THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1976 – 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 27th 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. 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); Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, LL.B., (Minister of Communications and Works); Hon. H. deB. FORDE, S.C., M.A., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of External Affairs); Mr. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M; Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Health and National Insurance); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of 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.; 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).

Prayers were read.

Mr. SANDIFORD and Dr. HAYNES entered the Chamber and took their seats.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for six months ended 30th September, 1978.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation for the year ended June 1975.

The Report and the Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation for the year ended June 1976.

STATEMENT BY HON. L. B. BRATHWAITE

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker,

The audited Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation for the years ended 30th June, 1975 and 30th June, 1976 were received in the Ministry in the vicinity of 2 years after the end of the Corporation's financial year.

The Ministry views these late submissions quite seriously since the Corporation is making important information available long after the transactions have taken place. The information at this stage is in fact of little value as it does not enable timely corrective measures to be taken and so the results of the Corporation's activities are quite expensive in the long run.

I wish you to note, Mr. Speaker, that the audited Financial Statements of the Corporation for the year ended 30th June, 1973 were not received in the Ministry until May 1975 and were not laid until June 1976. In the case of the Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June, 1974, these were not received in the Ministry until December 1976. They were laid in May 1977.

In June 1977 the Ministry took up with the Corporation the question of the late submission of the Financial Statements and gave the Corporation instructions that statements should in future be submitted within the statutory period. Nevertheless, the audited Financial Statements for the year 1977 were not received

in the Ministry until November 1978; but we must appreciate that given the history of the late submissions dating back as I said to 1973, it is not practical to change this situation overnight.

I understand, Mr. Speaker that the Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June, 1978 are in the process of preparation and are likely to be ready for submission to the Ministry within the next month.

It would therefore be noted that there has been considerable improvement in getting the Corporation to finalise its accounts since this Government came into office. This Government will continue to insist that the Financial Statements of the Corporation be submitted as early as possible after the end of its financial year.

There is another point to which I should like to draw attention and it relates to the comments of the Corporation's Auditors on the manner in which the accounts for the year ended 30th June, 1976 were kept. The Auditors state that the records of the Corporation have not in their opinion been properly maintained as there was a general breakdown in controls over the recording of Accounts Payable. Consequently, they were unable to satisfy themselves that all purchases and expenses were properly recorded and that the Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities in the amount of $534,092 were fairly stated. The Auditors stated also that in view of the materiality of the comments, they were not in a position to state whether the Financial Statements presented fairly the financial position of the Corporation as at 30th June, 1976.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to state that since this Government came into power, the position of the presentation of the Corporation's Statements has improved and the Government would have no interest in withholding information from the House. The Statements which are now being laid are Statements which relate to the activities of the Corporation under the previous administration. It is therefore clear that this Government far from concealing Statements would wish to present Statements to the House as quickly as possible.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before we move to Orders of the Day, I am in receipt of a notice of a motion from the hon. member for St. Michael South Central, and I do call on him to give such notice.
12.30 p.m.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Resolution.

Whereas agricultural development is of vital importance to the economy of this country, and

Whereas other areas such as Tourism and the Manufacturing Sector enjoy considerable tax incentives,

Be it resolved that this House approve the formulation of a programme of additional incentives to stimulate agricultural development in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Leader of the Opposition his Resolution.

Whereas many persons have been retired from Public and Statutory Boards at the age of sixty, and

Whereas most of these persons are not eligible for old age pension or benefits under the NIS Scheme until age 65, and

Whereas such persons, because of their age and the existing high levels of unemployment find it difficult to secure even part-time employment in order to sustain a reasonable standard of living,

Be it resolved that this House approve the rapid re-absorbtion of senior citizens into the economic life of the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Michael South his question re stagnant puddle of water, Bayville.

Is the Minister aware that dank and stagnant puddles of water settle on Jessamine Avenue, Bayville, St. Michael near the junction with Curwen's Avenue?

2. Will the Minister take the steps necessary to ensure that this health hazard, inconvenience and eye-sore is removed at the earliest possible opportunity?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same hon. member his question re one manhole on Second Avenue, Beckles Hill.

Is the Minister aware that at least one manhole on Second Avenue, Beckles Hill, St. Michael is without a protective grill or cover and so poses a serious danger to pedestrians and to vehicular traffic?

Is the Minister also aware that the other manholes on this Avenue constitute favourable breeding grounds for mosquitoes which cause considerable annoyance and health threats to the residents of the area?

Will the Minister state when was the last occasion on which these manholes have been treated by the Public Health authorities against such and other health hazards?

Will the Minister indicate when she intends to put the necessary corrective measures into effect?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same hon. member his question re roads at Sandbox Avenue.

Is the Minister aware that the road known as Sandbox Avenue, Bayville, St. Michael is in a bad state of disrepair?

How soon does the Minister intends to put the necessary repair work in hand?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same hon. member his question re street lighting at Second Avenue, Beckles Hill.

Is the Minister aware that there is need for the provision of street lighting in the area of Second Avenue Beckles Hill, on the southern side of Government Headquarters at Bay Street?

If the answer to the foregoing is in the negative, will the Minister investigate the matter, and take the necessary steps to provide the desired number of street lights?

If the answer to No. 1 is in the affirmative, will the Minister state how soon he intends to provide the street lights?

If Street lights are not immediately available, will the Minister consider the alternative of having security lighting installed on the southern side of Government Headquarters in such a way that the area referred to might be illuminated?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, may I give notice that the answer to the last question is ready, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. John his question re employment of non-nationals.

How many non-nationals have been recruited since September 3, 1976 into the office of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance?

What were their countries or origin?

Through what institutional or other agencies were they recruited?

From what sources were their salaries and expenses paid?

What functions have they performed or continue to perform?

What is or has been the duration of their engagements?

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

The question that the Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of the day's sitting was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
12.40 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Item No. 1 standing in the name of the Prime Minister, be the first Order of the day.

BILL TO AMEND THE CUSTOMS ACT, CAP. 66

The first Order was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Customs Act, Cap. 66.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, basically these amendments are carrying out the Objects and Reasons as set out in the Addendum to the Bill and they reflect decisions taken by the Caribbean Common Market Council at a meeting held in Guyana in 1977. We have also taken the opportunity to metricate a number of Items – not a large number, only 43 or 44 – where previously the tariff charge on these items was charged on Imperial measures. I do not propose to go right through the Act pointing out the alterations. What will be found is that in the Act you will see kilograms or meters as the case may be. The rates are not actually changed but in some cases you will find different figures because the rate was charged on an imperial measure and is now being charged on a metric measure.

Honourable members will take note that although the requirement of metrication does not become mandatory until the 1st May this year, the Customs Tariff Act is in fact fully metricated throughout and will no longer contain references to *avoir dupois* measures. This step has been in process since 1973 with the setting up of the Metrication Board. Many things in the Caribbean are already marked exclusively or primarily in metric measure. In our schools the metric system is being taught as the primary measure for the future and not feet and inches and pounds and gallons. They are being basically instructed in litres and kilograms, the measures which have demonstrated by their simplicity over the last one hundred and fifty years that they are the measures of the future.

The Bill is intended to come into force by proclamation, and the Government's present intention is to bring it into force on the 1st April this year,

which will coincide with the new financial year, rather than on May 1, when it will become necessary by law in any case.

I want to say this very briefly on the subject of metrication, because some people have expressed fears that the metric system will cause great difficulty to old people, that somehow there will be rip-offs arising from the change-over. That there will be some slight dislocation is obvious and to be expected, because those of us raised on the system of imperial measures will necessarily find it a little difficult to think in terms of the metric system without trying to find some point of reference that will allow us to understand what we are talking about. But that is going to happen whenever the change-over takes place, and countries which have hesitated after their minds have been made up for the change over are merely postponing the day when the inconvenience will occur. What we have tried to do in Barbados is to ensure that we do not go about it laying down rigid rules and trying to force people to grasp the metric system over-night. We think that since 1973 there has been a gradual awareness in the country. We have heard no complaints about milk being sold by the Pine Hill Dairy in litres; we have no complaints from the suppliers at Quarry Products that they now supply by metres rather than yards. Indeed I am gratified when I see the small lorry owners, people by no means young and who have had very little exposure to metrication, measuring their loads in metric grades rather than cubic yards. People buy gasolene in litres and have very little difficulty with it. Government is at the moment trying to discover the extent of assistance they would have to give to small shopkeepers in connection with the remaining articles which are still retailed loose by volume or weight, and a decision has been taken that as far as possible the Government will bear the cost of conversion to metric units for small shops. Details are now being examined by the Metrication Board. In short, by the end of this year we can expect that most people in their daily lives will have had some example of metrication and met it face to face and will already have been coming to terms with it. I am told that even in addition to the areas already mentioned, clothing comes into the Island in metric lengths and widths, and I am told that when we cease cutting in yards there will in fact be a saving which I hope will be passed on to the consumer, because the left-overs which at present are struck off on account of metric lengths will no longer be left-overs. The Estimates when they come out will reflect some saving in the area of the Government Printery because paper is imported into this country in metric sizes for some time now, and the Government Printery has been losing by cutting things in terms of inches. You will note from the new size of the Official Gazette that they have already begun to make savings in this area. All the little pieces of paper that have been falling off on the floor because the sheets come in centimetres and not inches will no longer fall to the floor.

We know that when people go into the shops to buy sugar they are still going to think in terms of a pound of sugar rather than half a kilogram, and for this reason when we were giving the new price for sugar we left in the pounds although the price is basically per kilogram, because we know there are still some small shopkeepers who do not have the metric weights to measure out kilograms for the small minority of people who still buy sugar loose.

There are other substances of this sort, but as I said I hope that we will clear this up when we are able to assist with the changing of the scale of these small shopkeepers at some expense to the Government. 12.50 p.m.

Now, there may be one or two matters in respect of customs tariff that hon. members may question. They may look at the new tariff on alcoholic liquors and beverages imported into the country, and they may take note that there are a few changes in that direction. Essentially, other changes have been made in respect of alcoholic beverages, not a change in customs tariff, not a change in the amount of import duties, but a harmonious tariff so that the CARICOM Treaty can take advantage of the provision which has apparently been overlooked at an earlier stage.

I am instructed by the Ministry of Finance that the CARICOM Treaty does permit duties to be charged on CARICOM produced spirits equal to the amount of the excise duty which is carried by the same spirits produced locally. We are taking the opportunity of enforcing this regulation which apparently was not foremost in the mind of the Comptroller of Customs in the past when earlier revisions were made.

Of course, hon. members will be familiar with the fact that there are several hundred items in the Customs Tariff Act. At least on this occasion, unlike the last occasion when the entire schedule was before the House, we have not asked hon. members to deal with it in all its stages in one session. I cannot guarantee that if I am closely questioned on any single item that I would be able to give an immediate answer, Sir. I do not think that any body would expect it. There are hundreds of items, but I will do my best for hon. members. However, substantially, the tariffs remain the same and reflect only the metrication and the small changes which I have mentioned. At some stage, Sir there may be some changes in connection with alcoholic beverages that are nothing to do with taxation; because at CARICOM at the moment discussions are going on to

establish a new system of taxation on alcoholic beverages. Instead of taxing them by the proof, they will be taxed by the percentage of alcohol and in due course hon. members will be asked to approve these changes in the schedule.

I did not think it right to wait any longer for members of the CARICOM Council to make up their minds on restructuring the system of taxation on alcoholic beverages; so I therefore have gone ahead and carried on the restructuring process which should be on the basis of approved litres. I think that the heading is 222, if I can find it. We are changing whiskey, brandy, rum etc. on the basis of proof litres. Although it would not appear in the tariff, these amounts are also going to be charged in the future on CARICOM liquors – these amounts that you see here. This system will mean a change in the fulness of time in a measure of charge based on the percentage of alcohol in each litre.

