

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1976 - 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 15th January, 1980.

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

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P. (Speaker); Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, LL.D., (Leader of the Opposition); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; 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); Dr. R. B. CADDLE, M.D., Ch.B.; Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD, M.A. (Econ.); Mr. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M; Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, LL.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; Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry) (Leader of the House); Hon. L. R. TULL, M.A., (Minister of Education and Culture); Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, and Mr. L. L. SISNETT.

Prayers were read.

Dr. Haynes and Mr. Johnson entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, the 18th of December, 1979.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, these Minutes have been circulated and subject to any observations by any hon. members as to the accuracy thereof, I beg to move that they be confirmed.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no observations by any hon. members these Minutes stand confirmed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG entered the Chamber and took his seat.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received copies of Accounts and Statements for the month of October, 1979, as prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the following:-

Twenty-seventh Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Natural Gas Corporation for the year April 1977 to March 1978.

Statement of instruments adopted at the 64th and 65th Sessions of the International Labour Conference.

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

Report of the Audit of the Accounts of the Auditor General's Department for the year ended 31st March, 1978.

The Immigration (Students) Regulations, 1979.

The Passport and Travel Documents (Fees) (Amendment) Order, 1979.

Statements showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for the months ended January, February and March, 1979.

Statements showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for the months ended September and October, 1979.

The Special Development Area (Deep Water Harbour Extension) Order, 1979.

The Special Development Area (Heywoods-Speightstown) Order, 1979.

The Special Development Area (Spring Garden-Fontabelle Road) Order, 1979.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

Resolution to approve The Special Development Area (Deep Water Harbour Extension) Order, 1979.

Resolution to approve The Special Development Area (Heywoods-Speightstown) Order, 1979.

Resolution to approve The Special Development Area (Spring Garden-Fontabelle Road) Order, 1979.

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

Resolution to grant the sum of \$295,628 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1979–80, Part I – Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1979–80, No. 21, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

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

A Bill to provide for the registration and control of land surveyors in Barbados.

A Bill respecting the demarcation of land boundaries and related matters.

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

A Bill to amend the Occupational Training Act.

A Bill to amend the Holidays with Pay Act.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE a Bill to provide for the registration and control of land surveyors in Barbados was read a first time.

On motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE a Bill respecting the demarcation of land boundaries and related matters was read a first time.

On motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, a Bill to amend the Occupational Training Act was read a first time.
12.25 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill to amend the Holidays with Pay Act be now read a first time.

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, pursuant to Cabinet authority, on 8th January, 1980, as Minister responsible for Minerals, I signed Geological and Geophysical Licenses permitting Mobil Oil Exploration Barbados Limited, a locally incorporated subsidiary of the Mobil Oil Corporation of the United States, to undertake a seismic survey on the Island of Barbados and in our economic zone.

As Honourable Members are no doubt aware Mobil purchased the assets of General Crude Oil Company in July last year and assumed control of the five (5) development leases granted to that Company in 1974, and the exploration licence to search for oil under the territorial sea of Barbados, which was granted in 1976.

Under the Offshore Licence Mobil Exploration Barbados Limited will carry out a marine survey covering some 1,609 Kilometers at an estimated cost of US\$500,000.

Under the Onshore Licence, Mobil will first undertake an experimental programme to establish which seismic method will produce data of good and interpretable quality. This initial programme is necessary because the limestone cap which covers the greater part of Barbados and which acts as a barrier to the transmission of energy into the deeper layers and back, has made subsurface mapping difficult in the past. The Mobil Oil Corporation will use its Experimental Field Laboratory to apply a number of recent techniques in data acquisition and data processing in an effort to overcome this problem. The experimental programme is expected to take about six months and will cost approximately US\$500,000.

If the experimental programme is successful Mobil Exploration Barbados Limited will conduct a

comprehensive seismic survey over the whole of the Island. This survey, which will involve the collection, processing and interpretation of the sub-surface geology of the Island will take twelve months to complete, and will cost a minimum of US\$1,500,000. The total expenditure proposed by Mobil will be, therefore, US\$2.5 million.

On the successful completion of the Offshore and Onshore Geological and Geophysical investigations the Government will enter negotiations with Mobil with a view to reaching agreement on the terms and conditions under which Mobil would be granted a licence or lease to search for and produce petroleum on or around Barbados.

