

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1976 – 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 20th February, 1979

Pursuant to the adjournment the House of Assembly met at 12.20 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P., (Speaker); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; Hon. H. deB. FORDE, S.C., M.A., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of External Affairs); 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; Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry) (Leader of the House); Mr. V. L. JOHNSON, M.A.; Hon. L. R. TULL, M.A., (Minister of Education and Culture); Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, Mr. L. L. SISNETT; His Honour E. E. ALLEYNE, LL.M., (Deputy Speaker) and Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.P. (Edin.).

Prayers were read.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: There are no Minutes ready for confirmation.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Customs Act.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Philip North – whom I do not now see in his place.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill to amend the Customs Act be read a first time.

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

Mr. SIMMONS entered the House and took his seat.

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

REPLIES TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 11 asked by the hon. member for St. Michael South is ready. The Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 17 asked by the hon. member for St. Michael North Central is also ready, as is also the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 20 asked by the said hon. member for St. Michael North Central.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Question No. 19 is ready.

PRIVATE MEMBERS NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: I now observe the hon. member for St. Philip North in his place and I will allow him to table his motion in respect of the entertainment and recording industry in this Island.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution of which I now give notice is as follows:—

WHEREAS the entertainment and recording industry in this Island make a substantial contribution to the economy, the tourist industry, cultural development and the enhancement of the quality of life of the people of this country; AND WHEREAS there is widespread

dissatisfaction among entertainers and recording artists with the terms and conditions under which their records are processed, distributed and marketed; AND WHEREAS there is considerable evidence that a number of foreign companies and persons exploit the works of local artistes who themselves very often receive no royalties or other contribution for such phonographic piracy; AND WHEREAS it appears that existing laws are inadequate to safeguard the interests of local entertainers and artistes; BE IT RESOLVED that this House calls upon Government to take such steps as are necessary not excluding an investigation into the recording industry or the passage of legislation to ensure that the interests of local entertainers and recording artists are properly protected.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: I beg to move the Suspension of Standing Orders Nos: 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43 and 44 for the remainder of the day's Sitting, but give hon. members on the other side the assurance that the regular Private Members' time will be observed.

The question that the Standing Orders be suspended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. GREAVES entered the house and took his seat.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Item No. 2 be the first Order of the day.
12.30 p.m.

THE CONDOMINIUM (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1979

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, neither this nor any of the other property measures on the Order Paper, Nos. 3 and 4, call for any speech on my part since the Select Committee has already reported and this House has accepted its recommendations on these Bills.

Therefore I beg to move that the Condominium Bill be now read a third time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. H. deB. FORDE, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, the Bill was passed.

THE LAND REGISTRATION ACT, 1979

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, the same comment which I made about the first Bill applies in this case also, and members will just wish to have a bit of information from me on this Bill. It is that we do not

intend to implement this Bill for approximately a year after which it will be proclaimed and will bring into being a new system for the registration of land in this country. I can state that the three Bills that were passed earlier in the Session will be proclaimed as from 1st September, 1979.

The hon. member for Christ Church South Central had explained that it would have been the 1st May 1979, but since then we have heard from Professor Marshall that he will not be available until July 1979 to give a course of lectures to members of the legal profession, real estate agents, land surveyors and other members of the public on the provisions of the various land laws which this House is passing. Also, it is intended that in the month of August Professor Marshall in conjunction with my Chambers will be writing a series of booklets, brochures and pamphlets explaining simply for the benefit of the public the changes being made in the land law. This therefore gives us enough time not only to bring the legal profession up to date with the reform of the land law but also to educate the public a bit more on the provisions of the law and to make in simple language the provisions of the law readily available to the public. After that, Sir, we will need a bit of time in which to set up the land registration office for compulsory registration of titles. The project unit is within the Ministry of Housing and Lands, but our present timing on this is 1st March 1979.

With the passing of these Bills most of the substantive land law in this country will have been reformed with the exception of the law governing the landlord and tenant and boundaries, and my Ministry is actively giving consideration to some very substantial reforms in this field of the law. Let me say that the simplification of the land law should really redound to the benefit of the public at large and I hope that the legal profession will now sit down and see in what ways with conveyancing simplified they could reduce the charges for matters which come before them and also to minimise the time lag that now occurs when such conveyancing is done.

With those brief introductory remarks, I would like to ask that this Bill be now read a third time.

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

On the motion of Hon. H. deB. FORDE, seconded by Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN, the Bill was passed.

THE LAND (ADJUDICATION OF RIGHTS AND INTERESTS) ACT, 1979

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. H. deB. FORDE, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, the Bill was passed.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On the motion of Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of the Island, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1978-79, No. 27

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, under Part I—Current, these sums are required to implement the revision of the salaries of the staff of Parliament with effect from 1st April, 1978, and I beg to move that the sum of \$37,114 be amended to include a sum arising out of a consequential amendment to the salaries which took place last week here, and the new sum should be \$37,194. There is a difference of \$80.00 which is necessary to amend the gradings that were approved last Tuesday.

The addendum fully sets out the need for this supplementary Resolution, and I beg to move that Head 2 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 5 – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (1) DIRECTION AND POLICY FORMULATION

Head 5 – Prime Minister's Office (1) Direction and Policy Formulation was called.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, the Addendum sets out the need for this supplementary. The cost of Government advertising has increased as a result of the necessity to have perhaps more acquisitions than originally envisaged, and consequently, the amount originally estimated of \$75,000 is inadequate to meet the financial obligations of the Government in this area to the end of the financial year, and it is requested that it be supplemented by the sum of \$15,000.

I beg to move that Head 5 Prime Minister's Office (1) Direction and Policy Formulation, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (1) GENERAL

Head 16 – Ministry of External Affairs (1) General – was called.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, in moving that this Head stand part, I would like to say that the total supplementary being asked for is \$222,955 and it has been occasioned by a decision to increase the allowances payable to officers serving in overseas missions and the decision to establish a temporary representation in Brussels for the duration of the negotiations for a successor agreement leading up to the Lome 2 and a decision to re-locate the physical office of the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in the same building and in the floor above the present location of the Consul General.

The existing level of allowances payable to the diplomatic staff serving in overseas missions was fixed by the Cabinet in 1974 and made retroactive to April, 1973; so for the last five years there has been no revision in the allowances, but because of the increase in the cost of living index in the particular country and having regard to the rate of inflation prevailing in those overseas countries, we find it necessary to look to revise those allowances. As a result an inspection team comprising the head of the Foreign Service and the then Chief Establishment Officer visited the Missions, and after taking and collecting relevant evidence made a recommendation to me and through me to the Cabinet which was accepted. It is that recommendation which we now seek to have implemented by way of this Resolution.