Sir, this being the considerations behind the Bill, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to second that, and reserve my right to speak.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, the Bill which the hon. member has just moved the second reading of has three very short clauses. Clause 1 is the short title. Clause 2 says that: "The Customs Tariff as defined in section 2(1) of the Customs Act is amended by repealing Part 1 thereof and substituting therefor the Part 1 contained in the Schedule."

Clause 3 says that this Act shall come into operation on such day as the Governor-General appoints by proclamation. That is the whole Bill; but the Schedule to the Bill has 333 pages. The hon. member has admitted that he is not in a position even to guarantee the quantum of the changes brought about by the amendments. Now, we all know that in the changing from a system, whatever you call it – changing from avoir dupois – from the old system to the metric system, it is not possible to do precise ıversions when you have 700 or 7,000 items in the Customs Tariff Schedule which affects the daily cost of living of every single person in this country; and it is possible to increase taxation at the port of entry by rounding off the conversions in an upper direction.

Mr. Speaker, I received the schedule which is the substance of the amendment where everything is taking place. First, when? At 10 minutes after 10 this morning. Secondly, where? Not at my place of residence. Not at my place of work. Not in the office of the Leader of the Opposition, Sir, but inside the post office at Eagle Hall. I had to go to the post office at Eagle Hall because I was informed by an hon. member that there was a document in circulation. I first made enquiries at the General Post Office. Then I checked my post office box. Then I went down to my office, and I checked at my office. I checked both places and yesterday at my place of residence I waited patiently, and no document arrived. So I went down to the Eagle Hall Post Office at 10 minutes after 10.

Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, the post office bag had not even been opened; but after searching diligently, the officers in that office said that they would check the mail that had just come in at 9 o'clock, and they found this document addressed to me and also some other interesting documents – I suppose circulated to other hon. members – for instance, the member for St. Michael North East. I saw a document relating to car parking. I know that there was a document relating to car parking because it was of the same size as mine and I presume that that was what it was – car parking in the precincts of the House of Assembly. I do not know if the hon. member for Christ Church.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I have heard the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: But, Sir, the point that I am making is.....

Mr. SPEAKER: You are making a second reading speech.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: A second reading speech on a document which I have not had the opportunity to examine.

1 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is understood.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I would like to know from the hon. member if this is coming into force on 1st April, we are still at least four weeks from 1st April, I have not been notified that the Estimates are due to commence next week, Sir, we have five days in March for Estimates, and I would like to know why hon. members could not be given an opportunity to do some sample conversions of the multiplicity of items listed here.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was attempting to stop the hon. member just now. I am quite prepared to hear that part of the argument, I do not want your complaint as to the non-receipt or non-arrival of documents.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: It is germane, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very much so, but I do not want it to be embodied in your second reading speech to

cause confusion, because I am quite prepared to have your complaint investigated. I do not want to investigate your second reading speech.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I thank you for drawing to my attention that this intervention that I am making is independent of my right to speak on the second reading. Thank you very much.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, as I see it, it is a question of the entire democratic process at stake. This 353 page document which can have serious implications for the cost of living of Barbados arrived at my house yesterday evening, it came in the post yesterday. Now there was no way that one could go through that document without being able to compare it with previous documents in order to see whether there have been any changes, and we are now faced with the situation where we have to accept the word of the hon. member for St. Thomas that there have been no substantial changes. I do not know whether hon. members of this House are prepared to accept the word of the hon. member for St. Thomas on this subject, but I would not be prepared to do so, and we must insist on an opportunity for a proper examination of these matters in order to make an intelligent contribution to the debate.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I share the sympathies of members on the other side in the light that some of my colleagues yesterday evening at a parliamentary group meeting did complain themselves that they did not even receive some of the documents. However, this is not the fault of the Government, so we don't want to make any big thing out of it, about this democratic process and this lot of jargon about these, we are as concerned about the late arrival of the documents as any other member on the other side, and this is why I believe that the Resolution brought by my colleague, the member for Christ Church East, was a Resolution that would help streamline the whole structure of the Civil Service at all levels. You would be most amazed, Mr. Speaker, to know that there are some places today that are Government property, real estate, that the Government at this very day does not even know it owns. It does not even know where the property is, no register, nothing at all, and therefore we are in sympathy with the problems you are encountering and as Mr. Speaker gave you the assurance, he is going to investigate, the problem, but what or how does democratic process come into this? Mr. Speaker gave an assurance and that is what we will all accept.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, if I can just be heard on this question of order. There is one point, first of all. There may be 353 pages in the Customs Tariff and there may be hundreds, perhaps thousands, of items, but either 44 or 45 items are the only items which are changed – I can give you the numbers of the items – and the whole amount of duty collected on all those items in 1976 is just under $3 million, and the changes amount to some sum in the region of $900 in $3 million; $900 or $1,000. The Leader of the Opposition is welcome to see the Table, I can read out the numbers and everything if hon. members want that.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order, Sir. I am not prepared to do an examination *ex improviso* like that, he can circulate a document showing us the changes when you have investigated, Sir. Is he trying to short circuit you, Sir?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am not aware, Sir, that Your Honour has promised any investigation which would hold up the debate. In 1973 – they talk about democracy – the Leader of the Opposition brought this Customs Tariff in here, not with 44 changes, but with 300, and Frank Walcott got up there and said he had no right to do it and made the same speech from the Democratic side about democracy as I have heard from the hon. member for St. Michael South Central today, and on that occasion when I got up over there and said you had changed the entire Customs Tariff, you had put duties on the people's food, you had charged meat, you had charged butter and you expected us to do the entire Bill in all its stages that day, and I refused to have anything to do with the debate, as Mr. Frank Walcott then did on that occasion. That Bill was introduced before the documents came down.

On this occasion the Post Office or somebody has apparently not delivered things in time. The Government gave notice in proper order. In fact, the relevant Standing Order is suspended, we can do it under the conditions of today in all its stages, even if we hadn't given notice, but we are not standing on that, because Standing Order 44 is suspended.

Hon. members who are familiar with the Custom Tariff ought to know that there is only a very small number of items which are charged in cash against an imperial measure. Hon. members, in other words, who are going to do a comparison. If the Leader of the Opposition remembers, when he was Minister of Finance, if his memory can carry him back the few years, he should know that the scheme of the tariff is to charge a percentage, and I give the House the assurance that no percentages have been changed; if any have been changed they have been changed by a printer's devil or entirely without my knowledge. Anybody who knows the Customs Tariff has to know that it cannot take more than an hour or two to search

it to discover all the items which would be changed by metrication. It cannot take more than an hour or two, because throughout the Customs Tariff you charge by percentages and the duty is not changed. If the rate of duty is 45% and the unit is a pound and you now make the unit a kilogram, the duty is not changed, there can be no change, because we are not changing the percentages. The amount of duty on the same amounts of material coming in remains the same.

The items where the duty is changed are potatoes, tomatoes, garlic, onions, string beans, pigeon peas, black eye peas, carrots, beets, sweet peppers, cabbage, okra, cucumbers, pumpkins, kidney beans, other beans, split peas, other peas, grape musks, champagne, other wines, sparkling wines, vermouth, other fermented beverages, neutral spirits, tobacco, tobacco, tobacco – three items-cigars, cigarettes, snuff, tobacco, cement, lubricating oil, cinefilm, coniferous wood, mahogany and other woods. They are the only items which are charged in a cash amount per an imperial measure; potatoes, so much cash per pound; tomatoes, so much cash per pound; and they are all that any hon. member needs to look at in analysing this Bill, and if the Leader of the Opposition knew anything about the administration of Customs, he could have told his colleagues that and saved them a lot of time and argument. It is no trouble whatsoever, once you understand that it is only in the area of the importation of fresh vegetables, in the importation of liquids into this country, in the importation of cigarettes, the importation of cement and various oils – petroleum and lubricating oils – and wood, cinemato-graph film. That exhausts the category which is changed.
1.10 p.m.

That exhausts the category which has changed and the whole amount of the changes, because the Caricom amounts were all set for all vegetables at $1.10231 per pound. That is all vegetables and that will involve the change in the importation of all vegetables into Barbados in 1974 of $21. $21 for the whole 250,000 Barbadians is the amount of change as a result of these items. So hon. members are picking up a point which history they should be ashamed to pick up since they afflicted the original Customs Tariff on us in all its stages in one day, and in practice should be ashamed to pursue it the way they have since they have revealed that they are so unfamiliar with the Customs Tariff that they do not know what items can be affected by metrication. I say 45 because I counted 45 on one sheet, but here I only see 44. Forty-four are itemised. I can give the actual numbers.

I do not even know if this is my final reply or if it is a contribution to the debate on whether we are going to debate it or not, but hon. members can have it for what it is worth.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it is advisable for Government to consider its own position with respect to the passing of this Bill today, and at the same time the Chair is bound to give some consideration to the complaints of the minority, and I am quite prepared to hear from the Leader of Government Business or an Honourable Minister as to what is best to be done under the circumstances, bearing in mind that Government must look at its own position either in respect of the passing of the Bill or delaying it, or whatever is the appropriate thing to be done.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to both sides of the House and I am quite sure that my colleagues on this side as well as hon. members of the Opposition only respect their views, and you have given the assurance that you are going to look into this matter, and I can only move that this sitting be suspended until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. I think that would give the members of the Opposition the opportunity – the Leader of the Opposition is always in his office – to get together and look at the Schedule and tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock we will come back here and settle the business of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, Wednesday, 28th February, 1979.

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

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

On Resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is now resumed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, this Sitting was suspended yesterday until today. Since then there is a notice of a Supplementary Notice Paper. I would like with the leave of the House that Notices be re-opened, Sir. I hope that members on the other side would have no objection. With the leave of the House, Sir, I beg to move that Notices be re-opened so that the person under whose name this Notice stands will be able to give notice of the appropriate Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Acting Leader of the House is asking leave of the House to give notice of a Supplementary Resolution. There being no objection leave is granted.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to give notice of the following Resolution.

Resolution to grant the sum of $1,114,681 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. 30, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. Philip South has caught my eye.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, I think this House is fully aware.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: If the hon. member will excuse me, Sir, I have not finished. I want to give notice that the answer to Question No. 30 asked by the Leader of the Opposition is ready. That is a Government Notice.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in dealing with this Bill here today, I have no doubt that this Honourable House is aware of my views and the change-over from the Imperial System to the Metric System. Consequently, Sir, I intend to speak here today on the ramifications of the new system. We have been told that this new system would become law sometime during the month of May this year. It is still my duty again today to point out to the Government the haste in which we are making this new system become law.

While it is a fact and having heard from the members of Government that we are obliged to fall in line with other big countries, I must draw to the attention of the Government that most of our products come from the U.S.A. and that system is not used there. In addition, Sir, I would say, subject to correction, that the reason why the British has adopted this system is because they have entered into the European Economic Community and therefore they are obliged to use this new system. It is my opinion that in the interest of the masses in this country that, and especially when we take into consideration the people who are placed in the lower categories in this Island, that they were never given the opportunity to have the slightest idea about this new system.

Here it is I have, Sir, a book which I have been reading last night from the Barbados National Standards and even those who have studied the Metric System might not be fully aware of what has been written in this book. On page 4, the Introduction "The International System of Units is based on some of its own metric units where the term....."

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation, could the hon. member.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Since the hon. Minister has not spoken on this measure he cannot be heard elucidating any point.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: On a point of order, Sir, I want to know from what document the hon. member is quoting, what year, that would be helpful to us.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure the hon. member will be pleased to bring us up-to-date.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, I can make the book a document of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: You will please state the date of issue, or the number or whatever is relevant to identify it.

Mr. WEEKES: All I have seen is "BNS 50, 1978", and Sir, "Barbados National Standards, International System of Units and its Practical Application including the designation of time and dates etc." I will read the Introduction, Sir. "The International System of Units are based on some of the old metric units. Where the term "Metric System" is used SI is in fact meant. The International System of Units and the old Metric System are not the same." I repeat "are not the same."