The Licences have been drafted to reflect a number of basic principles. These principles can be summarized as follows:

- (a) On the satisfactory completion of a programme of geological and geophysical investigation Mobil shall have the exclusive right, for the period of six months immediately following, to negotiate with the Government for a licence or lease to explore for, develop, and produce petroleum in the Licence Area;
- (b) if, on the expiration of the period of negotiations, agreement has not been reached with Mobil, Government will be free to enter negotiations with a third party. However, if the Government is willing to accept a proposal from a third party during the period of one year immediately following the end of the six-month negotiating period with Mobil, Mobil shall be given written notice of the proposal, including the identity of the third party and the terms of that proposal. Upon receipt of such notice Mobil shall have thirty days to notify the Government that it wishes to exercise its right of first refusal and will accept a lease or licence on the same terms offered by the third party;
- (c) Mobil acknowledges the creation of the National Petroleum Corporation and that it has been advised that the Corporation shall, at its option, be a participant in any grant of a licence or lease to explore for, develop or produce petroleum. The terms of such participation shall be a subject in any negotiations for such a licence or lease;
- (d) the National Petroleum Corporation shall be considered a third party and Mobil's right of first refusal shall apply to any undertaking between the Government and the National Petroleum Corporation;

- (e) Mobil shall give the Government's representatives full access to its field operations and shall supply the Government with all geological and geophysical data obtained therefrom. However, Mobil shall not be required to supply data which disclose its proprietary processing techniques;
- (f) up to, and including the period of the negotiations data supplied by Mobil will be kept confidential. However, the Government will be permitted to disclose such data as may be required by lending agencies to decide on the financing of any project for which the Government seeks such assistance.

It is the general consensus of opinion by the various consultants who have reviewed the petroleum geology of Barbados that a seismic reflection survey is totally necessary to form a basis for further exploratory drilling for petroleum. The Government is satisfied that the Mobil Oil Corporation has the resources and capability to undertake such a survey effectively. However, my Ministry will hire its own Geophysical and Geological Consultants to monitor the operations which will be undertaken during the course of the survey and to prepare an independent report setting out their detailed conclusions on the petroleum potential of the island. This will enable the Government to negotiate the terms of any further exploration programme from a position of knowledge about the possible risks and returns from such a programme.

The rise in international energy prices since 1973 has emphasized the urgency for developing known energy resources in developing countries. In Barbados production of oil and gas currently accounts for one-third of our crude energy needs. Domestic production of oil up to November 1979 was 253,845 barrels compared with 250,901 for the same period in 1978.

During 1979 the Mobil Oil Refinery imported almost one million barrels of cocktail crude and reformat at a cost of \$49 million. On the basis of the price increase announced for 1980 it will cost \$70 million for the Mobil Oil Refinery to import the same volume of feedstock this year. Honourable Members will appreciate the saving in foreign exchange which will be achieved therefore, if the Government meets its target set out in the Development Plan of self sufficiency in crude energy production by 1985.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer congratulations to the two Parliamentarians who were honoured in the recent New Year's Honours. I refer to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and Senator

Cox. Mr. Speaker, I have known the Honourable Member for St. Philip South from, I believe, about age twelve in 1952 and his family and mine have always been very close.

12.35 p.m.

There has been a warmth between the two families despite the difference in political affiliation. For myself, I have had the pleasure to be on a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference with the hon. member in 1976 in Mauritius and it was on that occasion particularly that I was able to get closer to the hon. member and to learn much from his undoubted experience as a politician who had served this country well. It is therefore very gratifying that the service which he has rendered this community has been rewarded by the honour of C.B.E. which he was awarded in January this year.

Mr. Speaker, in 1976 when this party won the election, indeed on the morning after the elections, the present Prime Minister appealed on television for national unity once the elections had died down. I have taken that appeal, Mr. Speaker, to heart and in recognition of that, in the last two years, even though it was my constituency group which organised a recital at the King George V Memorial Park, I was not so partisan as to shut out from invitation to the hon. member for St. Philip South, and I must say that invitations were extended to him and he appeared and delivered a Christmas message to the parishioners of St. Philip, and I believe that that spirit of cooperation which the hon. member has shown is something which could very well wash over to other members of Parliament, because in these times of divisive attitudes and polarisation, politicians have to set a lead and example in unifying the community. I believe the two of us representing St. Philip North and South have been able to bring a measure of cohesion to the parish of St. Philip, and I would like to think that he will continue to share platforms of a character which are above pure partisan politics in the future with me.