As hon. members are aware, negotiations for the successor agreement to the Lome Convention which expires in 1980 are in progress in Brussels on a continuous basis. We have had therefore to place an officer constantly in Brussels, Mr. Rawle Harris, senior foreign service officer to monitor the day to day negotiations on our behalf. He is supplemented from time to time by staff from the High Commission in London including the High Commissioner himself. We have sought through Caricom to establish, if possible, a Caricom presence in the hope that we would have been able to minimise costs in this respect by sharing the Mission with other Caricom persons. Unfortunately for us, other countries, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and the Bahamas have already established their own Embassies in Brussels, and therefore were not interested in such an arrangement, and the other territories have made their own separate arrangements or are in the process of

so doing. At the recent meeting of Foreign Ministers which I attended in Jamaica, we again raised this question but it was decided that there was not sufficient consensus for there to be a single mission monitoring the Lome negotiations or indeed looking after the affairs of these separate countries in Brussels.

In relation to the permanent mission to the United Nations, the lease on the existing building would have expired in April this year and it was necessary for us to try to renew the lease in some form or other. This would have cost us a tremendous increase if we had stayed at the same location, and therefore we have decided to look around. We are now relocating the office on the top floor of 800 Avenue or 800 Street; I am not sure of the exact name of the location. It is hoped by this means that we could also conserve some of our staff efforts and share certain joint facilities. The Head of the Civil Service and the Head of the Foreign Service and the Chief Establishments Officer have been advising us on how some savings can be effected. We believe that the joint arrangement would provide an opportunity to make more effective and rational use of the support services of the Permanent Mission and the Consulate General which together number 19 as against seven representative officers. The established staff is 19.

Another item on the supplementary concerns supplies and materials. These two items are outside of our control to some extent. They have been occasioned by the increase in the price of stationery and materials particularly in London, I believe, and the changing exchange rates of the pound sterling in which currency the U.K. purchases are made. One additional element has been the outfitting of honorary consulates in Finland and in Sweden, I believe, where we have established some honorary consulate, but in view of the limited financial resources we have not been able to establish diplomatic missions in either Finland or Sweden or Scandinavia or indeed any other country since we have assumed Government. We are using more and more the assistance of honorary consuls, and I should like publicly to thank them for the duties they are performing gratuitously on behalf of this country. I believe that those few comments should enlighten hon. members on the reasons for this supplementary.

I beg to move that Head 16 – Ministry of External Affairs (1) General, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 17 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND NATIONAL INSURANCE (1) DIRECTION AND POLICY FORMULATION

Head 17 – Ministry of Health and National Insurance (1) Direction and Policy Formulation – was called.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, if I may just supplement the Addendum, the Addendum makes it quite clear that these are monies being voted to cover the expenses for the payment of salaries and wages of the staff at the Black Rock Polyclinic. I think it is well known, but I will recap for the information of hon. members, that the Black Rock Polyclinic went into operation in September of 1978. Provision was made in the Estimates for certain functions which have been transferred to that polyclinic, namely, the Child Health Committee up until the end of August, 1978, and the understanding was that if and when the polyclinic was finished during this current year we would come for a supplementary. If I may say so, Mr. Chairman, I think there was a certain scepticism in certain quarters that we would complete two polyclinics in one year and the money was not voted. It so happens that we did in fact complete Litchfield, now the Maurice Byer Polyclinic, in July 1978, and completed the Black Rock Polyclinic at the end of August. These monies would carry us now to the end of this financial year, in fact, a half year roughly for the maintenance of staff and buildings at that location.

I beg to move that Head 17 – Ministry of Health and National Insurance (1) Direction and Policy Formulation – stand part.

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

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

HEAD 17(2) – COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, this is very much in the same interest. These are monies to have other Personal Emoluments, Utilities, and so on as set out in the Addendum and I would like to move that Head 17(2) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 17(3) – ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

Hon. B. A. MILLER: If I might add something which the Addendum does not set out, the Pest and Rodent Control Unit was formerly in the Ministry of

Agriculture and it was part of what is known as the Animal Human Health Project which was shared between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. That Unit, the Pest and Rodent Control, was during this current year relocated entirely in the Ministry of Health. It so happened that when we did the Estimates last year provision was not made for the relocation or transfer of funds to run it and this supplementary, Sir, is really asking that funds which were not provided for us to run the Rodent and Pest Control Unit in the beginning be made available to us now.

I beg to move that Head 17(3) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 17(9) PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Items under Head 17(9) are to do mainly with charges for Electricity, Gas and Kerosene where the expenditure anticipated is more than what we were prepared for in the Estimates. Also, at (e) to cover the cost of Drugs. Particularly, I should draw attention to the fact that we are treating more and more patients in their homes in the community in our Out-Patients Service.

It is beyond any doubt, Mr. Chairman, that the overall cost in respect of Psychiatric Health Care is lessened when you treat more people in the community than we treat in the Institutions, but the rising cost of Drugs and the rising number of persons we have treated in this way has exceeded the supplies which were voted in last year's Estimates.

I think it is fair to say, especially in this case and in the case of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that the 10% cut which we experienced at the time of the last Estimates has in fact forced us into the position of coming back especially under these two Heads 17(9), and (10), that will come later on, for these expenses.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that when the Drug Plan which is going to be implemented, we hope later this year, when this comes into the stage of implementation, that the overall drug cost that the Government faces in all of its Institutions will in fact be lessened rather than be greater.

I beg to move that Head 17(9) stand part.

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

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make some observations of this particular Head. The whole

question of Psychiatry in Barbados is one that is rather intensive because of the number of patients requiring such therapy and the limited number of personnel available to deliver. In that context, Mr. Chairman, we will always find a situation for a longer time where patients will be taking masses of drugs because they do not have enough staff to indulge in psycho-therapy as distinct from the use of psychotropic drugs.

Bearing this in mind, I think that it is important that the Ministry of Health should accelerate in extending the services and utilisation of paramedical personnel in the field of psychiatry because not only would you be employing your resources in future employment of Barbadians but at the same time you will be substantially reducing your loss in foreign exchange as a consequence of the importation of such drugs.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there are more serious aspects which I think I am duly bound to bring to the notice of this Honourable House. One is that over the past two years there have been unprecedented increases in the prices of drugs and in particular those drugs used in the treatment of chronic diseases and as you are aware, Mr. Chairman, many of the health problems in this community spring from the twin problems of Diabetes and Hypertension, both of which require continuous and daily medication.

Now we have had a situation where drugs have gone up 400% in price and where it has become necessary for patients to cut back on the amount of medication that they are actually taking in order to stretch it out as far as it can go, no doubt to the adverse consequence to their health. Not only has there been a very marked rise in the price of drugs in Barbados but also, for the first time, certainly since I have been in practice here in this country, we have experienced shortages in almost every commodity that you can think about, that from time to time you just cannot get the drugs in Barbados and I am speaking now not of the Institutions yet, but what is happening in medicine in the non-governmental areas and I believe that Government must intervene and must intervene decisively at this point because they cannot depend on the agents here in Barbados to substantially influence the cost of these drugs and the only point of meaningful intervention in the Government will be intervention at the point at which these drugs are purchased. With proper spending for the entire commodity it will be possible to reduce drugs that are now being retailed at probably 48 cents to probably less than 10 cents.