Here it goes on further and it says on page 5.
"Students of Schools, Polytechnics, Colleges, etc. are to be encouraged to use the official names and approved terms. They should eschew such designations as "The Metric System"and "Metric Units", tolerating them only in popular and non-technical language."

10.15 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking in popular and non-technical language as stated in this book.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it the statement relates to the amendment to the Customs Act.

Mr. WEEKES: Yes, Sir, and I must remind you that the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister dealt at length with the metric system and therefore I think you will grant me the privilege on speaking on the system.

Now, Sir, I want to draw your attention to the fact that approximately 90% or more of the people of this country are not aware of this new system; and I therefore consider it my duty to draw to the attention of this honourable House that I am not against the system but I am speaking on behalf of the 90% or more of the people of this country who I can vouch for do not know anything about. For example, I can deal with a few categories of workers. You get senior citizens, agricultural labourers, workers in the Scavenging Department, and you

get all the workers in the lower category of whom I am sure that 99% do not know anything about this new system. Let us think, Sir, about the hawkers at the various markets. Let us think of the Senior citizens and especially the old age pensioners of this country who want to purchase a few yards of cloth to make a dress. You are going to find that it is going to confuse them, and therefore it is my opinion that in introducing this new system you should have the new and the old on every commodity which people purchase. Failing to do so you are going to bring about or create confusion and hardship to the poor working class of this country.

Mr. Speaker, you are fully aware that at present with the old system, regularly there are doubts in the minds of certain people about the weights and other things in connection with commodities; and now for us to introduce this new system at the end of May, I feel that it can go so far as to bring about chaos and confusion and our people will become disgruntled to see that this new system has been forced on them at such an early date. I repeat, from the information which I have received from the Government side we are obligated to do so in the long run. But why are we in so much hurry? What benefit do we derive for this country? The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister yesterday stated that it could be of benefit to certain people because in the case of cloth there are certain pieces which would be left over and he hoped the customer would benefit from it. I am saying now as one from among the people and one who mixes with them daily that if the Prime Minister thinks that the merchants will be so generous to these people he is making the mistake of his life.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Since the hon. member is raising the question of cloth, on a point of elucidation, the present situation is that the merchants are being supplied cloth in metres but selling it to the public in yards. There is some belief that the merchants are at present making the profit in the difference between yards and metres and that the change will remove the present extra profit however it is looked at. The hon. member has it the wrong way round; that extra three inches at the moment is going to the merchants; we would like it to go to the people.

Mr. WEEKES: Thank you very much for explaining the matter to me, and I may say that we would like it to be given to the people. But are the people going to get it? Can you answer that? I am saying that in the long run it is the masses who will feel the pinch of the shoe.

The Prime Minister went on to say how happy he was to see how people have got accustomed to the new system after being trained and what not. If the Prime Minister would go through the various Ministries he will find out that a large percentage -- and I repeat, the majority -- do not know anything about the new system. Therefore I am again suggesting that both systems be used, the old and the new, on every commodity.

10.25 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister stated yesterday that plans are afoot to deal with small shopkeepers. No, Sir, those things are based on theory, but let us get to the practical side. As I see it, Sir, the small shopkeeper has no interest in the new system; and therefore it means that we are running these people out of business. Mr. Speaker, you are aware that many people in this country try to make a livelihood by carrying on small shops. You are fully aware, Sir, of some of their qualifications, of their standard of education; and you, Sir, may agree with me that it must create a problem for those people; and if in the long run they do not understand it, it means that they are going to close their businesses or everything in their shops will be done by "guesstimates".

Therefore, I can only suggest to the Government that since we are obligated to change from the imperial system to the metric system to use the term to suit the ordinary man and not the term which is written in this book. Now Sir, even the time will change. Now, to tell an old person – that is how it goes on Page 25 – to tell an old person about time. . . .

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member quoting from Page 25?

Mr. WEEKES: I am sorry, Sir. It is Page 33, and it reads thus: "In the international 24-hour time system, the time in a particular day is indicated by two numbers, separated by a colon and followed by the abbreviation of hours, hrs,*. The first number indicates the whole number of hours that have elapsed since the start of the day and the second number indicates the additional minutes. (a.m. and p.m. are *not* used).

"A day starts at 00:00 hrs and ends at 24:00 hrs.

"EXAMPLE: four thirty in the afternoon is written as 16:30 hrs.

"Where a number consisting of one digit occurs a zero shall be placed before that digit.

"EXAMPLE: five past three in the morning is written as 03:05 hrs.

PRONUNCIATION

The following are examples of the pronunciations which shall be used:-

08:00 hrs shall be pronounced ... eight hours.

16:00 hrs shall be pronounced ... sixteen hours.

"*NOTE: This abbreviation of hours is for the designation of the time of day only."

Mr. Speaker, let us assume that all of these things become law, you telephone and want an old lady to come to your office, and you tell her to come at 00:50 hrs. How is that poor person going to know the time that you want her to come? You, Sir, it is true, by virtue of your office, sit here presiding over the destiny of our people with all of these changes. What will you tell the old lady? You are supposed to know the answers. I think that you will try to satisfy those persons by going back to the old system; and therefore I am saying that the Government should give this matter careful consideration before forcing it on the people who do not want it; but we have been told that in order to satisfy the European Market it must be done. I have no grouse about that. What I am speaking about is the timing of it. I am saying that because of people who still go to the shops to purchase a pound of sugar. There are still a large number of people who do that today. In the district in which I live there are about four small shops, and they cater for a population of 250 people or less.
10.35 a.m.

Now, Sir, imagine those small shopkeepers who have to cope with these changes and regardless of the tuition which you will give them – and when I say "them" I am referring to all shopkeepers, small shopkeepers throughout the island – in many cases they will never understand this new system, because they were not trained along the lines.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would say that the new system will not benefit the masses, but we have been told that we have to do it and therefore if it is the desire and the will of the Government to make it compulsory during the month of May, I am still appealing to them to give an extension of this time and also I am requesting them to use both systems, especially in the interest of the masses of this country.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I think the time has come in this House when people should stop being sentimental and certainly deal with matters in the manner in which they should be dealt with in a Chamber as serious as this one. The speech made by the last hon. member is certainly a speech made for this side of the House. When he talks about the Government giving full consideration before forcing this matter upon the people, this is what he should have told his side when they were in Government. He is getting on as though this is a matter which the Barbados Labour Party Government has brought into being; not so, we came and found it, and as they found the Deep Water Harbour, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Seawell Airport and had to go on, we have found a system like this and there was no point in checking it at that time. There are certain things which you will view as soon as you come into office and if you think that you must scrap them, you must scrap them, as we saw we had to scrap the question of the building of the Polytechnic on the site where the former Government thought they should build it and build it elsewhere, for security and other reasons. We may consider that there are things like these we have to do, but there are other measures which we have to carry on with. We cannot like ostriches bury our heads in the sand.

If the whole world is going metric, obviously Barbados will have to fall in line with the metrication system. The last hon. member made mention of the old woman; we are concerned with the old women, we agree entirely with what he said, and it is for that reason that we have suggested that the two systems should go side by side for the time being until the people catch on to the question of metrication, therefore the speech made by him is a slap to his leader sitting over there, the hon. member for St. John, and certainly not anything in criticism of us. He supports our contention in this regard and not his own side's. He should have told that to them. It is unfortunate that they for years have sat down and made mistakes after mistakes and did not see that they were making mistakes. As a matter of fact, they became so bankrupt in office that they could not see that they were going wrong. We have come to find a situation such as the one which we found, what must we do? Reverse the whole situation as we found it? I will tell you what we have reversed, Mr. Speaker. We have reversed the situation where the last Government had said that the shopkeepers in Barbados will have to pay for the changeover to the metric system by way of their scales, etc. and this Government has taken the conscious decision.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On point of order, Sir. I would like to ask the hon. member when did the last Government say that and where did he find that anywhere in the debates or the policy of the last Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, it seems as though from time to time we are forced to come here and make statements on matters, but I saw this matter where that decision was taken, and this Government as a result of my taking a matter to Cabinet has agreed that the Government will pay for the changeover to metrication of the over 500 shopkeepers in this country; the last Government did not see that, and we have done that. And I will go further and state for the benefit of the hon. member for St. Philip South – and I do not believe that he wants to do anything that is wrong, I believe that if he makes a mistake it is a genuine mistake – the cut off date is not a legal cut off date, that was a policy decision and one made by the last Government that the cut off date should be 31st May, 1979. That is the position as it is.

But, of course, we are moving with the times, and if metrication is on us we have to go metric. The last hon. member who spoke mentioned the question of our getting most of our goods from America, but that is not so, Mr. Speaker, the most of our goods are not coming from America, they are coming from parts of Europe, from Canada as well, and all the countries are going metric. Canada is metricated, I know that, but he said they were coming from the United States of America, which is not true, but we are not going to do something to the exclusion of people who might not understand the system of metrication. We have just dealt with the question of sugar and we made sure that the price of sugar was also in the pound as well as in the system for metrication.

These are things that are uppermost in our minds, and we are not going out there to pull down anybody, we are not going out there to say that because the last Government has done something which we did not thing should be done at the time, but which we think will happen in the process of time, that we are going to come here and pull them down on that; it is because of the speech made by the last hon. member that I am forced to say what I am saying here, and if any hon. member gets up to say anything other than what the file reveals, I will get the file and I will read it here in order to put the record straight in this Hon. House. It is time that we do not run away from the damages which we have created, but stand up and face them and face the issues squarely and like men. We in the Barbados Labour Party are not afraid, we have had to make many decisions from time to time and we are prepared to back those decisions, and we are sure that the intelligent community that we have to deal with will in the fullness of time, if not immediately, accept the reasons for the decisions which we have made and our determination to carry out those decisions in the interest of the country.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister has made a few points which I wanted to make. However, Sir, we have heard from the hon. member for St. Philip South that there has been haste in which we are making the new system become law.

10.45 a.m.

In addition to what the Hon. Minister has said in refuting and rebutting such a suggestion, I would like to point out that we on this side have always sat down and tried to analyse the changes which we are about to introduce into this country, and it is not fair to suggest that this Government is hasty in introducing any new measure. What has happened, Mr. Speaker, is that we are overtaken by a situation which we as a developing country must face up to. It is well known that the great economic powers are all going metric, and since Barbados under this Government has got as an objective entering into trading and developing its trade overseas, it is vital therefore that we adopt a system which is common to our potential trading partners. As it stands now, we have got to enter into negotiations with the Economic Community and when our Ministers or negotiators meet to discuss matters, for example, sugar, they must be able to understand the metric system. The countries with which we deal, the ACP countries as well as the EEC deal in and understand the metric system. It means therefore that we would be far out of line, we would be the lone wolf out there not being able to relate to the negotiations, and that is why it is imperative and vital that we bring our system in line. So, Sir, it is not a matter of undue haste, but a government facing up to reality, and the sooner people who are in responsible positions explains to the people of Barbados the true nature of things, the sooner will we be able to gain the respect of these people. We must bear this in mind. There is no haste whatsoever.

The former administration was well and fully aware of the significance of the metric system. The former government knew that. I will not on this occasion seek to criticise or to lambaste the former administration for this, but the point I would try to make is that the hon. member for St. Philip South who made his contribution in here today was a member of that administration, and surely he should have been aware of the significance and the possible introduction of the metric system. Now we heard him give the impression that this Government is making it obligatory, that we are now obligated to fall in line with other countries. It is not a question as to whether we are obligated to fall in line or not. This Government will not be led on. We have got our independent views and we have made this quite clear despite some of the harsh and unfair criticisms that we have had to take over the last two and a half years. The position is that we realise that in order to deal effectively in negotiations we must introduce a system which is common to our negotiating partners, and we have gone on and on with cheap contributions in debates at times giving people the impression that this Government is a government of not caring and rushing into hasty decisions which are against the feelings of the Barbados public.