Mr. Speaker, he does not know, but a statement made by him in 1976 soon after I entered Parliament subsequent to the by-election encouraged me and gave me even greater impetus for the general election, because during a debate in this Honourable Chamber the hon. member for St. Philip South alleged that I had won the seat in the by-election by accident. It was therefore to prove that I did not win by accident that I was given even greater strength when the general election came around. Mind you I won by a single digit majority.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member I believe, can teach a lot of contemporary politicians much of the art of representation. I believe the whole country knows and accepts that he is and has always been on the side of the

underprivileged, the small person and the down-trodden. But it is not by mere words that he must be judged and by statements made in here, but I believe that any of his constituents of whatever political complexion will admit that the hon. member for St. Philip South has always been one to assist in little things that mean a lot I believe, be it signing passport forms or photographs or giving lifts, in whatever form. During the time I was campaigning and during the time I have been back in Barbados for the last ten years, I have always heard people of St. Philip speak of the great help that the hon. member has been able to give them in very small ways, and I believe that he has been able to teach those of us who want to learn how one should conduct oneself as a politician, that you must as far as possible be with and be identified with the people whom you represent, and it can never be said of the hon. member that he, having attained a seat in this Honourable Chamber in the words of Julius Caesar scorned the base degrees by which he did ascend, but rather he stuck to his people and the reward which he has been given in the New Year's honours has been justly obtained.

To Senator Cox, Mr. Speaker, I wish to tender my personal congratulations. He is in this party but I cannot claim to have had very close association with him, because when he was in the party as an active member of the party, I was a youngster. Since I have been engaged in active politics he has been taking a less prominent role in the caucuses of the party, but I can only say that during my association I have always found him to be a most upright and straightforward individual given of deep thought, and one whom the historical records of this country will show was one of its finest Ministers that this country has ever had. His honour is richly deserved and like the hon. member for St. Philip South, they are two persons who have not been born into this community with riches and privileges, but have come from humble beginnings, but by dint of their own effort and their own innate abilities have risen to positions of the highest eminence in this community, and have set a standard that can well be followed by other persons from humble origin in this country. That my party has been associated with these awards is also a matter of gratitude. I am sure the recognition that this party has for persons of all walks of life, but especially person who have been less well off than some others of us.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I speak for those of us assembled on this side when we offer our warmest congratulations to the two parliamentarians I have mentioned. I just want to say that these are imperial honours and though I myself do not believe in imperial honours, nevertheless it is a fact of life and it is but appropriate that so long as you have a system you must give due praise where such praise is merited.

12.45 p.m.

I am grateful to learn that the Government as from this year is going to have its own system of local honours which will perhaps in time mean more to Barbadians who can identify more readily with a local system of honours, but it is not to take away from the stature of the two men. I have made my own personal comment on the system because I want my own personal comment in the records.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, two parliamentarians have been honoured by Her Majesty the Queen. It is not for me to speak in extended terms about Sir Mencea Cox, I wish to extend my congratulations to him, having served this country and that period of service having been taken note of and deemed to be of a quality to be given the Knighthood. I extend my congratulations to him. There are others who would be more competent to speak on his period of service than I am and I leave it to them so to do. I speak particularly to extend felicitations and congratulations to Reynold St. Clair Weekes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that you mean the hon. member for St. Philip South.

Mr. SANDIFORD: The hon. member for St. Philip South. We all know that he is honourable, the hon. member for St. Philip South. It was the poet William Shakespeare in one of his plays which perhaps is not among his best, in the play Henry VIII, who said it is better to be lowly born and range with humble rivers in content than to be perk'd up in glistening grief, and wear a golden sorrow.

The member for St. Philip South was born of humble parentage, his father like mine was a carpenter. He richly deserves the honour which he has been given, Commander of the Order of the British Empire, for he is a shining example of the Barbadian way of life. He had to fight problems of poverty, of inadequate educational opportunities, of prejudice and all of those constraints that met large sections of our population under-privileged and disadvantaged in the land of our birth. But for him these were not considered handicaps but challenges, and his career is an outstanding example of how one can surmount difficulties in life through courage, through dedication, through natal ability and make a contribution equal to or surpassing that made by others born in better circumstances.

