100 a week.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, just on a point of order I would like to draw to his attention that the hon. member for St. Michael South Central and Mr. Philip Greaves are no longer at Rattan so they would not be concerned with that type of business, Sir.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the impression was thought to be given from this side tonight that this legislation is creative of increased employment. I believe the first speaker on this Order tonight was trying to get across to the House, and he has been taken out of context, in my view, is that it does provide some capitalists for the possibility of increased employment.

It does provide the possibility of an employer having a set of workers come on who works from X hours to Y hours and then another set come on who work from Y hours to Z hours, but nobody is saying that *ipso facto* there will be a substantial increase in employment because of this legislation. That impression must not go abroad as being the logical deduction of members of the Government Party but we believe that every bit of legislation that can arise with an increase in employment, even indirectly, is beneficial to this country in these times when unemployment is still perhaps our greatest social ill, and in this legislation there is the possibility, as I say, for stimulating increased employment but no way is suggesting that direct employment will automatically double or whatever from what the figures are at the moment in the area of shops and supermarkets.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have to support this Resolution because I do not believe that in a country there are restrictions between persons in similar businesses and if the former legislation had the effect of discrimination, well if this legislation is to remove that discrimination, every member of this House of Assembly in pursuance of our Oath, and in particular to uphold the Constitution of this country that we remove some of the anomalies which will exist in any society and I heartedly commend this legislation to the House, Mr. Speaker, and I give it my wholehearted support.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, surely, Sir, after what I can consider a rather gruelling day again, and after hearing a number of speakers dealing with an Order which I thought would have have only taken 10 minutes to finish, I can only conclude that this Order which was introduced by me, Sir, in my capacity as Acting Leader of the House and Acting Minister of Labour, Sir, would have taken this amount of time.

There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the members on the other side, and I must confess some on my side, took it upon themselves to convey that the Resolution which is here is the whole bit of legislation which the Government is bringing in relation to the Shops Legislation. It is now common knowledge that the Government is bringing into Parliament a whole revamping of the Shops legislation in this country, and at this very moment, Sir, we have sent a draft to the Barbados Workers' Union and a draft to the Employers' Confederation for consultation on what we consider a major bit of legislation and I can only consider it a holding up of Parliamentary time for members of the Opposition bench and some of my colleagues to make what I consider major speeches in connection with legislation of this nature. I am appalled.

From 1975, the former administration was dealing with this. Since coming into office, Mr. Speaker, a new draft on the Shops legislation is now in the hands of the Barbados Workers' Union and the Employers' Confederation and all associations that would have interest in a matter of this nature.

Now what was all of these dog-eared arguments put up today for and against about exploitation of people? This Party goes on record as a Party that was and still is in agreement with social legislation in this country. It is this Party that stopped the same shop assistants from working until 11, 12, and 1 o'clock at nights at Hill's and these places and now a simple Order just allowing the shops to be opened so there will be no discrimination between shops in the urban areas and shops in the rural areas. I have heard a long drawn out debate on something that I thought would have taken no more than 15 minutes to dispense with, Sir, but for some of my colleagues, it was a practice wicket. On the Opposition bench, Sir, it was typical of them to oppose for opposing sake. I am going to watch the voting on the other side because one of the speakers, Sir, the hon. member for St. Michael South Central said he supported this Resolution in principle and I heard the member for St. Lucy saying he could not support it. Now that is the consultation between them and their Party when they sit down to discuss the business of the House on Tuesdays. Now we are going to see the consultation.

It was not necessary for us to write the Union or to consult the Union. We informed the Union what we are going to do in the light that there is a whole set of legislation pertaining to the shops in Barbados. A whole revamping was done by a man by the name of Mr. Callup, a United Nations Expert who came down here to look at this and I heard the member for St. Lucy talk about exploitation. This body cannot get home from work, people in the Day Nurseries, well let me say this now, I believe this will be the avenue to improve the unemployment situation in Barbados because I dare

any person who is going to ask members of the public to work for any 12, 14 or 20 hours, the shift-system will have to come in there. You will have to employ a few more people.