1.00 p.m.

I remember that about twelve years ago we were faced with an escalating Bill in the public sector with one of the drugs used in one of the chronic diseases, and it was possible to reduce it by simply going to the manufacturer and making it clear to him that there were

alternative sources of the same medication, and I think that drug dropped from fourteen cents to about six cents by the next shipment. But the agents here in Barbados objected to the reduction in price because the percentage they would get for drugs coming into Barbados would be substantially reduced.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it is not only a question of the escalating cost of drugs — and this is the main burden that the chronically ill have to bear in this community. It is not doctors fees; doctors fees in Barbados are perhaps the lowest in the Caribbean, and historically it can be demonstrated that most patients who go to government institutions and overcrowd the government institutions often go there to get their drugs free, and then continue to visit their own general practitioner. This has been the burden in Barbados and has become increasingly the pattern, throwing an increasing weight on the Government services. I think that with appropriate planning and looking at the sources of these drugs and our use in a large volume, by planning for a number of years we could negotiate with the producers of these drugs and thereby have them drastically reduced in price. Unfortunately in the institutions, both in respect of drugs and intravenous fluids, there have been substantial shortages, and I would not want to alarm the community by giving an example which caused me very grave concern because that particular shortage could have caused great embarrassment to the government at that particular time. I do not think it is necessary to do this because I feel that in an area like this one should be as responsible as possible and bring a thing like this to the attention of the Government elsewhere.

Now we have heard a lot about the national formulae. I do not know what the problem is. In 1974 the hon. member for St. Michael North Central set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of the then Chief Medical Officer and that Committee was divided into two sub-committees. I was chairman of one of the Committees dealing with drugs for institutions and a formula was completed way back in 1974. On that Committee there were three physicians, a psychiatrist, a surgeon; and other interests were represented on that Committee, and as far as I recall the only problem that arose at that time — because the formulae were completed in generic names — the only problem that arose was that there were a few approved names as distinct from proprietary names, and this was unavoidable because there were situations where you had drug mixtures that probably contained ten or twelve drugs and to put these in generic names and ask a doctor to write a prescription would embrace an entire page. But the formulae were completed then, and not only completed then, but there were subsidiary formulae to be used in certain out-patient areas — there was a formula for major institutions and another formula for other government institutions. To the best of my knowledge and belief I doubt whether more than half dozen drugs of any significance would have come on the market since then that would alter the situation with regard

to those formulae. But we have a Central Purchasing Department and I believe that certain powers have been delegated to at least one Government institution to purchase drugs on behalf of that institution, and I think that from that source drugs may be distributed to other Government institutions.

The time to intervene is now; we have lost two years and if we continue like this we are going to have more and more problems in relation to the health of the community. It can be done almost overnight by just following the line of action I have suggested. I believe the Minister of Health will be able to confirm what I have always said, that at the beginning of each financial year each institution should be able to make projections for the drugs it would be using in large volumes, so that when the money becomes available the drugs will almost be here in Barbados and we would slash costs overnight. To give an example: If diabetic tablets are being sold over the counter at 48 cents each and Government makes proposals to a firm on the basis that in Barbados we are going to use half million tablets a year over the next ten years, you would be surprised to see the kind of deal you would get from wholesalers, for example, as in the United Kingdom with National Health Service and elsewhere. But we have a system — and I have always been suspicious of the relationship between the private sector and the public sector in Barbados — where the Government may order for two or three months and then all of a sudden there is a shortage and then they have to go into Bridgetown and buy the drugs from the same agents at increased cost; so that eventually the poor tax payer pays more and more until the point is reached where they cannot pay anymore. And I want it to be understood that if somebody has diabetes or hypertension — and there are thousands of people like this in Barbados — you may be talking about two or three dollars a day that they have to spend before they can eat.

I believe that Government should also look carefully at its taxation policy in relation to these drugs, certainly in matters like import duties, etc., to see whether any relief can be given to the people who have to purchase these drugs; and I call on the Government to investigate the causes of the shortages of drugs in Barbados. There are many reasons that have been put forward. For example, it has been suggested that because of the proposed National drug plan which the Government announced about two years ago the wholesalers in Bridgetown are not carrying the usual four to six months stock which they usually carry in order to maintain continuity of supply. It has been suggested that one or two major firms have also been in financial trouble — I think one has had to move out of Bridgetown and go elsewhere, and they are one of the worst offenders in relation to this problem of shortage.

1.10 p.m.

Another problem is that as a matter of grave concern, where persons in Government institutions cannot

get the drugs from those institutions, and I am talking about patients who are institutionalised, you have a situation where doctors have to write private prescriptions for patients' relatives to go into Bridgetown and bring back the drugs to certain institutions in Barbados. This is happening at the moment, and there is one particular case which I should bring again to the attention of the hon. member for the City where there is a particular drug that costs, I think, \$120. It is not in a field in which I am involved, and I was flabbergasted some time ago when a young man — it is a drug that is used only in emergency situations, it is a life saving drug, as I understand it — and this poor chap was running all over Bridgetown trying to get \$10 from this friend, \$10 from that friend, \$10 from another friend, and eventually managed to put together the \$120 to go to a firm in Bridgetown to get an ampoule of the drug.

These are serious problems, and I think that, whatever the long term strategies of the Government, there is a need for immediate action and that there is no reason why action of the kind which I have outlined now, which I have outlined before, cannot be taken with effect from 1st April of this year.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I hear all this talk from the hon. member for St. Michael South Central; why action cannot be taken now, why action could not be taken at the time when he was saying this all these years, but why was action not taken when he was the second most important man in the last administration? You know, Mr. Chairman, I hear the Gallery laughing, but I have to restrain myself because it is not a laughing matter that the hon. member for St. Michael South Central should get up and talk all this nonsense when his administration is the administration that put a sales tax on drugs, and when this administration came in on September 2, 1976 one of the first items that we lifted the sales tax off was drugs and we were abused for it by that administration.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point or order, Mr. Chairman. I have heard viragos in my life and I am attributing the hon. member with these attributes. That would be elevating her to a pinnacle to which she does not aspire, but what I want to say is this, Sir. The sales tax on drugs was removed long before September 1976, it was removed long before in a Budget speech by me. When the hon. member says that its removal was one of the first things they did, this is not correct.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for St. John is perfectly correct, the sales tax on drugs was moved in a big rush in July 1976 when they had just lost two by-elections and were terrified of losing a general election. He is perfectly right, I am grateful for the correction, but I find it difficult, it is passing strange that the hon. member for St. Michael South Central who sat so high up in the hierarchy of that party would allow a sales tax to be placed on drugs in the first place knowing all

of what he knows now. Diabetes and hypertension were conditions, Mr. Chairman, which for years have been afflicting our people in large numbers, it is nothing new that has come about since 1976, and it was true at the time that that administration put a sales tax on drugs, now I am going to hear a lot of nonsense about what could be achieved overnight and about what could be achieved in a matter of minutes and what could be achieved by the 1st April.