Mr. Speaker, the former administration knew that at some time they would have to introduce the metric system. That is clearly understood. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition knows this, and it was the duty of that administration to see to it that the phasing out of the imperial system was started and that the new metric system was introduced over a long period of time so that we would not have the sort of contribution as we did from the hon. member for St. Philip South, because if there was a gradual introduction whereby the metric system would have been taught, we would not be faced with this today. I have said repeatedly that we as a new Government have got to take a lot of criticisms for the things which we need not take criticism for, but as I said, this is it when members on the other side want to score a cheap political point. It is not a matter for politicking in

here; it is not a matter of trying to score cheap points. We have got to look at it realistically and let the people understand that in order for us to derive the best benefits, we have got to adopt a system which is common to all the developing countries. We cannot be left out or be isolated. With whom are we going to trade if Canada is going metric? If the European Common Market is going metric, tell me how are we going to relate if we continue to adopt the imperial system? The countries that adopted the imperial system have gone metric. Are we going to stand aloof by ourselves and not get in the act?

We feel as a responsible government that we have got lots to gain and nothing to lose from going metric. I do agree with one point which the hon. member for St. Philip South has made. He has suggested, and I support him on this that the imperial system and its equivalent or the metric system and its equivalent should appear on certain items. I am saying this because I feel that is the way that this should be done rather than having a somewhat abrupt introduction of the metric system. I understand that some Bridgetown stores have already adopted this. There are others I know that have not started the new system but the whole idea is that we will have the equivalent phased out; or let us say, we have the imperial system and the metric system and it will be phased out over a period of time. People will get so accustomed to the kilometers and the miles on certain signposts or certain line marks that eventually they will see and hear the metric system more widely used in Barbados, and eventually it will become a reality. The imperial system will be automatically phased out, so I support the hon. member for St. Philip South on this.

One point that comes to mind, Mr. Speaker is in Canada. In Canada they have two languages and it is law that you have English and French on certain goods or certain places. You can speak either language and it is written there, but you must have the English and you must have the French, and I do agree with the hon. member and will go along with him on this. But when he asks what benefits can Barbados get, I would not expect to hear that question being posed by the hon. member. He should know better than to ask that question because surely there are lots of benefits. If you are out there playing a different game from the other people obviously you cannot gain many benefits. In other words, the word is "participation", and we want to be able to participate and to derive the maximum benefits and that is why we are going metric.
10.55 a.m.

We are falling in line with our other trading partners and surely we have seen them deriving benefits. That is a simple answer. What I must point out here and now is that we will not seek or acquiesce in any cheap political terms or any sort of information or interpretation of measures which will be short-termed. We have got to look beyond the short-term policy. If that was the policy condoned by the former administration surely it is not the policy condoned by us on this side. We realise that we are looking towards the 21st Century and therefore our policy is geared towards that and what we are aware of is that Barbadians, though they may not like a system, will have to be educated in it and that is why we have set about to have various programmes so that people can be made aware of the change-over of the Metric System.

Now, Sir, I have heard the hon. member for St. Philip South also take at issue the question of the small shopkeeper. I want the hon. member to understand that in 1975 the then Minister of Trade and Industry, who is now Leader of the Opposition the member for St. Michael South West, it was he who said at a function that the time of the one-door shop is not only passed but should be forgotten. He was the then Minister. He is now the present member for St. Michael South West. He said that.

In other words, if you have got to analyse and interpret those remarks you will clearly see that even then he did not care one hoop about the small shopkeeper, that they had no place at all in the economic structure. Our policy will be geared towards embracing them in the economic structure in this country. We have revised plans to help them. I want the hon. member for St. Michael South to understand that we have responsibilities for the small business men and I will make sure that the small shopkeepers who are part of the small businessmen will be well looked after so I do not want him to suggest to this Honourable Chamber that we are unmindful of our responsibilities of the small businessmen or the small shopkeepers as they have their place in the economic development of this country.

Now, Sir, what I would like to suggest, because this has been a matter which has occupied my attention for sometime now, and it is related directly to the Tariff and specifications of certain items. From time to time I have had complaints. I have had to deal with complaints arising out of the interpretation of what is regarded as the classification of items in this Bill. The confusion has arisen because some Customs Officers have a tendency to misinterpret the items and you find a situation where there have been lots of quarrels and discontent and confusion over the duty which they have got to pay and I would suggest on this occasion, Sir, that the Hon. Prime Minister under whose portfolio the Tariff and Customs come have a look into some of these items as they are specified in this particular document, because as I said, the Customs Officers seem to give different decisions and different interpretations and we need to have uniformity.

We need to have a system whereby one trader going to the Customs Department will not be told well your

item falls into this category or it does not fall into this category and then the next trader comes down there to be told, yes, Sir, you are next in line. It is a problem and the problem is far from being solved. I would suggest on this occasion that the Prime Minister have a look into this with a view to having this particular question solved.

Now, Sir, as I said we must have a look at this Tariff with a view to having certain items that are very broad simplified. The main problem with this is not the question of whether you understand the kilograms or the litres, or the pounds or anything like that. It is not a question like that. I think what has happened, and the hon. member must understand, is that since 1976, students who took the Common Entrance Examinations had questions based on the Metric System included in their papers. There have been years, 1976, 1977 and 1978, all that time and they have been aware of the Metric System.

I would like to ask one question. If it was going to cause confusion and if it was not relevant, why did that Government allow it to crop up on the Common Entrance papers? There must be some reason and I am not doubtful about the reason because I believe that the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition was aware of the significance of the Metric System. I would go as far as to say this and the Minister of Education is here and he will agree with me that the Metric System is taught in our Schools and the Imperial System has been phased out. As a matter of fact there are just a few schools that are still using the Imperial System. Examination Papers and multiplications show that the Metric System is now a part of it. The London Chamber of Commerce and Pitmans Examinations all use the Metric System and we are taking the same examinations so students are being prepared at that level for it.

The young generations have an important role to play in this particular area. They have got to try to educate some of the older people who are unfamiliar with this and I would appeal with them to share some of their knowledge. I am sure, Sir, that with no detriment to the older people, I am hoping, Sir, that their learning the new Metric System will be able to pass it on to the shopkeepers. I think what is happening is that what we are trying to do is to have a more social-minded community so that those who know will help those who do not know. We want to have the whole social structure changed in such a way that we will be able to learn from those who know. I think we can do this in order to eliminate some of the problems.

Mr. SPEAKER: Except for a crash-programme for the Custom Officers.

11.05 a.m.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, there are a few misunderstandings which I should like to clear up. The first relates to a statement made yesterday that when the Customs Tariff was amended the last time I had asked the House – as the people on the other side refer to the former administration – everything is the former administration – they seem to go to sleep with the spectre of the former administration floating before their mind; and whenever they get into a corner they say the former administration introduced this or the former administration introduced that. Somebody says something critical about the measures they are introducing and they say the former administration.

I do not want to go through the list of items, but first let me say that the Customs Act was amended in 1973 and 1975. In 1973 it is not correct to say – as the hon. Minister of Finance stated yesterday that the Government tried to deal with the amendment in all its stages with a document similar to the one we have in the Schedule here today. What happened on that occasion was that notice was given of the amendment to the Act and the document was circulated between the two meetings of the House; but on the day on which the matter was to be discussed it was discovered that although the Order Paper disclosed that notice had been given of the Resolution, it did not appear on the Order Paper that the Bill had been read the first time. And you will remember, Sir, that the then Leader of the House asked permission to deal with the Bill in all its stages because normally we should have gone straight into the second reading, but in order to rectify the mistake he had to ask and give notice that he would be dealing with the Bill in all its stages. That is what happened, and the reference to that is the record of the House dated 3rd July, 1973. For the benefit of the hon. members notice was given on 3rd July and the debate commenced 10th July and the intervention of the then Leader of the Opposition – now Leader of the House is found on page 3463. And three hon. members voted against proceeding with the Bill – Mr. Craig, Mr. Adams and Mr. Hinds – for the reason stated that there was a misunderstanding about the inclusion on the Order Paper. The House adjourned on that day without a quorum and resumed on the following day and dealt with the matter. At no time did any member, including Your Honour, suggest that members had had insufficient time to read the Schedule to the Bill. I just want to get that clear. At that time we were dealing with the introduction to the amendment which was being made at that time to the Brussels definition of value, the BTM, and there was a comprehensive change in the Customs Tariff because the classification was being changed on the left-hand side from the SITC to the BTM or BDV – some people call it BTM and some BDV, Brussels Definition of Value – and that only appears on the left-hand side of the Act, with the actual number of the different items as a result of the CARIFTA Agreement. And that is why the matter was being dealt with by the Leader of the House at that time. In 1975 we had a further amendment to the Schedule of the

Act, that is 1975–60, and I have the debates of the House, and at no time was the question raised of insufficient notice to members to study the changes. The interval which Your Honour indicated yesterday we should have, although only twenty four hours, gave me time to do my research, and I refer to page 5475 of the debates of the House for 16th December, 1975. The Bill was approved on December 31, 1975, and by proclamation came into effect on 1st December, 1977. That is the whole history of the amendment which we made to this Schedule during my time of office insofar as notices, etc., are concerned. It was quite wrong for the Hon. Minister of Finance to get up yesterday and suggest this was a case of tit for tat, that we did it and thereby implying they could do it too. Anyhow we have got over that hurdle because yesterday Your Honour indicated you were not satisfied that sufficient time had been given to study a voluminous document such as this. Some of us have now had some kind of time to deal with the matter.

Having disposed of that and having given all the reference from the official reports of this Chamber, I will now turn to the speeches which have been made here today. The hon. member for St. Philip South, as I understand it, representing as he does a rural constituency, is as entitled as any member of this House – he is a grass roots politician – I do not think there is anyone who has sat in this House as long as he has, representing the point of view of the small businessman, for the simple reason that he is a small businessman himself, not an adventurer flipping from one occupation to another whether licenced or unlicenced, or seeking to eke out an existence at any unprofessional kind of vocation that does not require any kind of skill, but rather serving inside the community with the Friendly Societies, representing people at local Government level as well as Central Government level over a long period of years and running a small business successfully. When the hon. member gets up to speak all of us should listen because invariably he has the point of view which many of us living in the metropolitan area or isolated sometimes from the kind of reaction which different measures might provoke in the community would not be exposed to; and therefore when the hon. member for St. Philip South gets up and makes a contribution we would not expect the kind of vehement attack about the past administration as one heard from the two members on the Government side – the Minister, whatever Minister he is at the present time, I must apologise for not knowing.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Agriculture.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Thank you, Sir, the now Minister of Agriculture and member for St. Andrew. I did not really expect that kind of attack on someone who is in a better position to represent the point of view of the small businessman, in my humble opinion, and the point of view of the old people and the people not in a position to represent themselves. In a nutshell, what the hon. member was saying had nothing to do with the past administration or with this administration as such. What he was saying is that he recognized that the metric system would be introduced into Barbados at some time. All of us recognize that the metric system, whatever it stands for, will be introduced in Barbados, not for the reasons advanced by the hon. member who just spoke, the hon. member for St. Michael South East now a Parliamentary Secretary in which Ministry I am not certain, but the point is that it is not being introduced for any economic advantages.
11.15 a.m.

The point is this. The hon. member for St. Philip South – at least I know my own members' constituencies because they are identifiable and personable and have personalities. I am not suggesting otherwise but they are identifiable. The point that he was making is a point that he could have made for me. I am not going so far as to say that he could have made it for Your Honour, but he certainly could have made it for me. Let me tell you about myself. You can call me ignorant or you can say what you like about me; but I am going to say right here and now that I do not go to a service station or a gasolene station and call any more for so many litres of gasolene because I do not know what I am letting myself in for when I call for 50 litres of gasolene. I put my hand in my pocket, Sir, and I decide how much I am going to spend and I say give me $10 or $20 of gas as the case may be. I have never been to one service station and called for 15 or 17½ litres of gas; and the hon. member for Christ Church North Central, my neighbour, suffers from the same difficulty I am suffering from. He has never done it.