That simplicity, that dedication, that perseverance which he has demonstrated is an object lesson for the young in this society. It was in 1913 that he first saw the light of day. He was born in the parish of St. Philip and he has remained a St. Philip man. He has made a multi-faceted contribution to the social, political and economic life of this country. Perhaps it is little known that he was a teacher, and in an area which perhaps at

that time was not given the type of recognition that it might have been given, that is the area of handicraft, and those who were fortunate enough to benefit from his educational ministrations can attest to the fact that he was always patient, willing to impart skills, willing to show, willing to set an example. The skills of rope making, slipper making, hammock making from indigenous materials is perhaps not as widespread now as it was then, what a pity that we do not make fullest use of those skills, but the member for St. Philip South imparted those skills to a large number of trainers, that is, teachers, who in turn were able to pass on those skills to their charges.

His life and his career mirrors some of the most significant changes in the social and political life of this country as far as Local Government is concerned, and as far as National Government is concerned and in the Vestry system he served.

12.55 p.m.

He was a Vestryman, and when that system of Local Government gave way to the system of District Councils he also served in that capacity, rising to be Chairman for two years. Even then those with whom he served recognized his ability and his capacity. He was always very tactful as a Chairman, and always willing to assist members of the Council. If there were any errors of procedure he was always willing to give them the benefit of the doubt, not slap them down with the letter of the law. And when the change from Local Government came about he sought honours at the national level and contested the General Elections in 1961 and was successful. When there was the change from Colonial status to the status of independence, the hon. member for St. Philip South was there and played no small part in that successful transition. When there was a change from double member constituencies to single member constituencies in our political system he was also there and since 1971 has represented the constituency of St. Philip South.

His career attests then to the qualities he developed as a politician, and attest to those qualities in the life of this country which demand that those who serve the people must learn how to follow the people.

The hon. member also served this country in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and it is a tribute to that organization that he has always been available for local and regional service, representing this country abroad in the counsels of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

His work for the improvement of highways and sanitation in this country, his work as a Parliamentary Secretary and an Acting Minister of Government on a number of occasions, all attest to the fact that he is a

man of many parts and of high quality. He has worked for the common good and for the well being of this community.

Alexander Pope, the Poet, once said: "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan, the proper study of mankind is man." The hon. member for St. Philip South has been committed throughout his life to the service of the common man, and it is a fitting tribute that his career, rich as it has been in service to the common man, should be rewarded with the honour that has been given him.

Calls for national unity are always calls that find an echo in the breast of well-meaning patriots. That this honour has come at this time is a suitable testimonial, and it is also a good lesson that the Government is following. It is not the first time that an Opposition politician has been honoured by the Government of the day. It must have been in the 1970s or in the late 60s that a representative of the parish in which I live — Mr. St. Aubyn Holder, a long serving member of the Barbados Labour Party — was given a Royal honour. I believe that Mr. Lloyd Smith also was given honours, another long serving member of this Honourable Chamber. This is the type of tradition that we have built up in this country, and it is good to know that the present Government is following this tradition. It must be a moment of very great pride for the family of the hon. member of St. Philip South that this recognition should come to the hon. member, and it gives me very great pleasure to record the association of myself and of the members of this Opposition and indeed of the Government, because it is a national honour; and so we all record our appreciation and share with him the pleasure of the award.

Mr. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself with the congratulatory remarks as expressed by the two hon. members. The hon. member for St. Philip South and Senator Cox are two parliamentarians who have come — as we say in Barbadian terms — a very long way. They are men from very humble beginnings but very rich in their sense of responsibility and their dedication to serving this country. In the two hon. members we have seen demonstrated over the years that they believe in humanity and in understanding what humanity is all about, and it is rather gratifying to learn that both of these gentlemen have been honoured in the recent New Year's list.

The hon. Senator Cox lives in the constituency which I have the honour to represent. I have been associated with him for a very long time and have found him at all times willing to impart to younger colleagues or contemporaries any information which would help them to develop their whole capacity which would redound to the benefit of the country.

That these two gentlemen have been honoured is an inspiration to those who have got a desire to serve at the national level.

1.05 p.m.

Both of them, as far as I know, have had times of trials but they have not allowed those trials and tribulations to dampen or daunt their enthusiasm to serve.