Certain remarks were ordered by the Chairman to be expunged at this stage.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I heard the hon. member for St. Michael South Central make a big impassioned plea just now, "we have lost two years, it can be done overnight". Mr. Chairman, we have lost 19 years, not two, and he comes here to say that it can be done overnight? That is the case.

I am going to start at the beginning. The hon. member in speaking about the psychiatric hospital — because we have not come to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital yet — said that the Government should accelerate the extension services. I think that for the benefit of the hon. member and all hon. members of this House I should point out that particularly the out-patient visiting service, the service you do in the community, has increased to the extent that the numbers we saw between January 1978 and September 1978 were as many as the number that we saw in the whole of 1977. The extension services are increasing. The extension services staff are going to be increased in this coming financial year. We can see the benefits of it.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I wish to deal with the point made about the formulary. I do not know when the hon. member for St. Michael South Central resigned a post that he held at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. At 1.00 p.m. — he actually noted the time on the file — in the month of October, I cannot remember the date but I certainly remember the time, it is the only time I have seen a time noted on a file of resignation, in 1976, soon after I came in. I do not know if he took the so-called formulary with him, I did not come and find any national formulary, I came and found the skeleton of a hospital formulary. The national formulary which has since been prepared by the people who are planning the drug service is something which came into being after the hon. member for St. Michael South Central left the service of the Government.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the hon. member get up here and talk about all the things that are wrong and all the things that we must do overnight now to put them right. The hon. member well knows, he has been hearing it since 1976, that this Government is committed to a national health service and that the national health service is in fact a packet of services, and that the first of those services which we are going to produce, implement and offer to this country is the drug service. He is not the only one who is aware of the world wide situation with

drugs, we know that the pharmaceutical industry, next to the advertising industry, is the most profitable in the world. We know that for years countries like Barbados, regions like the Caribbean, have been dumping grounds for drugs rejected by the Food and Drug Administration of the United States, we know that areas like the Caribbean, and Barbados in particular, Mr. Chairman, for years have been buying drugs from all sorts of fly-by-night companies in certain European countries. We know that all of those things are true, and a national drug service takes planning, it is more than putting together a formulary, as the hon. member well knows, and it cannot be done overnight. He knows, Mr. Chairman, that we have to look for reputable manufacturers, his profession is the one which is screaming "quality" at the top of its voice, he knows that arrangements have to be made for bulk buying, he knows that warehousing facilities have to be erected here. We have now identified a site, Mr. Chairman. I believe that some of the land owned by the Government at Warrens will be the site for the drug service warehousing facilities.

1.20 p.m.

He knows, Mr. Chairman, that certain equipment has got to be acquired; the pill counting machine.....

Dr. HAYNES: If the hon. member would give way...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Why must I give way?

Dr. HAYNES: On a point of explanation.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not giving way on any point of explanation.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member well knows that all of these things go into the planning of a workable and efficient service, and all of that we have been doing in these two years. These two lost years that he talked about have been years of fruitful planning for me and the Ministry of Health, and we are hoping to go into productive service this year. So it is all well and good for him to stand up and talk all of that now when he knows it has been so for years, when his administration had the chance and did absolutely nothing about it and rather sought to drive a sales tax on all drugs. God help the poor diabetics and the hypertensives. Who cared about them then? Who cared that they had to buy drugs before food? And you hear a lot of nonsense being talked today.

Now it is a fact that by generic purchasing and bulk purchasing a significant cost saving can be made. This is nothing that specially reposes in the breast of the hon. member. We all know, the drug industry knows, everybody knows that the retailers are ripping off. I have been speaking this from the platforms in 1976, that the drug industry is ripping off sometimes to the extent you can see of 400% and 500% mark-ups on drugs in this country, and that is why the National Health Service enjoys the priority

that it does under this administration, and that is why the drug service enjoys within the National Health Service the concept and the priority that it does. So all of this is being worked on, Mr. Chairman. It cannot be done overnight. If it could have been done overnight it would have been done overnight, because I defy any hon. member in this House to suggest that the work load and the work turned out by the Ministry of Health could suggest other than that if it could have been done overnight, it would have been done. It was thought that you could not build two polyclinics in one year, but the Ministry of Health did it and it is possible that in this year we will build three more.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the fact of the National Drug Service is something which is known to the hon. member for St. Michael South Central. He could not be in the medical profession and not know that the study team which is on the ground has been doing intensive work. He knows it and he knows that help is at hand for this situation. In the meantime we have fallen short of the estimates for this current year.

The question that Head 17 – Ministry of Health and National Insurance (9) Psychiatric Hospital, stand part, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 17 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND NATIONAL INSURANCE (10) QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Head 17 – Ministry of Health and National Insurance (10) Queen Elizabeth Hospital – was called.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, under this Head, these monies are requested for reasons very clearly set out in the Addendum. We have been using natural gas instead of Bunker "C" fuel and natural gas is a little more expensive in the circumstances. Staff uniforms for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are one of the things that when we had those two years of constraint, drugs and food came first and those kind of items and uniforms took a back pew, and now they have reached the stage where the condition is requiring replacement.

Also under this Head, Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with certain fixtures, furniture and fittings which in effect are one automatic ice-making machine. It is cheaper for us to have our own ice-making machine in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital kitchen than to be buying ice from ice factories no matter who owns them outside of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and the other item is a diet trolley.

I beg to move that Head 17 – Ministry of Health and National Insurance (10) Queen Elizabeth Hospital – stand part.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1978-79 No. 28

Head 109 – Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs, was called.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution, although a very simple one to me to introduce, certainly causes me a bit of uneasiness because I recognise that from time to time succeeding Ministers with my responsibility have been coming to Parliament asking for large supplementary provisions in order to underwrite the inefficiency to some extent of various corporations. In the case of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation we are allocating to them \$3½ million. The concept of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation was probably a very good one. Unfortunately that Corporation, or rather the Government at the time, purchased a number of uneconomic estates all over the Island, and therefore immediately created a problem. The estates which were bought by Government at the time and turned over to the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation were not economically viable to the business people of the day who ran them and they were certainly very happy to offload them on the Government of the day.

For example, you have areas in Christ Church like Fairy Valley and Spencers of course which were used to some extent for the expansion of the airport, and the areas which were eventually left were utilised by the A.D.C. in order to produce food and cane. In St. John you had recently Bath Plantation and in St. Philip Lodge estate. In St. Andrew you have a number of estates, Sedgepond, Bawdens River, Haggatts and Bruce Vale. These are some of the inheritances of the Government and the A.D.C. In St. Lucy you have the Spring Hall estates which were also part of the holdings of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation and the milk plant which is there as well.