10.05 p.m.

This is the crux of the matter, but there has been a long drawn out debate on the Resolution. I only hope that the people get to work in time, unlike some of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, who today almost drove me to the point of embarrassment by not coming in here to perform their national duty. The backbenchers in particular on this side and the Parliamentary Secretaries and the Chairman of the Board must understand that it is a flouting of the wishes of the people of this country when they do not report here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your opening hour was fixed for 12 o'clock?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg your pardon!

Mr. SPEAKER: The opening hour was fixed for 12 o'clock?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am not quite sure.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the closing time tonight?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I will close just now.

Mr. BRADSHAW: I heard the hon. member mention Parliamentary Secretaries. I would like to make it quite clear that I am a Parliamentary Secretary, there are two in here, and I was in here on time. That is just for the record.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am only making.....

Mr. SPEAKER: We are dealing with closing time now.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: We will come to closing time. I have taken into consideration the Staff of Parliament, and I want to support the hon. member for St. Michael South West for chiding members on the other side when they do not report for national duty on time. As far as I am concerned, on Tuesdays no appointment should be made by any member in here, Mr. Speaker. You have to find yourself in Parliament. When I was in the Opposition you were one of the persons who made me to understand that in no uncertain terms my first duty on Tuesdays was to Parliament, and it saddens me as Acting Leader of the House in particular today to see how we had to be running up and down the corridors looking for my colleagues to come in here to perform a duty to the people of this country. They know how to get out there at 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock at night asking

for a vote. When the people have accepted you in their confidence, Parliament being the highest office in the land, must be treated with that dignity and respect.

I want to say this to my colleagues on this side. As far as I am concerned the Opposition's duty is not to form a quorum. A Government with seventeen seats must form a quorum. On the other hand it also saddens me when I see members ducking about inside the lunchroom and inside the precincts of the House. But you know that I am sorry that the Nicholls Report did not put up, that if they find you ducking about in the precincts of the House and do not come in, to take away your salary from you. It is pathetic. I know when I was in the Opposition that you, Mr. Speaker, drew to my attention on many occasions "do not care what they have in here, we are going to come in here and form a quorum with them and fight them, because not forming a quorum cannot embarrass a Government." A Government is going to be determined by its performance, and I know that we are going to perform, and we are performing well enough. I just want to drop this hint now we are dealing with the shop assistants: coming to work on time is as important to me as opening of the shops whereby I believe it would generate a degree of employment in this country. I have no doubt in my mind and I am just making my position clear on the floor of the House whether my colleagues are annoyed or not with me, that I am not prepared to flout the wishes of the people. 12 o'clock noon is the time that you are to be in here.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced the Resolution. The Minister of Health acted for the Acting Leader of the House while I was sitting in with the General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, please, not at the same table. The question is.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The question was answered that the Union's Secretary would not sit with me, but we sat around the same table, and thank God it was a very happy experience as it will be for the shop assistants, Mr. Speaker. It is my respectful submission to you to put the question.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I know I would not envy you sitting in the Chair; it is a bit of a strain, you cannot relax, but you have the Deputy Speaker here in case you would like to go. I know the Clerks and the rest of the Staff are tired, but there is a very small item which we would like to get out of the way. It is Item No. 3. It would not take any time. It is just

a deletion where instead of the name of a person you have the word "person". It would not be controversial.

Mr. SPEAKER: What Item are you dealing with?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Item 3. I am known for hard work. It is not controversial.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 3 is the instant Order of the Day, and it is to move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Promissory Oaths Act, Cap. 28.

THE PROMISSORY OATHS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1978

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple amendment to the Promissory Oaths Act, Cap. 28. It is simply to make sure that when the Governor-General has to administer the Oath of Secrecy he has not got to put down Brandford, Burton, Craig. Just to put in the word "person". That is all, Sir. Read the Addendum. I do not see it is anything controversial.