Now, we are both exposed to the same educational necessity contemporaneously. That was not taking the Common Entrance Examination year before last or in 1940 or in 1947. It is true that the hon. member was a little junior to me, Sir, in age and in grace; but nevertheless we were exposed to the metric system and there was no thought of the metric system being introduced into Barbados then. So what the member for St. Michael South East says about introducing this system into the Common Entrance, the Common Entrance papers are not set in Barbados as far as I know. I thought that they were set overseas.

We did learn the metric system as an exercise in our tables. So what has that got to do with it? The point is that it is not only old people who are confused. It is people who have learned the metric system. What the hon. member for St. Philip South was trying to say – what he actually said – and which was unfairly attacked by the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I beg to apologise to the Hon. Minister for Communications and Works and to the

House. The Hon. Minister for Communications and Works was not even in the House. I withdraw that unreservedly.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: The Leader of the Opposition seems to be completely off tune this morning. He is wearing his glasses, but apparently he cannot see. He says that I was not in the House; but I was sitting in a back seat during the time. He keeps referring to the Minister of Communications and Works. I do not know what is wrong with me this morning.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your point has been taken.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I did not know whether at that time the Hon. Minister had been relegated to the back benches and thereby I do not expect to see him there. Therefore, I did not look for him there; but the hon. member must remember that a man of his stature should always be higher. He should be up with the giants and not with the Liliputians. *(Asides).*

Mr. SPEAKER: We are getting on with the amendments to Customs Tariff Act now.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The point, Sir, that was being made by the member for St. Philip South argues that the United States is one of our major trading partners, and the United States has not introduced the metric system and both of these things are facts Canada has partially introduced the metric system.
11.25 a.m.

The amendment to the Customs Tariff is something not as the hon. member for St. Michael North Central has said, that all of our trading partners have done it, it will get around to doing it, but the point is that it is a question now of definitions. Are you going to have in a Common External Tariff if the tariff is a Common External Tariff, are you going to express your weights and measure? That is all it is about. The Hon. Minister of Finance in his budget speech in matters which did not relate to the Customs Tariff at all decided that he was going to impose certain taxes in terms of the metric system, but the metric system is not the Customs Tariff alone, it is a whole range of matters which affect the life of this community, and I think that is where the hon. member for St. Michael South East was getting himself in a bit of a vortex.

Let us realise that what the Minister was introducing was something that the Caribbean Community Council of Ministers has decided should be the new Common External Tariff way of defining the weights and measures of goods coming into the countries who are subscribers to the Treaty of Chaguaramus. Now, once you put that oneside, you can see the point of view of the member for St. Philip South. We satisfy our internation requirements, it does not increase trade or diminish trade, once the goods come in here – I do not agree with the member, I think it was the Minister of Agriculture, or it may have been the member for St. Michael South East – I don't want to blame the member for St. Michael South East wrongfully, it may have been the Minister of Agriculture, it is here in my notes, who said – I don't think it was the Minister of Finance – who said that people are bringing in things in metres and selling in yards to customers and taking advantage of the difference. *(Aside)* This is the whole point I am making now, Sir, it was the Minister of Finance. This is the whole point now the member for St. Philip South is making. The Minister of Finance should have made a complaint to the Chamber of Commerce, because that is unfair business practice. If at present the members of the business community are importing, let us say, cloth as we understand it in metres, and selling to their customers in yards, the point is being very well made by the member for St. Philip South. We can have BTM, SITC or metric for weights and measurements in the Common External Tariff, there is absolutely nothing to prevent our shopkeepers, small or large, or supermarkets, or service stations from selling the same goods to the people and using the measurement in the old imperial system, wine gallons, imperial gallons, pounds, ounces, whatever you like, because the Minister for Finance has given away the secret, but I do not believe the Minister of Finance on this, but he would have to explain how it is being done. Because if he says at present they are importing in metres and selling in yards, all the member for St. Philip South we know, he said, and we agree, we are not trying to say that we did not know at some time that because we are in the Common Market – that is not the European Common Market, you know, our own Common Market here, our own Caribbean Community – that we have to go along by classifying weights and measures according to the metric system. *(Aside)* All right, but after the goods get in here we can invent our own system of weights and measures in the disposal of the goods to the public. That is what the Minister of Finance said is happening now, and that is the point which was being made when the member for St. Philip South was speaking. He said, why confuse the old people with kilograms?

The Americans are not doing it, the Americans are trading with the European Economic Community and the Americans have not – do you know what the Americans are doing, Sir? The Americans are very clever, the Americans are making all the television films and selling them to other countries about the metric system. They are making Sesame Street and telling you about kilos, but they have a film industry and their idea is to sell it, but they are not worrying with that in their schools. America has its own market of 220 million people, and the Americans who should be the most progressive people have not even done what Canada has done. When you get to Canada, Sir, you will notice they have changed all their

distances from miles to kilometres and you get a bit confused when you are coming from the airport. Canada has done it, Canada has the two systems co-existing side by side, Canada also has two languages co-existing side by side, but the United States has not even begun to make a start to say that the people when they go into a shop they have to call for so many metres of cloth instead of so many yards. That is the point the hon. member for St. Philip South was making.

I think it is very unfair for any Government Minister to get up and attack him and say what the former administration did. Everything now, when everything sounds new and people have forgotten where the inspiration came from, oh, "we are introducing this and we are introducing that," as soon as they get any criticism, oh, "we are only taking up where the former administration left off," whether it be old motor car bodies or whether it be the metric system or whatever you can think of, Sir, don't let us worry to go through the list of items and the list of measures and the categories of legislation, it is not necessary, let us forget about the former administration and get down now to policy. And the point I want to stress is that the hon. member made a very good intervention when he pleaded that there is no international law, even when we pass as we intend to support because we started the Free Trade Area, we started the Common Market, we on this side, we were not always supported by that side in our endeavours in regional economic integration, but nevertheless I think you have accepted the idea of regional economic integration now, and therefore it would be ridiculous for this side to say that we are not voting for the change in the Schedule to the Customs Act of 1975 by this amendment, because all the other countries in the Free Trade Area and in the Common Market have adopted with varying degrees of reservation the Common External Tariff, but there is no international law or any law in Barbados, even after this is passed, which says that the shopkeepers have to sell in metric either now, or for evermore, or at any time.

Now when the Hon. Minister for Agriculture got up and said that the former administration intended to make the small shopkeepers pay for the changes in their scales and that kind of thing, I am saying that there is absolutely no truth in that allegation at all; absolutely no truth. In the first place, the former administration did not say that the small shopkeepers would have to change over any metric system that I have any knowledge of; and secondly, we would have to pass a law, and the time we were considering the implementation of such a law would be the proper time for us to consider the cost of the conversion to a different set of scales or measurements of the people who could not afford the change. So I just wanted to get the record straight on that, there is absolutely no truth.

I will now deal with the remarks of the hon. member for St. Michael South East. The hon. member for St. Michael South East is an authority on most things. I listened to a dissertation by him which caused all of us who has passed our Bar examinations to hang our heads in shame, including the Hon. Attorney General.
11.35 a.m.

We had to say, well behold the man, because we had never heard a dissertation on the history of the law of property like that coming from a layman in our lives. It was slightly inaccurate, but at least he had opened a book the night before, he had all his terms mixed up....

Mr. SPEAKER: Preparing next day to deal with the amendments to the Customs Tariff!

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: That's right, Sir, and that is why I will deal with the hon. member. He had put all of us to shame in this dissertation that he delivered. Today he excelled himself because today he seems to think that we are amending the Customs Act to deal with your weights and measures of goods coming in – that is what we are dealing with, because the Minister of Finance has assured us that there is no severe taxation in it. He may have had, as I warned him yesterday, to round off a few figures. It is inevitable because when you change from a pound to 500 grams, it is not going to work out exactly. It is almost impossible. There are supposed to be, let us say, something like 30 grams in an ounce; I can't remember; but it is not exactly 30 grams; it might be 29.54, but this is going to have some kind of marginal effect. The Minister of Finance gave us a list of 44 items, most of them essential commodities which he felt would be affected marginally according to him, but we cannot wait until we feel the effects on our pockets by the change; but he claims that this is not going to be a deliberate act on his part, but a sort of incidental to that kind of exercise of conversion. Let us accept that, but let me assure the hon. member for St. Michael South East that rejecting or accepting is not going to increase or diminish trade. That is the first thing you have to understand. It has nothing to do with economic expansion or economic recession.

The hon. member made some very sweeping statements. I would just like to quote him verbatim now that I cannot see the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works; but that is not his fault. My glasses are short distance glasses and he does not come into focus at that distance. I can see the hon. member for Christ Church East because he is more elevated behind there. What the hon. member said is that if you are playing a different game, we want to participate and fall into line with our trading partners. That is what he said. We will have to fall in line with our trading partners; and he said that if we did not do this, how are we going to trade? We have to

get into the act. How are we going to trade? We are going to trade the same way that we traded before, but the point is that we are in the Caribbean Common Market and for the purpose of classification of our weights and measures we have decided to use the so-called metric system in that respect in so far as customs clarification is concerned. In the same way that we changed over in 1973 from SITC to the Brussels definition of value and it did not make in itself any difference to the volume or the direction or cause any deflection of trade between the countries in the trading area at all.

The hon. member for St. Michael South East seems to have some difficulty over the question of classification, but I would not worry to take him up on that because he called it at one time specification. The Minister did specify 44 items, but that is not classifying the items. He only mentioned that in his opinion 44 items were likely to be affected by the increases or, as he said – he did not use the term "marginal" – by small increases in the cost of these commodities, and one of the reasons taken up on this side of the House yesterday was that it would be inevitable that if you make any kind of change of this nature to the Customs Tariff there should not be some kind of increases in the cost of the commodities which are in the tariff, but we have been given the assurance that those changes are small, because we would hate to think that the Minister of Finance would use a Bill of this kind which is dealing purely with a system as a major taxation reform. He has assured us that there is no tax reform as such in the Bill, and despite the fact that we had 24 hours, we had the same difficulty when he had four days. We only had 24 hours and he had four days in 1973 to deal with a similar number of pages. He said he had great difficulty. We had great difficulty item by item trying to analyse whether these changes are quantitative or qualitative.

Mr. Speaker, as far as we are concerned we do not think that we should confuse the amendment to the Act with what the Government has been called upon by the hon. member for St. Philip South to implement that is to say, that the people in the country thoroughly understand the implications of the metric system. The schools in Barbados, as you know, Sir, have been teaching the metric system from time immemorial, not as a survival question or a question of economic survival but as a question of ordinary intellectual discipline. So that point about the "O" level examinations is not one that people like you and I could easily understand its relevance to this debate because we know better. But there is no law, I should like to point out to hon. members, either international law or local legislation, which compels anyone trading in Barbados from using the metric system or any other particular system in disposing of his goods, provided that where the law says that you should not sell a pound of sugar for more than, let us say, 35 cents a pound, that whatever system you arrive at by delivery to your customer the quantity that he has demanded does not work out to more than 35 cents. I think that is the point which has been validly made by the hon. member for St. Philip South.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to follow quite quickly on the hon. member for St. John to correct part of his amnesia in relation to events concerning amendments to the Customs Act and to say contrary to what he says that the case as set out by the Prime Minister yesterday is correct, and I regret to say that the hon. member has only done part of research and that his memory does not serve him well again on this occasion, because if the hon. member will read from the Debates for the 24th July, 1973, Hansard, at page 2557, the hon. member will find out that on that day the then Leader of the House, the Deputy Prime Minister, sought leave to introduce the Customs (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill of 1973, and it was that Bill which introduced the Common External Tariff, and the Bill contained 351 pages.