These estates from the original inception were never viable estates and since I came to the Ministry I have been having a serious look at the viability of the operations within the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation and from what I have come up with, and I am still having an in-depth look, but at short glance what I have discovered is that a number of the uneconomic units will certainly have to go. By making that statement what I really mean is that you have areas like Wildey in the Pine area and estates like that, and in places like Husbands in St. Michael which are not agriculturally viable which in my opinion can be best utilised by the National Housing Corporation for the building of houses and for the resiting of houses in Barbados.

1.30 p.m.

The question of Housing is creating a problem, as you know. It is extremely difficult to find areas on which to site people and it is the view of the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture that the areas which are not agriculturally viable should be turned over to the National Housing Corporation. There is a project for Spring Hall and that project will shortly get on the way.

In the area of St. Andrew it is my view that the land there should be farmed out by way of leases to co-operatives, people down there who are very knowledgeable of the land having the first call for such areas of land as the Government may consider giving them. The Government also primarily has to plant the land in fruit trees and then lease the land out to the people in that area.

I am very happy to see, as I have said before in a public place, that there is a group of people within the area of St. Andrew and St. Peter who are keen on developing co-operatives in order to take over as much of the land as possible in the area of Sedge Pond and there are a number of schemes that we are examining with a view to putting the Agricultural Development Corporation on a very firm keel so that we would not have to come here year after year asking the Government to subsidise an inefficient Corporation.

As far as the Barbados Marketing Corporation is concerned, the Government when coming into office recognised that there were a number of outstanding commitments that had to be met and we thought that the time had come when something should be done in order to make payments to the people who were involved and this aspect of the Resolution seeks as far as the Barbados Marketing Corporation is concerned to put the Barbados Marketing Corporation in a comparatively better position than what it has been in the past.

The Resolution is to some extent self explanatory and I imagine that questions will be asked. I want to assure hon. members on the other side that if there is anything within this Resolution that they might be anxious to know about I will be willing and ready to answer any requests by them.

With these few introductory remarks I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister in calling for this very substantial capital sum whether he has audited statements of the Agricultural Development Corporation for the year 1977-78 because I do not think that the information which has been submitted in the Addendum to the Resolution in anyway discloses the true financial position of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation.

The law clearly states that within a certain time the accounts of the Agricultural Development Corporation have to be laid. Now I have asked the Clerk of the House to search for those documents and I have not received them. Now if there is one thing which is a violation principle of this Chamber it is that the original document which is laid from any Statutory Board or any other document which is required by law should not be removed from the precincts of this Chamber or from the Library or the hypothetical Table, wherever this Table is, I suppose it is that Table. I have not found any document on that Table. The Clerk goes outside and he searches and if he finds the document he brings it in here.

Now we are being asked to provide a sum of \$3½ million to assist the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation in meeting outstanding liabilities. The last time I saw any document in relation to the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation the accumulated deficit of this Corporation was closer to \$6 million than \$3½ million. Now has the Minister emulated the worthy example of his Minister of Finance and walked away from \$2½ million and committed an act of oblivion in so far as another \$2½ million is concerned? We did this at the time of the Budget Speech in respect of the current deficits which this country has been spending during the past two years. Now as the Minister — I do not know what portfolio he is holding now. He is now the Minister of Agriculture, I believe. They change their portfolios so frequently.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. (*Asides*).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is a point of order.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I will take your word for it.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, it is certainly a reflection on the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that he does not know who occupies which office on any part of this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: That is no reflection on the Leader of the Opposition. That is a reflection on their ineptitude when they are playing musical chairs with the Ministries. Truly, I do not know what Minister he is. You had a Minister of Chicken Backs and I do not find that anywhere in the Constitution.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Now this hon. member represents the constituency of St. Andrew and he said that he is going to spend — I read it in the newspapers

that he is going to spend \$115 million on Soil Conservation in St. Andrew alone. May Divine Providence protect us from any Minister who has that kind of illusion of grandeur. The largest holding of the Agricultural Development Corporation is now also in St. Andrew.
1.40 p.m.

The hon. member refers to the Government — presumably the previous administration — buying unproductive land. I agree with him because people who have productive land do not sell it to the Government unless the Government acquires it compulsorily. But the largest holdings are in St. Andrew for the purpose of soil conservation — Greenland, Bawdens, Swans etc., are in his constituency — and he is going to spend \$150 million on soil conservation alone. God help us with ideas of such grandeur. But the point I am making is that I have tried to get the report and financial statements which are required by law for the past two years — although I do not believe that he controlled the Ministry for the whole of that period — but I have not been able to get them. What has happened to them? I know that the ADC was refinanced in 1974 to the tune of \$4 million, but that was for the whole existence of the ADC which was a period of over ten years. Now in two years he is asking for an additional \$3.5 million, when the last figure that I saw was very close to \$6 million. Now will the Minister tell me before I go further what has happened to these reports which by law should have been laid? Because the auditors have been into the ADC and have not been able to get the kind of information that would entitle them to say that the records of the ADC in the past two years have not been accurately kept. That is a fact, and I challenge — I do not like to challenge — only the hon. member for St. James is a challenger. I had a worthy predecessor who was a great champion of the world rejoicing in the same name as myself; his patronymic was the same as mine but his two previous names are Joseph Louis, but his last name is the same as mine; perhaps that is why the hon. member for St. James is always challenging me, as he puts it. But I am inviting the hon. member for St. Andrew to say whether it is not a fact that the auditors in their very last statement in 1978 have expressed their extreme dissatisfaction with the way in which the ADC under the the Great Combination — (*Asides*) — you are reading it now — I invite the hon. member to say — I have called for the records but have not been able to get them. The hon. member can enlighten us; the name of the auditors is no secret; they are the same auditors as in the previous administration — Coopers and Lybrand. I do not even know who works there; so don't say that anybody there gave me any information, because this is information which the general public through the machinery of the laying of documents on the Table of the House should have. Now the books have disappeared. Why have they disappeared before this debate? That is what I am asking the hon. Minister; the 1976 and 1977...

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The hon. member is entitled to speak in his usual sarcastic style but he is not entitled to make accusations that anybody on this side is responsible for the disappearance of books. The hon. member just now said very clearly what he wants the hon. Minister to explain is why the books mysteriously disappeared from in here just before this debate. I ask that the hon. member be called upon to withdraw that clear insinuation that the hon. Minister was the cause of the disappearance of the books.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I never said that he made them disappear. (Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN RISES)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please, I cannot have two hon. members on their feet, The Chair rules that the statement made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is out of order and I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I will withdraw the precise words that are being complained of when they are read out...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There will be no conditional withdrawal.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: There is no conditional withdrawal.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has ruled...

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On what, Sir? Will you tell me what I am supposed to withdraw?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There will be no arguing or challenging of the Chair in this Honourable Chamber.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, again on a point of order, I call on you to ask the hon. member to withdraw; he must withdraw.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has ruled that the statement by the hon. Leader of the Opposition indicating and suggesting that a Minister of this Government was in some way or somehow responsible for the disappearance of documents must be withdrawn and expunged from the records. I have already called upon the hon. member...