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

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

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says it is not controversial and if it is to do what he says it is to do, I do not see how it can be controversial. But if one looks at the actual section of the Bill which seeks to do what he says it seeks to do, it says "by inserting therein immediately after the word "person" appearing in the 3rd line thereof the words "or the holder of such public office".

Sir, I looked at the principal Act and if it is amended as it is set out here, it would not do what the hon. member as I understand it, said it is intended to do. I think the hon. member suggested in his opening remarks that it would delete "person", but the amendment as it stands here says "immediately after the word "person" appearing in the 3rd line thereof the words "or the holder of such public office."

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would give way, since we all agree, let me concede that the hon. member is right. I concede that he is right. Can we now put it to the vote?
10.15 p.m.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I agree that it is not controversial; I merely asked the hon. member to take a look at the legislation and see, that as it says here, when we pass this amendment it will not make sense. I do not wish to have a debate on this, Mr. Speaker, but

he said we would remove the word "person" and substitute these words That is not what the circular ...

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: If the hon. member will give way. Appearing in the third line thereof the words "or the holder of such office". This doesn't need any debate; you are not a lawyer yet although you may become one. It isn't necessary, it isn't controversial. Let us finish the matter.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I take objection to the remarks. Being a lawyer has nothing to do with commonsense.

Mr. SPEAKER: There are two hon. members on their feet.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, for the sake of peace. This is a very simple matter. The Act at the moment gives the Governor-General power — and I will read it: "The oath of allegiance, the official oath and the judicial oath are to be administered except as otherwise provided by the Constitution by the Governor General or such person as may be appointed by the Governor-General to administer them either generally or in a particular place." All we are seeking to do with this amendment is that in addition to the words "by such person" is to add "by such person or the holder of such public office." It was then be not only *ad personam* that the Governor General may give people this power, but he may give to an office, so to speak; somebody like the Accountant General, or the Auditor General; not necessarily *ad personam* X, Y, Z.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: We cannot legislate like this. Is there any other hon. member of the Opposition who wishes to make a contribution? (Pause)

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

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. B. A. MILLER, Mr. 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.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, just one thing I might have omitted to mention before. The rationale behind this is that when you give this power to a

particular person and that person is away from his office through illness or vacation or some other cause it means that nobody else can administer the vote; but when you vest this power in the office itself, anyone acting in the position will have power to perform the function and so facilitate business.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the hon. member for clarifying the position. It is a natural understanding in the various Acts that we have. For example, with the appointments to Statutory Boards, you do not appoint the person who is Permanent Secretary but you appoint the Permanent Secretary. All I sought to do was to find out from the hon. member who introduced this legislation if what was said was accurate or if the legislation was accurate. I can appreciate that the hon. member had an eventful day and therefore may feel a certain — I don't want to say agitation but perhaps animation — and if he says he is elated it would not to be the first time his elation came early and quickly.

But, Sir, the only point I want to make is that when we legislate when we in this Chamber allow legislation to pass through because we are not careful — I was merely seeking to do the same duty the hon. member a few moments ago indicated it was our duty to do.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, we heard from the hon. member for the City an explanation and I would like to know whether this is merely hypothetical or whether they were actual difficulties experienced in administering this thing. We did not get any hard information on this particular matter. Have there been problems in administering this and why is this amendment now before us?

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, from my own experience in the Ministry of Health there have been difficulties. For example with appointment to Boards, if you appoint a particular person to a board and he is out of the Island and something important comes up he cannot be there; so you appoint the holder of a particular post or office or his nominee. These difficulties do arise and it slows down Government business considerably. People get ill, they go away on long leave, go abroad on Government business, and so on.

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

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the

passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. B. A. MILLER the Bill was read a third time and passed.

THE ADJOURNMENT

*On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. B. A. MILLER, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House until Tuesday, 14th November, 1978 at 12 Noon.
10.25 p.m.*