11.45 a.m.

The Hon. member is entitled to see the Debate. I will give him the Debate because at page 2557 this is what the hon. member Mr. C. E. Talma said. "Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, I beg to give notice of the following," and he sets out the Bill including a Bill to amend the Customs Act of 1962. "I intend to make a Motion to deal with the last Bill in all its stages today." That was page 2557.

On page 2559, after the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders, the hon. C. E. Talma again said "Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill to amend the Customs Act, 1962 which deals with the Common External Tariffs, copies of which have not yet been circulated to all members, be dealt with in all stages at this Sitting. Because of the voluminous amount of work we have before us, we intend sitting again for a short time again tomorrow in order to complete Government Business."

Mr. SPEAKER: I heard the Hon. Attorney General stating something about copies. I want to be clear on that.

HON. H. deB. FORDE: Yes, Sir. The point is, Sir, that when the Bill was brought down to Parliament and they were asking for leave to deal with it in all of its stages they were members of the House, including members of the Opposition, who did not have a copy of the Bill in their hands, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is what the Hansard Report is saying?

HON. H. deB. FORDE: That is what Hansard is saying. "I beg to move that the Bill *to amend the*

Customs Act, 1962 which deals with the Common External Tariffs, copies of which have not yet been circulated to all members be dealt with in all stages at this Sitting."

HON. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Hon. Attorney General has missed one important point. The then Leader of the House was reading from his Notice Paper. He was not reading the Debate. He was reading from the Notice Paper which Ministers read from and I want to clarify that point because no Bill or no documents had been circulated at that time.

HON. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, the position I am making is this. The then Leader of the Opposition, the present Prime Minister objected and he said that the Act contained 315 pages and it is to be dealt with at one Sitting. I do not think that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is serious. That is at page 2559. Now, Sir, the House was divided and the present Leader of the Opposition voted for the matter to be dealt with in all its stages. Now you did not hear anything about democratic institutions being affected. The hon. member then for St. Michael West, Mr. Frank Walcott, as he then was, said that the Opposition should not be treated with any decency at all when we walked out on the matter. He said he does not believe in soft-soaping any Opposition.

How do people forget so easily. The Democratic Labour Party was one of the most vicious Parties that you could have in this country when it comes to people's rights. How do they forget?

RT. HON. E. W. BARROW: I object to that, Sir. The hon. member should withdraw that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please let us have some order. The Hon. Attorney General will continue.

HON. H. deB. FORDE: These people rode rough-shod over the rights of this House in 1973 and the rights of the Opposition. They interfered with many fundamental freedoms in this country and only now have they discovered that they have democratic rights and the hon. member for St. Michael South Central comes in here and all of a sudden believes he knows what are his constitutional rights. He was not able to correct the Hon. Leader of the Opposition then. All of a sudden between September, 1976 and now he has rights. We are treading on his rights.

There are 315 pages. All that was told to him then and unlike what we did, we adjourned to give them the opportunity although we had circulated the Bill. We lean over backwards as we are continually leaning over backwards in this country to preserve democracy and whenever you look at the facts as opposed to the rumours you will find that the facts bring us out right. This Democratic Labour Party must understand that people in this country can read. The DLP must remember the history of this because the then hon. member for the City who was then the big standard bearer for the DLP, Mr. Mottley, who all of a sudden discovered the otherside, he too objected that his rights were being trampled and he tried on about four occasions to raise the matter and they voted and rammed that Bill right through Parliament on the same day with the four Opposition members walking out.

Now the thing is that people in this country were beginning to watch the techniques of the Democratic Labour Party. I saw it in 1971 and I see it being repeated, Sir. They cry foul that their rights are being suppressed, make people believe that somebody is doing something to them. All of the tactics that they used they think that somebody wants to use them against them but we have to fight to preserve democracy by reminding them that when they were in power their attitudes did not match up to what their words were and if they are ever given the chance to rule again they are going to run rough-shod over people again. That is why one has to deal with them seriously, Sir.

On the Customs Amendment No. 1 that year the same problem occurred and you then try to fight it. Within less than a month, two months, they came back with another Bill and were rougher in dealing with the Opposition then. Mr. Walcott said he did not believe in soft-soaping any Opposition. He went on to say that he would not take them on any trips overseas, or give any Leader of the Opposition any office to be in, that that is not the way to treat them that you have to treat those people rough. That is the way and that Government agreed then including the then Prime Minister who is Leader of the Opposition. When it comes to treating people he did not treat people like any candy either. If you listen to the debates in this House. . .

RT. HON. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order. The Debate which I have in my hand is dated 10th July, 1973 and on that date on page 5447, Mr. Talma, under Government Notices said "I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Customs Act, 1962." That was on the 10th July and the point I was making, Sir, is that notice of that Bill was given on the 10th July, 1972 to amend the Customs Act. The hon. member now speaks of a Customs Amendment Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Customs Amendment Act.

RT. HON. E. W. BARROW: He said an amendment to the Customs Order No. 2. This is the Bill that I was referring to, 1962 and the hon. member for St. Thomas, as he then was Leader of the Opposition, said he had the Bill only since Friday and this was on Tuesday the 10th of July. The House adjourned without a quorum and met

again on the 11th of July and the hon. member is getting up and talking about the Democratic Labour Party instead of discussing the Act which is before us so who has got the correct version of the proceedings?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order. Just let me make my situation clear as I was referred to. I was not referring to the first amendment to the Customs Act which was passed in 1973, I was referring to the second because it was the second Act which produced a document with 357 pages. The Attorney General is trying to point out to the Leader of the Opposition that he is quoting from the wrong debate. There were two debates and the Leader of the Opposition's understanding is still so limited that he cannot understand that he is quoting from the wrong Hansard, that none of us, except he, is talking about Amendment No. 1 and we are talking about Amendment No. 2. All the rest of us are out of line, only he is in order. He cannot understand that he has the wrong Debate and he is obviously unconsciously misleading the House. I thought he did it deliberately, that is the truth. I thought he did it maliciously but I now realise it was done out of ignorance, not malice.
11.55 a.m.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of elucidation, Sir. Arising from the statement on the hon. member for St. Thomas the debates show that the hon. member on that occasion...

Mr. SPEAKER: Which debates?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The debates of 10th July, and 11th July, 1973, pages 2447 – 2448, with Mr. Adams saying: "If notice had been given of it last week it would have been read a first time last week. I cannot believe that the Leader of the House has directly sought to mislead anybody in here." And he went on to object to the Bill being dealt with that day; that is 10th July, 1973. That hon. member also referred later on to 353 pages which he now says was a subsequent Bill. It is not a subsequent Bill at all.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Please ask the hon. member to read page 2559 of the debate of 24th July and stop contradicting hon. members who have documents in their hands.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I have the file here and that page is out.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Is it that every single occasion that the hon. member is embarrassed in the House a document is missing? I said quite clearly on page 2559: "The Leader of the House has been kind enough on this occasion to send me by hand of the Clerk a copy of the Bill to amend the Customs Act, 1962 which he is seeking to deal with, but it is the fattest Act which has ever been submitted to Parliament in my memory. Can we deal with it in all its stages in one sitting? This is an Act which contains 315 pages and it is to be dealt with in one day and at one sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the date of that debate?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The 24th July, 1973; but it is not the Bill to which the hon. member is referring.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am at a disadvantage. The hon. member has said page 2559. I do not see how the debate for the 24th July can be reported before the debate of the 11th July, because the part he says is missing from the House of Assembly file – but the debates of the 11th July are at page 2465, and that is the same Bill; and you said in that debate that you had the record on Friday, so there must be some mistake somewhere.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am advised that there were three separate amendments to the Customs Act in 1973.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The hon. member got up this morning to try to say that what the Prime Minister was saying was not true and therefore he was going to give the truth. He said there were only two amendments, one in 1973 and one in 1975. The hon. member is suffering from amnesia. Let me remind him: In 1973 there were three amendments to the Customs Act. If the hon. member would get hold of a copy of the Laws of Barbados for 1973 he would see that there was 1973–22 which came into effect on 16th July, 1973; then there was 1973–32 which is the Customs (Amendment) Act (No. 2) which came into effect on 1st August, 1973. It was under that Act that the Common External Tariff was implemented. And then there was 1973–44 which came into effect on 3rd August, 1973 and which merely changed the Schedule by substituting the words "Minister responsible for External Affairs". I told the hon. member that he cannot win against me because he never does his research thoroughly. And the point is that at that time, on August 24, 1973 – and I am not misleading the House – the hon. Mr. Talma tried to move the Bill through all its stages, and I will read from the record. He said: "I intend to make a motion to deal with the Bill in all of its stages today". That Bill contained the Common External Tariff and had 315 pages. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition as he was then – and now Prime Minister – objected to dealing with the matter in all its stages that day, and when we were voted against, we left the Chamber. I am going to read from the speech of the hon. member to refresh his memory. He said at page 2576: "Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to revert to any discussion which took place in this Chamber, but as early as my Budget Statement last year, that is in 1972, I indicated to the House that Barbados along with its independent partners in the Commonwealth Caribbean

would be moving towards a Common External Tariff as the next step in the process of Caribbean integration." He then went on to say at page 2577 that the Common External Tariff should go into effect on 1st August, 1973, which was seven days away from the debate in the House. And at page 2578 he said: "The Act has three Clauses. The first Clause he said is the Customs (Amendment) Act, 1973. The second Clause says that the Schedule to the Customs Act is amended. I submit that the real important amendments were done on the 31st May which members had in their possession from that time, and that it shall come into operation from 1st August, 1973. The whole of the Schedule contains figures in which the businessmen, from day to day, and the Customs Officers will be involved. I assure hon. members that I have already extracted – I needed to extract because we had a $20 million deficit – every single item which would tend to affect the cost of living adversely."

Now, Sir, at that time, the then hon. member for St. Joseph – and still the present member – raised the question of an adjournment because he said these items could affect the cost of living. And there was not one word from them then that they could not ram the measure through the House at one Sitting.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of explanation, Sir. The point I was making is that the document had been circulated.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The hon. member's memory is not correct, because Mr. Talma as Leader of the House says this on page 2559: "Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Customs Act, 1962 which deals with the Common External Tariff, copies of which have not yet been circulated to hon. members be dealt with in all its stages at this Sitting." That is the whole point, Sir.
12.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, at that time Mr. Talma apparently had handed a copy to the Leader of the Opposition. Nobody else had a copy of it. The hon. member for St. Joseph in that debate made the point that he had not seen a copy of it. Mr. Frank Walcott said that it did not matter if he sees a copy of it. The only body who needed to see it was the Leader of the Opposition. That is the way they conceived of democracy then, and they have not changed their colours. They get on the platforms now and try to fool people that they are the biggest democratic people out; but, Sir, I remember how you, Mr. Speaker, had to fight them for the democratic rights of the Opposition and how you had to fight everywhere along the line for this, Sir. There were six of us over there and we fought them at every go to establish those rights.

The hon. member for St. Michael South Central only has to read the Independence Debate or the Constitution Debate to see what the then Government thought of democratic rights in this country. That is how they thought of the people of this country at the time. I am glad to see now that we are beginning to teach them; but there will have to be longer teaching sessions; but they will have to remain in Opposition for several years to come until they genuinely change their ways, and come to understand that there are areas of this country in which you need to respect the rights of the people and not only talk about it now that you are on the opposite side.

That is one of the reasons why I am concerned that the hon. member for St. Michael South Central is here, because he is now washing his hands clean. He is going to wash his hands clean by saying that he was not then in the house; but he was a member of the party in those days, Sir; and it lies ill in his mouth to come here and talk about somebody over-riding democratic rights when he knows that he belongs to a party that has shown scant respect for people's characters and everything in this country all the time. It lies ill in his mouth to do so, Sir.