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I never made any such statement.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I have made it clear I want order in here. I have stated my understanding of the remark to the hon. member for St. John and I call on the hon. member for St. John to

withdraw the remarks. (*A Pause*) The hon. member refuses to withdraw the offensive remarks, a remark which the Chair finds...

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order, I have not refused to withdraw...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot stand on a point of order when the Chair...

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am on a point of order; I have not refused to withdraw any remark.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I have not refused to withdraw; I do not know what the words are.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Order, please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I am making a suggestion that you call the Clerk of the House to assist in this matter. I am hoping you will not send out the Leader of the Opposition. He is aiming to be sent out, but do not send him out.

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman,... (*Disorder*)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: (*Standing*) Order, please. Will the hon. member take his seat. Without regard to any official record I state emphatically that I as Chairman of this Committee having called upon the hon. member to withdraw, if the hon. member refuses to withdraw I shall have no alternative but to abide by the rules of the Chamber and ask the hon. member to withdraw.
1.50 p.m.

I will now ask the hon. member, because I believe I have already given a sufficient and clear warning, will you please withdraw the remarks to which I made reference? Do you or do you not withdraw? (*PAUSE*). The hon. member I can only indicate has refused to withdraw and I have no alternative but to ask the hon. member to withdraw from this Chamber for the rest of today's sitting.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Mr. TAITT and Mr. GREAVES withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for St. Andrew.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to advert to the question of reports being laid in this Hon. House. As a matter of fact, I am only responsible for what I bring here and what comes before me, but I will

undertake myself to make an enquiry on this matter and report back to the House by way of a statement.

I take it that the officers of this House are responsible for the documents of this House, and I am not aware that people can come in and take documents away, this would be a very unfortunate thing, but the last Financial Statement I have seen is for 1977, and when you consider the lax way in which the previous administration conducted all of its business, one would consider that even to see a report close to 1977 is certainly a progressive step. But I will undertake to make sure that I investigate all matters surrounding the statements which we have heard and make a statement to this Hon. House in the fullness of time.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, I did not intend to get involved in this debate, but statements coming from the other side would seem to indicate that something out of the normal has happened in ADC since this administration took over the Government. I would like that it be recorded that in 1976 when this administration took over the accounts of the ADC were some four years in arrears. We have put in special personnel, and one of my first tasks was to ask that the accounts be brought up to date, because the only way we could know the true financial status of ADC was to get the accounts that fell under my Ministry. Not only did I ask for up-to-date statements on the ADC, but on the BMC as well. Further and above that, Mr. Chairman, I believe the public should know that the bulk of debt at the ADC was created in the administration of the Democratic Labour Party, and I know the history too well.

It started when Central Government had no more money to plough into ADC. I was then a member of the Opposition and a member of the Sugar Industry Bank, and it was when the ADC was under the management of Mr. Cumberbatch and Mr. Roy Ward as Chairman, that an application was made to the Sugar Industry Bank for a sum of over \$1 million. The records of the Sugar Industry Bank will show that I opposed the lending of \$1 million to ADC, because at that time not only was it losing money in its agricultural pursuits, it was also acting as a broker for cotton, a cotton broker for the Japanese, the English and the Americans, and ADC has continued to lose money by being a broker for cotton, paying the farmers for cotton in this country at one price and receiving a lower price by virtue of the devaluation of the pound every time it sold its cotton stock, because ADC has to carry the cotton at Spencers until a ship arrives for it. Not only does it deal with local cotton, ADC seems to be the bonding house for cotton coming from the LDCs, and ships come here to pick it up. I opposed it back in 1974 and 1975. A letter came from the then Government to the Chairman, Mr. Geoffrey Armstrong, of the sugar Industry Bank saying the then Prime Minister had advised that ADC must go to the Sugar Industry Bank to borrow

money. The crippling effect of that has been that the vote today represents some \$2 million that the ADC owed the Sugar Industry Bank, which prevents the Bank from lending to other farmers in this country.

The Central Bank imposed a stop on the lending of money to ADC in 1976 and 1977. I telephoned the Governor of the Central Bank myself and asked him to give ADC another chance. The Opposition wanted to walk out today. I had promised never to say anything on agriculture as long as I was back in this thing, but when you get people trying to tell the public what is not correct, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for St. John, was the man who put the ADC on to the Sugar Industry Bank. Mr. Symmonds at the Bank will tell you that it is the ADC that accumulated all the debt because the Government of the day took over the St. Lucy estate and they lost thousands of dollars in the cotton industry in St. Lucy. The money the ADC and other farmers in this country get for cotton is less than it costs them to produce. The Ministry of Agriculture has shown, through its Planning Unit, that it takes 1,400 pounds of cotton per acre to break even, and there is not one cotton plantation in this country, the ADC or any other, that has ever recorded more than 1,000 pounds of cotton per acre in this country.

The stupid position that exists in this situation, Mr. Chairman, is that Mr. Roy Ward who was then Chairman of ADC under the last Government is supposed to be the President of the West Indian Sea Island Cotton Association. He grows not ten acres on his estate. Mr. Andy Dowding who is a representative lost his whole field of 25 acres last year, but they are the people who are forcing ADC to grow cotton every year, and the taxpayers of this country are subsidising the cotton industry of this country. Let anybody produce the figures and you will see it is so, and the ADC was going downhill, simply because of a policy that was instituted under the last administration.

Mr. Chairman, in order to correct the policy people seem to think that the Barbados Labour Party, as I constantly say, is made up of a bunch of magicians. A normal crop of sugar cane takes a minimum of 18 months from planting to reaping, not even including the sale of sugar. When you start on a planning scale, we came into office in September 1976, you plan for agricultural land from February and March, we started planning in 1976, the Development Plan for agriculture under my administration was presented to the Ministry of Finance and Planning in December 1977 and that plan set out the way I see agriculture in this country.
2.00 p.m.

I want the people to understand that, and that plan set out the way I saw agriculture in this country. It was done in 1977. Mr. Chairman, if you go eighteen months

from September 1976, you will see where we are, and the only way you can turn around what is happening is if you move off the existing crops and bring in new crops.

Mr. Chairman, the ADC had managers at every estate and a general manager. I brought in an Attorney and he helped to identify where the ADC was losing money. At Fairy Valley they were growing sweet potatoes at a cost of \$1.66 a pound based on the accounts, and it is when we saw the accounts in 1977 that we knew what was going on. If they talk about corruption, it is corruption in their members who are now on ADC estates. If they want...I would not talk to them in here because if I started on what the corruption is, they would understand. They would know where corruption stands, because the accounts will show that they grew potatoes at \$1.66 a pound when the highest price for potatoes ever reached in this country was 80 cents a pound. Carrots growing at the same Fairy Valley were being sold at \$1.00 in the yard, and when I put my foot down and said that every pound of agricultural produce grown by ADC estates must be sold to the BMC, and I mandated that carrots must not be sold for more than 50 cents a pound from ADC to the BMC, do you know that the ADC made more money selling carrots at 50 cents a pound to the BMC than when they were sold at \$1.00 a pound at the farm gates out of the same acreage? That is what the accounts will show; and I want them back in here. That is why I am sorry you did not take the advice of the hon. member for St. James, because I want to tell them.