The hon. member for St. Philip South, although I suffered a defeat in St. Philip South in 1971, did not at anytime fail to lend me his assistance and encouragement like a man and I must say on this occasion that he has demonstrated at all times the sort of qualities which are only associated with a man, a very big man.

I want to offer my personal congratulations to the hon. member for St. Philip South and I know that even when he would have retired from the political arena that he would pass on that vast knowledge which he has accumulated over the years to those who aspire to serve in the national interest.

Senator Cox, some of us might not remember, but I would like for the records of this Honourable Chamber to demonstrate how a man with vast experience and much ease could become a member of Parliament and one who still has the love or interest of his country at heart.

I remember as far as 1975 at one of the St. Michael South East constituency group meetings when we were considering Resolutions for the Party's Annual Conference that it was the same Senator Cox who drafted a Resolution in which he appealed for recognition of all children whether they were "legitimate or illegitimate". He was then calling on the then Opposition, my Party, to place on record his concern about the status of illegitimate children and I am extremely proud to learn that this Government has seen it fit to implement a Resolution which the Senator was instrumental in drafting as early as 1975. That is a very classic example as to how the Parliamentarian who has served his time in politics, when he was out in the Opposition could serve the community.

I would not want to be very long because there are lots of other things that can be said about the hon. member but in short, I would like to quote a passage from Shakespeare and I feel that this can amply be attributed to both hon. members when Shakespeare said "That stars like signs of nobleness shall shine on all deservers." This, both of them richly deserve, all the stars and the attributes which they have now received.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, it was certainly not my intention to speak on this occasion even though I felt that I ought to make a contribution. I do

not want to be discordant in anyway but I believe that there are times when things must be said and I rise to put the records straight. I do not consider an occasion such as this should be used by any person for any purpose other than the reason for the occasion.

I have been in this House for not a long time, but certainly sufficiently a long time to understand the people who are in this Honourable Chamber and I have always associated the hon. member for St. Michael South with dignity, honour and charity and I was certainly appalled when I discovered the very strict partisan line which he adopted on this occasion. This occasion, in my considered judgment, is one which proves the man, the greatness of the man or the smallness of the man.

The hon. member for St. Michael South did not fail to observe that while the hon. member for St. Philip South at the period when he was Chairman of the Southern District Council, presided and the type of decisions which he made and that he never failed to give members the benefits of the doubt and things like that. I do not know exactly what he was trying to bring out but certainly I regarded that approach as not in good taste. I equally regard the approach as completely omitting from anything he said, anything to do with the worthy son of the soil who has made a contribution towards the well-being of this country for a number of years.

It was certainly in the days when the late Sir Grantley Adams found it extremely difficult to recruit to the ranks of the forces of progress to fight the classes that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition so forcefully championed and accused me for attacking at some time previously in this Honourable House, found it extremely difficult to attract to these ranks people like the hon. member for St. Michael South and he was able to get people like the present Senator, Sir Mencea Cox, if that name will choke somebody let me say it here now, to come forward and to champion the cause of the working-class people that we can see this attitude coming from the hon. member for St. Michael South to me indicates the attitude of his mind which tells me that he has no respect for people who have come along and did not have his good fortunes much as he said that he admires the hon. member for St. Philip South.

You cannot under one breath admire the coming along and the approach to life and the hardships of one member who is involved in an exercise with another person similarly involved and completely ignore what that other person has contributed. I do not believe that there is a single man in this country, with the exception of the hon. member for St. Michael South, who would have got up here today and made a speech so totally unconcerned with the contribution which Senator Sir Mencea Cox has contributed towards the well-being of this society in which we live.

1.15 p.m.

There is one thing I know, he was so honest and sincere, so concerned for the democratic principles of the society that he never sought to remove and depressurise as some people have sought to do.

I want to say that I consider this occasion to be one that members of Parliament should rise to the occasion and forget petty politics. The hon. member for St. Philip South has rendered yeoman services to this community and I want to put the record straight for the benefit of the hon. member for St. Michael South and colleagues on that side. Scholar as he is, he is not aware that the hon. member for St. Philip South was in this House long before 1961. I would hope that he would get the record straight as far as that is concerned. During my period in here, I have found the hon. member for St. Philip South to be a very sincere, honest, upright and conscientious member of this House.