Now, Sir, metrication. The position is that as the hon. Minister for Agriculture has explained, Barbados has been metricated for some time even before metrication became official; and in the CARICOM region it has been agreed that all the countries will move to metrication in addition to having a common external tariff which this Bill now seeks to bring into effect in this country, Sir. It is obvious that the process of metrication will continue, and I think that the Hon. Minister has given the assurance that it is not intended at all to have anything done which will be to the detriment of anyone in Barbados. I think that the Government has fairly committed itself to using funds to minimise the effects that this will have on the small man, and particularly the small shopkeeper. The Minister is quite clear in his mind; and there is a sum of money put aside to help the small shopkeeper to replace any weights or measures because of metrication in this country.

I hear them talk one thing and do not do it. In the case of this Government, although they think that we remain silent and are not polluting the air every night, there are actions which are there. In the case of the small shopkeeper we are making sure that no expense will come to him or to her as a result of metrication; but let me say that in Barbados it is much easier to metricate than it will be in Canada, or Britain or the USA for the simple reason that the state of our industrial development is such that the cost of changing machinery will be minimal; and even already factories have been using machinery which is based on metrication methods, so that the cost is not there. A place like Canada will take several years, and the cost

will run into several million dollars. It will mean the changing of machinery and doing it over a period of time. Barbados does not have that same problem; and the benefits to be gained by metrication should be obvious to all.

Even in the United States, although they have not gone fully on the law with metrication, there are areas of the industrial process of the USA which have been metricated already; and this country will be making a mistake if it thinks that it cannot move towards the metrication, or should not move towards the metrication system as soon as possible. Let me say, Sir, that we are looking at those laws which need to be changed and we hope to be able to make the necessary changes in the legislation.

I do not know if the hon. member for St. John may be bothered by the fact that his size in metrication may appear even bigger than it is in reality; because in metrication when you have a waist of 60 inches it should be shown much more in terms of the metric system which you get. If that is his only fear, he need have no fear about that. I do not see anything that the Government can be criticised on about this – neither the present Minister of Communications and Works whose responsibility it was, or indeed the present Minister of Agriculture whose responsibility it now is. I think that we have shown how conscious we are of giving benefits to the country while moving forward.

I want to say one thing about CARICOM because this is essentially a Bill which gives effect to a decision of the Caribbean Council of Ministers. It brings in a common external tariff with the Brussels nomenclature fully, and I think that one should take the opportunity to say that despite all of the talk, the adverse comments that we have heard at the time of the oil crisis, or the oil pressure, the raising of oil prices and about CARICOM being dead, there is every sign that the Caribbean Economic Community is functionally progressing; and despite the difficulties which have occurred in Guyana and Jamaica, and which led to some restrictions of imports from these territories, it is a fact that by and large there have been positive gains within the community within the last two years. People should be reminded that the Community came into being – not the Free Trade Area – at the height or certainly very soon after the commencement of the oil crisis. It has been able to withstand that crisis. It has been able in the face of the crisis to move on to a position where the Caribbean Clearing Facility has been set up which will assist in the increase in the trading of the volume of exports and imports. That facility is still not fully understood by many people in the area, and it is not being used to its utmost so that it could in turn increase the volume of exports between the respective countries. I believe that our Civil Servants and businessmen should make better use of the Caribbean Clearing Facility in order to help sustain any pressures that may come on a shortage of foreign exchange.

Another significant fact of this period, Sir, is that the Community, despite its difficulties has been able to agree this common external tariff. The third feature is that the Community has been able through the magnanimous assistance of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in particular, to come to the rescue of at least two of our countries which had serious balance of payments difficulties.

12.15 p.m.

There is no doubt that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been magnanimous in its Caribbean aid plan. It is not a question that the Trinidad taxpayer is giving money to the Caribbean because money is on loan, it is aid, it has to be repaid some time, but the terms are favourable and it came at a time when both Guyana and Jamaica had serious balance of payments difficulties, we had some ourselves, and when the other territories, the LDC's, had certain problems of a budgetary nature on their current account, they needed assistance because of the shortfalls that were occurring in their budgetary measures. Now this is very important, because too often we get the negative side of Caribbean integration being stressed, and people forget that there are very great positive measures which this Community has achieved. In fact, those of us who read widely in this sphere would recognise that not only academic writers but international institutions who have been reviewing regional integration movements throughout the world commend the Caribbean Community as being the most successful of those movements, and that the growth rate in genuine integration within that movement has been more outstanding than any other regional integration movement I know of among developing countries, and some among even developed countries, perhaps with the exception of the European Economic Community which is differently structured. That is a positive fact.

I would like to take the opportunity also to correct a statement which the hon. member for St. John made, Sir. He didn't say it in any cantankerous mood, but I think he genuinely believes that the statement is correct, and it is not. The Barbados Labour Party has never opposed regional integration either on the economic or on the political side, Sir. In fact, one of the vast differences between the Democratic Labour Party and ourselves on policy has been that the Democratic Labour Party at the time of the Little Eight were not prepared to give the experiment another try, for whatever reasons there might have been. The hon. member might have been fed up with his colleagues from the other areas – certainly he said some harsh and sharp things about them from time to time, a legacy that Thank God we have now lived down, and I will come back to that, Sir – but the Labour Party was consistent in saying that the Caribbean area in order to progress in economic terms had to move

from being merely a free trade area, it had to have genuine Caribbean economic integration, and political integration must follow as well, and we were prepared in 1964 to give the experiment another try, and I want to take another opportunity of correcting the facile statement I often hear about the Labour Party and the Under Forties being opposed to independence for Barbados. That has never been the issue, the issue was that all the territories were at the stage that if we went forward together we could have been independent together, and the delay in moving the territories now to independence would not have occurred. It has taken twelve or more years, more than that, sixteen years since the breakup of the Federation for us to see the independent movement again getting impetus in the Caribbean, and it is significant that it occurs at a period of time when the Barbados Labour Party is back in power, the party in this country which had the greatest connection and devotion to the concept of West Indian unity, greater than any other party that I know of. Was it not us, after all, who gave the only Prime Minister to the Federation? A sacrifice to our party, because he had to leave us at that time and go to the Federal scene where every measure that he took then was misrepresented and he could only come back occasionally.

These events are significant, and you cannot wipe out history by trying to reverse them. It hurts me to see when you get an outstanding patriot, a great West Indian, one of the world's leading statesmen like Sir Grantley Adams, making the sacrifices that he made for this country that you get people whom the Democratic Labour Party are complimenting, Eric Sealy, cursing him as though he was the filthiest thing in this country. That is what is hurtful in Barbados. (ASIDE). I have the tape here if the hon. member has any difficulty about it, Sir. People had better sit up and take note how politics in Barbados, because of the lust for getting back into power is going in these days. I have the tape here, I listened to it very carefully, and this has been the position.

We are happy to bring this measure, we are happy to take any step that will move towards closely to being the true Caribbean man, like the calypsonian who has just won the contest said, the Black Stalin, Sir. He was not talking about these politicians, he was talking about those politicians, Sir, when he talks about those who were breaking up the Federation and breaking up unity and against economic co-operation. The Free Trade Area was an afterthought, a last-minute thing, Sir, the Free Trade Area which the hon. member, together with the then Premier of Antigua and the then premier of Guyana come as a last-minute face-saving device, but it has never been the genuine thing, and it has put back the integration movement. The step taken by the Opposition in 1964 has delayed the true integration and the true freedom of the Caribbean for longer than those of us who want to be rid of colonialism should ever want to see happen. Let me say that the Government is committed, fully committed – contrary to what the hon. member says – not only to regional economic integration but to genuine functional co-operation leading finally to the unity of the West Indian countries, and we dedicate ourselves to keep working towards it. That is why I am proud when I see my Prime Minister going through St. Lucia and here the applause that is given for him, not to speak of, as the hon. member for St. James has said, your humble servant, myself, Sir, because for us that was an applause for Barbados as a country. We have reversed the sort of attacks that used to come to Barbados, we have not had to call anybody any bandits, we have not got to insult Mr. Compton, today Mr. Compton who was insulted at Sherbourne stands proud as the Prime Minister of St. Lucia, Sir, an outstanding man. The hon. member, whatever might be said about his contributions to Barbados, he had amnesia, lapses, certain parts of his historical past which will haunt him to his grave in which he has been against progress instead of in favour of it. He knows that as well as anybody does, and when I read the debate in here on the independence issue in which he went to town on me as an under forty, I made up my mind then that I was coming for him to correct history for him for all time, and I will remain in politics with him on every issue. In fact, I would like to challenge him to leave St. John and come up in Christ Church West or any other constituency now in order to see who would get where. I have remained to correct all the incorrect things he said, all of the misdeeds he did people and made them believe that what he says is true all the time, because he is not the only person who can read in this country, he does not have all the knowledge, what is hurting him is that we are running the country and making economic progress when you all can only go around with rumours. We are going to be here for a long time to come, no seven year Parliament, there will be an election in five years and you will be back there if by then the doctors in your party are not fighting between themselves and squeezing the hon. member for St. Michael South out, if that hasn't happened Sir.

That is the position, Sir, so it is my pleasure to say that this is a measure highly commended. If the hon. member wants to look at the economic and integration movement, any time any one of us over here is willing to debate it with him anywhere at any time at his pleasure with or without preparation

12.25 p.m.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I believe I would not be long on this particular measure that is before us. As I understand it, this is consequential upon certain decisions that have been taken at the regional level, and as I understand it too, this is not a measure for any imposition of taxation. It is merely consequential upon the adoption of the metric system and a change in the existing legislation would take account of that.

As I understand it, in some areas the Customs Department might gain slightly and in other areas it might lose, so that on balance things may work out as they were before.

What I would like to say however, Mr. Speaker, is that as far as this measure and its relationship to the Caribbean integration movement may be concerned, I am very pleased to note that the Prime Minister can get applause when he passes through St. Lucia, and that is very gratifying because if he cannot get the applause in Barbados, at least it is all right if he gets it in St. Lucia. That is quite satisfying to those of us over here. He can get the applause in St. Lucia, but he is not getting applause in Barbados.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, the hon. member will know the well-known adage that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. It takes a lot of people a long time to recognise how good the Lord was, not that the Prime Minister is the Lord, but he must realise that.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the general point that as far as the integration movement is concerned the Democratic Labour Party administration played a significant role in that development, and what we are saying here today is that the measure that is before us is the outcome of the role that was played by the Democratic Labour Party in these events, but the collapse of federal movements in the Caribbean is something that is beyond the responsibility of any single party, any single territory in the Caribbean. It was part of a Caribbean situation, and I believe that the hon. member for Christ Church West may have been carried away by his own rhetoric in trying to make whatever points he may have been making in heaping the blame for the collapse of the federal experiment in the Caribbean on the shoulders of the Democratic Labour Party. It was something that was bigger than the Democratic Labour Party, bigger than the Barbados Labour Party, bigger than Barbados. It was a situation in the region at the time, but I think it is a tribute to the role played by the Democratic Labour Party that after these efforts failed that another approach to Caribbean integration was taken, an approach to a common services basis and movement in terms of sectorial integration as far as the region could take at any particular time, and I think that Carifta and the development of Carifta into the Caribbean Common Market together with the common External Tariff are all tributes to a search for alternative routes towards that unity in this region which is still the goal of all patriots of the Caribbean, and I am one among them. And I look forward to the time as a young West Indian – I am younger than any of them on the front bench with the exception of the Honourable lady Minister.....(Hon. L. R. Tull: You are older than me, Sandy!) The hon. member for St. George South gets on with these things. I am older in wisdom than he is; there is no doubt about that. But, Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to that day when in this region as a result of the developments that are taking place, this will take place.