Mr. Chairman, they have to hear. They want to know where the corruption is. Ask what has happened now that you have put an Attorney at the ADC. He is moving from plantation to plantation and seeing what has happened. Who will carry away the accounts? If they want to know about accounts, ask about the van which was removed from the Ministry of Health and parked in the yard at Spencers for Carmeta Fraser without any record at all at the Ministry of Health or by anybody and with money being spent on it. That is where the corruption is.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member would give way, the time is now 2.05 p.m. and I beg that Your Honour do now report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.50 p.m.

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

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

On Resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Question Time be taken until 3.15 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. The hon. member for St. Michael South — his question No. 11.

I do not now see the hon. member in his place. Let the answer be laid.

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION No. 11

"The Government of Barbados has caused 120 acres situate at Bath Plantation to be brought back into agricultural production since September 1976. Further parcels of land situate at Neils, Belle and Cane Garden, all in the parish of St. Michael; Rowans in the parish of St. George and Frere Pilgrim in the parish of Christ Church, have been returned to cultivation following decisions taken by the Government since September 1976. Lands whose acreage is not precisely determined situate in Soil Conservation areas in the parishes of St. Joseph and St. Andrew have been returned to cultivation following a ploughing and reclamation programme initiated by the Soil Conservation Division of the Ministry of Agriculture during the year 1977."

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Michael North Central — his question No. 17. I do not see the hon. member in his place. Let the answer be laid.

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION No. 17

"(a) \$15,136,863.18

(b) Various firms and individuals by way of trade and otherwise.

(c) The Government is not liable to International Seafoods Ltd.

(d) It is impossible to answer this question at this stage but the Government is taking steps to minimise any possible dislocation.

(e) Does not arise at this stage.

(f) Appropriate procedures will be followed."

Mr. SPEAKER: The same hon. member — his question No. 19. Likewise let the answers be laid.

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION No. 19

"1. Yes, Sir.

- 2.(a) The Government proposed the establishment of a National Petroleum and Gas Corporation which will be empowered, *inter alia*, to import and trade in all petroleum products, including bottled gas.
- (b) The Government is examining the local price structure of this commodity to determine whether it should be brought under price control.
- (c) The Government is investigating alternative sources of energy which could be made available to consumers, and the Natural Gas Corporation is at present undertaking a study of the economics of further extension of its distribution system in the light of available and potential Natural Gas resources.
- (d) The Government with the aid of technical assistance from UNIDO, is presently investigating the current methods of distribution of natural gas in Barbados and on receipt of the experts' report, the Government will be prepared to implement such recommendations as are acceptable."

Mr. SPEAKER: Again the hon. member for St. Michael North Central. I do not see the hon. member in his place. Let the Reply be laid.

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION No. 20

"1. Yes, Sir.

2.(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

- (d) Officials of the Ministries of Finance and Trade monitor all imports, and will inform the appropriate authorities of any contravention which is discovered or is drawn to their attention."

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, there being no Private Members' Business, I beg to move that Government Business be resumed.

Mr. SPEAKER: But there is one item under Private Members' Business.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: The hon. member in whose name it stands is not with us.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member in whose name the Item under Private Members' Business stands I do not now see in his place.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: I beg to move that Private Members' Business be postponed and that Government Business be resumed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the instant Order of the day.

When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it now reverts.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD 109 — MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for St. Andrew may proceed.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, during the brief break in Government Business just now, I had occasion to check the Annual Reports of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation and I am satisfied that prior to 1974-75 reports had not been laid in this Parliament, and my understanding is that the Report for 1976, although it came before Cabinet, was not laid, and that the Report for 1977 did not long come into the Ministry, and I have asked the officials there to expedite the process with the hope of laying these Reports in Parliament.

The statement as made here by the hon. member for St. John certainly boggles the mind, and I would like to know what type of Reports could have been taken from this Parliament, because it would be of interest to me to know. I would like to know if in the same vein there are charges of corruption, or if the auditors are not satisfied with the state of the accounts of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation that the matter be brought to my attention as the Minister responsible. 3.00 p.m.

I assure this Honourable House that I will not fail in my efforts to bring the culprits, if culprits they are, to justice and that as far as the Ministry is concerned and the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation is concerned that we will not allow a stone to be left unturned in respect of anything that is malfunctioning in that area. The history of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation is very well known. It is known that many of these Corporations were plagued with corruption and all types of dishonest dealings in the past and the advent of 1976 brought a number of these malpractices to an end.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to read here from the file and I will read a letter of the 8th April, 1976 from the General Manager of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Science and Technology and it reads as follows:

"Dear Sir,

Re Financing -- Agricultural Development Corporation

Please refer to your letter AG/99/1, Vol. 3, undated, and the Ministry of Finance letter No. 5147/Vol. 1 dated the 19th of March, 1976.

With respect to paragraph 3(a) of the Ministry of Finance letter and the attached expenditure notes, review and expenditure data and crop performance data for the years 1973/74 and 1974/75, the audit for 1974/75 is currently being done by the Auditors so that the figures shown at Appendix II are unaudited."

That is the position of April 8th, 1976 and therefore this Committee will recognise that the failure to produce statements to this Honourable House is certainly not a failure on the part of this administration but a serious dereliction of duty on the part of the former Government and the Minister responsible during that period of time.

We found tremendous difficulties on assumption of office in order to get figures up in shape in order to get any order at all out of the chaos which existed at the time. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, and this Honourable House that very shortly the backlog of statements will be laid before this Honourable House and we hope the situation will be corrected.

I beg to move that Head 109 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 117 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND NATIONAL INSURANCE

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this Resolution speaks for itself and I do not think that there is any need to comment on it. Work needs to be done on "Abergeldie" and this Resolution seeks to make provision for the work to be carried out.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Mr. JOHNSON: I beg to second that.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1978–79 No. 29

Item 1(c) was called – To move the passing of the Resolution to grant the sum of \$19,700 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1978–79, Part I – Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1978–79, No. 29, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, this Item seeks to make provision for the setting up of the Special Assignments Office in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs and the Addendum to the Resolution speaks for itself and sets out very clearly the matters to do with the Item under this Head and I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Mr. JOHNSON: I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 9(3) – MAINTENANCE OF VEHICLE AND PLANT

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Head 9(3) makes provision for maintenance of vehicles and plant primarily to do with the Motor Tractor Cultivation Scheme and I think it would be proper for me to say at this point in time that that Motor Tractor Cultivation Scheme is not performing the functions which it was originally created to perform and that I am having a very serious look at the revamping of the Scheme with the hope that farmers of the country will get better services from the monies which the Government is spending there.

That Scheme is very heavily subsidised but it is more subsidised in the interest of the people who work on the Scheme than it is for the people who should benefit, that is, the farmers generally in the country and I am carrying out a study with respect to the

changing of the whole structure of the operation with a view to making it more functional and more serviceable to the people whom it was designed to assist and very shortly I shall be coming to Parliament with a new revamped Scheme in order to give impetus to this type of Scheme which Government is now providing.

With these few comments I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

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

3.10 p.m.

Head 9(7) was called.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: This Item is one for the provision of vehicles and plant and has more to do with the expenditure involved with repairs to mechanical units, most of which have out-lived their usefulness and it is virtually spending good money after bad. But the country cannot always afford to carry the cost of new units and this Resolution is primarily for the purpose of repairs.

I beg to move that Head 9(7) stand part.

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

Head 9(8) was called.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, this has to do with repatriation of fishermen who go adrift from time to time. My understanding is that we pay to other governments for repatriating our people. When their people drift here we repatriate their nationals as well and if you carry out an accounting of the system you will find that they probably owe us. But there is no question about this Item; it is very important, and indeed I would like to see it a little greater than it is.

I beg to move that the Head stand part.

Mr. SISNETT: In seconding the motion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a word or two in tribute to the marine mechanical service offered by the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture for the service they are performing to the fishermen of this country. I am a little concerned, however, about the number of vessels that get lost in the course of a year and I would like to know whether the Minister would be able to shed a little more light on what is being done to reduce the incidence of the number of vessels that are lost at sea. I am told that these vessels can claim an average of

\$300, which is about 50% of the sum allowable to them, and this cost is running annually into thousands of dollars. Nevertheless, the mechanical division of the department is doing a good job in trying to make sure that these vessels are seaworthy. In 1975 figures revealed that there were 366 claims by these fishermen, of which the Ministry paid out \$69,638.03. In 1976-77 the figure was still relatively high, 344 claims and the Ministry paid out \$91,771. The figure was somewhat reduced in 1977-78 when there were approximately 312 claims, and to date this year the number of claims has been reduced to 119, on which \$59,892.42 has been paid.

The additional money that is being sought today, as I understand it, is to defray certain expenses. The sum of \$1,464.27 has been spent this year for repatriation of crews from neighbouring territories.

Another point which I would like to give a little praise to the Ministry is for the service they are rendering to the fishing industry. There are approximately 500 fishing vessels and the Ministry is doing a valuable service in help to these vessels such as servicing 275 injectors to pumps, decarbonizing 20 engine heads, repairs to steel shafts and water pumps, in addition to advising on the installation of engines. An average of fifteen reduction gears and boxes are serviced weekly by the Ministry; approximately 12 - 14 engine repairs or overhauls are carried out annually. All in all I believe that the Ministry is doing an extremely good job and I want to commend them for the effort. A great amount of time is spent in assisting owners in taking parts to the Foundry and providing machinists in order that the vessels can be seaworthy again.

I would like to pay tribute to the Minister himself for the diligent way he has been conducting the affairs of the Ministry of Fisheries and to the Ministry for looking after the interests of the fishermen in making their contribution to fisheries development in Barbados.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, the last speaker spoke like a Minister himself. He was certainly seized of the facts and has given the House a feast of his knowledge of the facts.

In regard to the question which he posed as to what is being done to curtail the amount of drifts and the consequent problems, there is very little the Ministry can do except to enforce certain regulations. For example, the Ministry can try to see that on each of these boats there is a wireless type set by means of which contact can be maintained. I would like to see all boats seaworthy, but what we have discovered is that where a boat is owner-operated you hardly get problems of drift because they are usually up to standard. But when the boats are operated by people other than the owners, the condition of the boat deteriorates to the point where the fisherman

may say to himself: "This is not my boat; I do not stand to benefit anything." The attitude therefore is to take the boat to sea despite the fact that it might not be too seaworthy. The Government may well have to consider introducing a very stringent form of inspection of boats to make sure that the boats are to a standard considered seaworthy.

The question of tides and the fishermen's ability to read the stars — most of them depend on that; very few of them know how to read a compass. I think that in the area of fisheries the Government may have to consider the introduction of a training course for fishermen. Fishing is a highly technical area and fishermen should be trained to know precisely the condition of their boat, the area in which they are fishing, and if not experienced in reading a compass at least be able to read the stars and know the area. The Ministry is looking at these problems and is hoping very shortly to come up with answers which may assist in saving the lives of fishermen who go adrift.

We also have a problem with respect to insurance. Insurance companies do not pay for boats that go adrift; this is not part of the insurance. The people involved in rescue operations do a commendable job from time to time, and like the hon. member who just spoke I want to commend them for the job they are doing in this respect. But this whole matter is constantly under review by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs.

*The question that Head 9(8) stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
3.20 p.m.*

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE NOTE TO
ITEM 17 — HEAD 9(1) AND THE NOTE
TO ITEM 10 — HEAD 9(9)

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, the Addendum to this Resolution is self-explanatory and I do not think I need go into any details on this matter. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. SISNETT: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Mr. SISNETT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of four money Resolutions in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, the Resolutions were agreed to.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I have a point of order to raise, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is before the House, may I ask?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: My point of order, it is about next week's Order Paper. It is the adjournment, I suppose, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that you are now inviting the House to turn to the fixing of the next Order Paper.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a very proper exercise for this Hon. Chamber.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am moving, Sir, that the first Item on next week's Order Paper be the Customs (Amendment) Bill and that any Resolutions of which notice may be given pursuant to the Standing Orders be the second and subsequent Items. In respect of Questions, Sir, Question No. 22, I am submitting to Your Honour, is covered by that provision of the Standing Orders which says that members shall not ask questions to obtain information which is accessible from written sources. The matters raised in Question No. 22 are all to be obtained either in the Petroleum Act, the original 1885 Act, or in Price Control Orders and other Orders, Sir. It is exclusively asking for information which is contained in Statutory Instruments or Statutes, and I submit for that reason that it is in contravention of the rules, because the only answer the Government will be able to give about that Question would be to refer the hon. member to the relevant Statutes and Statutory Instruments, Sir.

If Your Honour would rather us give that answer, and I can tell Your Honour from now that it will not be given with any disrespect to the Chair, Sir — you see, that is my real reason for raising it — because when you give an answer like that it can sometimes reflect on the Chair. If you prefer us to give the answer and refer the hon. member to the relevant Orders, because he should have known, bearing in mind what position he once held in that Ministry, he should have been familiar with the rules, we will give it, Sir, but I draw it to Your Honour's attention.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have heard the comment of the Hon. Prime Minister indicating that under Standing Order 14(2)(1) Question No. 22 falls, but I would be prepared to hear the reply given in the same vein as the Prime Minister has spoken today and let the Hon.

Prime Minister make the same comment as was made today, and the Chair will be prepared to deal with the matter at that time.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Once Your Honour is assured that any such reply does not imply any disrespect to the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not at all.

ADJOURNMENT

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday next at 12.00 noon, February 27, 1979.

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

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