If I have no other opportunity, may I take it now to extend every best wish to those territories including St. Lucia which have recentlybecome independent. We do not get opportunities in this House to deal with these matters, but with your indulgence I take this opportunity to inscribe on the records of this Honourable Chamber my appreciation satisfaction at the independence of St. Lucia and I do hope they will make the best of that independence, and that in time I will see arise in the Caribbean a United States of the Caribbean or Union of Caribbean States, and I throw out that policy objective to whatever Government is in power that they can work towards such an objective. That is my belief. I believe we can work towards that on the foundation that had been laid so far by the technocrats of the region and by the politicians of the region, and that as time passes on we will be dealing not only with matters relating to Common External Tariff, but the institution of the new union of Caribbean States or United States of the Caribbean will in due course be fashioned by the politicians of the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will be among the leaders of that group. Those who are over there now will be in the Opposition or the party might have disintegrated into internal chaos. That is a possibility. You, Mr. Speaker, survive all of these matters. I think you have a fine political brain, and I believe you will last longer than many of them over there, and I believe you too, Mr. Speaker, will be in that group looking forward to the union of the Caribbean States and finding a true institution which can give leadership and direction in this troubled world at this particular time.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, there does not appear to be any other hon. member wishing to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there any other hon. member who would like to exercise his right in this debate?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I wish only to make a short reply to those hon. members who have spoken. I think we have managed to settle the contentious matter as to which debate and which Customs Tariff Bill was what. The hon. member for St. Philip South has dealt with metrication as has the hon. member for St. Michael South East, and I think the House will reasonably agree that it would be unwise in the context of our development to push ahead with metrication on the basis that you must chop off people's hands if they write down the words "pound", "foot" or "inch". You cannot really go on like that and certainly I know that the Minister concerned has taken favourable note of the sentiments put forward by the hon. member for St. Michael South. Metrication is coming. The Attorney General has in the course of what all of us will agree was one of the most powerful speeches made in this House for a long time pointed out that delay in the matter of metrication will in the end mean much more expense, because we will have to convert a much larger range of facilities as we move into an industrial age than you will have to convert at the present time. I would

just add to that that many of our industrial establishments in Barbados already operate on a metricated basis. You do not find the component factories making their electronic chips in terms of 1/16th of an inch; they make them in terms of millimeters and parts of a millimeter, whether they are American or not.

The hon. member for St. Philip South referred to the Sanitation Service workers not knowing about metrication.
12.35 p.m.

The hon. member for St. Philip South referred to the Sanitation Service workers not knowing anything about metrication. I would have to take issue with him on this.

Mr. WEEKES: What I did say was, Sir....

Mr. SPEAKER: On what does the hon. member rise?

Mr. WEEKES: On a point of elucidation, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You rise to elucidate a point?

Mr. WEEKES: Yes. What I did say, Sir, is in my opinion that the majority of workers are not fully aware of the new system and the problems which it brings. I think I should say this, Sir, that they are those who deal at certain small shops and you have rice, sugar, salt, animal feed and all of those things and therefore when those people go to order things, because they do not buy from the supermarkets, and you have to buy all those things by the pound you will find that you will have confusion, Sir. I say the majority, but not all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your point is well taken.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I fully agree with the hon. member that in fact many of the workers will not be familiar with the metric system but I think many of the items which he pointed out that the small shopkeepers sell, I have taken a note of. However to continue the point about the sanitation workers.

Mr. WEEKES: Those are only a few, Sir.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I disagree with that, they are nearly all. He has called nearly every item that is sold in this country by the weight. In dealing with the sanitation workers the operations of the Sanitation Authorities are also carried out in metric terms and we have never received a complaint from any sanitation worker. They collect the garbage and they price the garbage in so much per cubic meter or per kilogram and we have never received a complaint from anybody at the Sanitation Service that the workers did not understand how to compute the cubic meters when they load garbage on the trucks in the case where commercial collections are carried out and they have to make a charge.

Mr. WEEKES: On a point of elucidation. The Hon. Prime Minister is fully aware that not only the elderly people but the children at the various schools do not understand the new system. I have spoken to a large number of them and they were not in a position to tell me anything about it.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I think if the hon. member spoke to a lot of children in the schools he would find, unfortunately, that they are some children who do not understand ounces and pounds, or pints and gallons either. I myself have had a lot of difficulty understanding pints and gallons since for years we have used the 8-pint gallon, and the 16-ounce pint without realising that the other West Indian Islands next to us use the 10-pint gallon and the 20-ounce pint. We have had variations even in the Caribbean that would make it difficult for you to understand. The glory of the Metric System is that it is a little easier to learn than the number of ounces in a pound.

Hon. L. R. TULL: On a point of order. I would like to point out to the hon. member for St. Philip South that all the schools in Barbados, from Nursery to Tertiary teach only the Metric System. There is no longer any teaching of the Imperial Measure of Weights in the schools in Barbados and indeed over 2,000 Teachers in Barbados have been trained to teach metric and there is an on-going process of training for the Teachers in the transition from the Imperial Measures to the Metric System.

Mr. WEEKES: On a point of elucidation, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member does not give way.

Rt. Hon. J. M . G. M. ADAMS: You cannot make a debate of this but I do want to reassure the persons and in the broad sense those comprising the constituency on whose behalf the hon. member is speaking, that we understand the difficulty of the shopkeepers who has to call for so many pounds of sugar or pounds of rice when the rice is supplied to him in kilograms and he has to have a scale to measure kilograms and so on. We appreciate these difficulties.

Before the ending of this year our understanding is that supermarkets will package all loose foods, sugar, salt, rice and animal feeds in metric amounts and that they will be no more 1-pound bags of sugar or 2-lb bags of sugar that sugar will come in ½-kilograms, kilograms and 2-kilogram bags. I have been told by the General Manager of the Flour Mill that flour will be sold exactly in kilograms,

that the Flour Mill will produce ½-kilograms and kilograms of flour. Where rice is packaged it will be packaged in the kilogram size although the imported rice will continue to come in packages which will say 1 lb. or 454 grams, 5 lbs. or 2,220 grams, however much it works out to, Sir. Cement is already being sold in this country in 50-kilogram packages. The hon. member does not realise how fast metrication has proceeded and how little dislocation it has occasioned.

I did promise to give a rough analysis of the difference in prices which the new duties will cost, Sir. They are so negligible that it is hardly worthwhile going through them. The revenue will lose $135.00 on the 12,000,000 pounds of potatoes, the 5½million kilograms of potatoes that we are importing as a result of the new Tariff. We will lose $1.00 on the tomatoes. One dollar per year, Sir, and $1.00 per year on garlic and so on.

In other words, the prices have been put so clear we lose like $9.00 a year on split peas. I do not mean individually. That is the whole amount which will be changed in the course of a year as a result of the new Tariff. We lose $23.00 on beer. We give up $630.00 on stout. We gain $56.00 on champagne and so on and so forth.

The other matter which I mentioned to the House is that the Customs will now be enforcing the provisions of the Caricom Treaty that will allow them to charge before duty on the Caricom spirits up to the amount of the Excise tax charged in Barbados; it will bring in some more revenue so I would not want it to be thought that there would not be changes but the changes do not arise from metrication. They arise from a Collateral Agreement which has been reached which allows us to equalise the duty on Caricom Gin, Caricom Rums, Caricom Vodka and such Caricom Whisky and Brandy as are imported, and I envisaged this in my Budget Speech but I am proposing to deal with it in a different way which is by way of Consumption Taxes.
12.45 p.m.

It has now been discovered that it is easier to deal with it by the CARICOM Agreement and allow all CARICOM members to levy these taxes, and that will have revenue implications to the tune of about $400,000. That would be on gin, vodka, etc. In fact, I have been instructed that this is already being done, not as a result of the Bill but as a result of the agreement and with the analysis of the existing CARICOM provisions. The amount may be changed a little by the Bill, but this is something which is already in force.

I would like to thank all hon. members for the contribution they have made to the debate and to say in conclusion that they struck a happy note when they discussed St. Lucia's independence. Perhaps I can take this opportunity to thank the people of St. Lucia for the kindness shown to the Barbados delegation and for the enthusiastic welcome they gave us. If the hon. member for St. Michael South believe that only St. Lucians love the Barbados Labour Party, perhaps I can take him for a drive some afternoon so that he may get an idea of the strength of the Government in this country. But that apart, I would just throw the suggestion out, since it was raised in the debate; the Government has not asked for it, but I think that on a bi-partisan basis perhaps Parliament should commit itself to give to the Parliaments of St. Lucia and Dominica a gift which would reflect that feeling spoken of by the hon. member for St. Michael South a gift from the Parliament of Barbados on the occasion of their taking their place in the international community, I throw the suggestion out and perhaps Your Honour may be in a position to take it up in the Debates Committee. I would assure that Committee that the Ministry of Finance would be no obstacle in the way of a suitable subvention in carrying out a project of that sort.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the bill be read a second time.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I would like to second the motion and also the observation made by the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister that Parliament should make a gift to the two Caribbean states that have recently become independent. But it is unfortunate that the hon. member for Christ Church West should mislead the House with the suggestion that I could in any way attack the Prime Minister of St. Lucia.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot entertain that. I appreciate your agreeing with the proposal...

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The proposal would have my unqualified support; you may be assured of that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance has given the lead and the Debates Committee will certainly look into the matter.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I would hope that it would not be a useless kind of gift, but rather something like a dispatch box or a Chair – though I think India generally gives that.

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Mr. Speaker left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill. Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 3 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. H. deB. Forde, Mr. Chairman reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. H. deB. FORDE, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, earlier in the day I sought leave of the House that Government Notices be reopened. There is also an answer which the hon. Prime Minister indicated he would like to give an answer to a question which was tabled yesterday. I beg to move, Sir, that Government Notices be reopened.
12.55 p.m.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to amend the explanatory note under Head 108 – Ministry of Finance and Planning – Item 2 – Equity and other Contributions of the 1978–79 – Capital Estimates.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 30 standing in the name of the hon. member for St. John.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Question No. 30:

1. How many non-nationals have been recruited since September 3, 1976 into the office of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance?

2. What were their countries of origin?

3. Through what institutional or other agencies were they recruited?

4. From what sources were their salaries and expenses paid?

5. What functions have they performed/or continue to perform?

6. What is or has been the duration of their engagement?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

1. No non-nationals have been so recruited, but the Minister of Finance has continued to benefit from the services of experts provided under technical assistance programmes funded by overseas agencies.

2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 do not arise.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Prime Minister can tell us how many experts have been provided to the Ministry of Finance, which is his Ministry?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the supplementary is as follows: I take it that he does not want names. (Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: No names). There is an advisor employed by International Monetary Fund who is advising the Government on Estimates problems, the presentation of the Estimates, and I will advert to this when the Estimates come down later in the month; and he is currently engaged – I am dealing with people who have come since September 3, 1976. There was an OAS expert on various taxation problems at the department of Inland Revenue, and there two persons from the Canadian Expert Service (Overseas) also attached to the Department of Inland Revenue. The remaining one is a painter from St. Lucia. They even supplied details on him. He is at present painting the Ministry of Finance Office and the Ministry of Planning's office. He works at the Ministry of Communications and Works. He is the only discernible person who is a non-national at the moment that we could have thought that was meant.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Will the Minister inform the House whether he has any advisers on the Budget in the Ministry of Finance?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Not that I know of. The Director of Finance and Planning is giving advice on the budget, Sir. I know of no non-national who is advising on the Budget.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Will the Minister elucidate what is the function of Mr. Jackson of the United Kingdom in his Ministry?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Since a name has been called, Mr. Jackson has nothing whatsoever to do with the Budget. He is the expert from the IMF who is advising on the presentation of the Estimates. He is the person whom I first mentioned. He has absolutely nothing to do with the Budget that I know of. He has been attending Estimates Committee meetings. The hon. member's sources could have told him that.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, this concludes Government Business, and I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until the 6th March, 1979, at 12 o'clock noon.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly at 1.00 p.m.

1.00 p.m.