I would have thought that the hon. member for St. Michael South would have been charitable enough to say that he congratulates the Government for its bigness in recognising the services rendered to the community by the hon. member for St. Philip South. Something which the last Government would never have done, never did and never will do because they will never be returned to have an opportunity to do or not to do. The people are too much awoken to the attitudes of the other side. I regret as I said, Mr. Speaker, that the tone and content of the speech which was made by the hon. member for St. Michael South has caused me to make this speech which I am making because they would not have been any need for this at all if he had adopted the straight line and risen in my considered view to this occasion which in my view, is a very big occasion.

I want to congratulate both the hon. member for St. Philip South who has contributed tremendously towards the well-being of this country and who is extremely respectful in this Parliament. A man with courage and conviction, who is not petty when he gets up to speak. A man whom you can always recognise as having his heart in the right place. That is what I have learnt from him being here. I am proud of the honour conferred upon him. As a matter of fact, I would be happy to be able to say Sir Reynold Weekes, meaning the hon. member for St. Philip South and I would hope that the day will come, and I am sure that this Government is big enough to do it, to bestow such an honour on the hon. member over there. He is deserving of the honour. He has lent colour, respect and character not only to this Hon. House, but to the community in which he lives. So has the hon. member in the Other Place.

Sir Mencea Cox has done a great deal of work on behalf of the society in which he lives. On behalf of myself and this Government which has made it possible for the honours to be given, I congratulate most

wholeheartedly the two worthy gentlemen for the honours which they have received.

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

Mr. GREAVES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join hon. members who have proceeded me on this occasion to offer my congratulations to the hon. member for St. Philip South and Senator Cox, now Sir Mencea Cox who were both recently honoured by the Queen in the New Year's Honours List.

There is no doubt that both of these gentlemen sprung from humble circumstances and in their respective ways have been able to make a mark on life in this country. I do not know Sir Mencea Cox, other than, seeing him on the road, or in a photograph, so I cannot speak on any kind of personal or intimate way about him but I would certainly like to congratulate him for the honour bestowed on him, obviously for what is considered to be the contribution which he has made in this country.

As far as the hon. member for St. Philip South is concerned, I had the privilege of being associated with him since 1961 when I succeeded in winning a seat in this Hon. Chamber. The member for St. Philip South, contrary to what the member for St. Andrew has said first gained his seat in 1961 and not long before 1961 as he indicated. This of course, was not his first association with politics because, as has been pointed out, he was associated with the political life of this country and more particular with the political life of St. Philip before 1961, having served in the Vestry and also having been a prominent member of the Southern District Council. In 1961 the constituency of St. Philip was divided into two constituencies; St. Philip North and St. Philip South and my colleague represents the Southern part of St. Philip. At least, that is the seat which he holds. I am sure that it can be said without any fear of contradiction that he still considers himself to be the representative of the entire parish of St. Philip. Indeed, when one sees him moving around in St. Philip, and those who work closely with him recognise the very special place which he has for all of the residents of that parish of St. Philip. I believe that he, by his example, has demonstrated very clearly what a representative of a constituency should be, the kind of concerns which that representative should have and the way in which that representative should function.

The member for St. Philip South as a person, is a very kind, helpful and warm hearted individual. I cannot help but be impressed by the way in which he regards the family, his family. If one can judge from that, one must conclude that the member for St. Philip South regards the maintenance of the family unit is of extreme importance particularly in terms of national building and national

development. I think this is another of the characteristics which I would want to make mention of on this occasion.

The member for St. Philip South is also and has been, a devout Anglican. I have had the privilege of sitting on Synod Council with him for St. Clement's Anglican Church in St. Lucy and he was representing St. Martin's Church in St. Philip. It shows very clearly that his concerns were not only of a political nature but also of a spiritual nature.

I think that his political career so far has indicated what dedication, hard work, and conscientiousness can do for a person who did not have the kind of opportunity for education and the kind of advancement which are so many today. But nonetheless, in spite of the many problems and the serious obstacles which were placed in his way when he was climbing the political ladder, he nevertheless has been able to maintain his own amongst some of the best and has therefore been able to make a very important and lasting contribution to the political life of this country. I remember for example, the kind of concern which the member for St. Philip South has expressed and continues to express on behalf of the senior citizens of this country.

I very well remember, Mr. Speaker, when the Government decided that they would introduce the metric system in this country, the concern which was expressed by the member for St. Philip South and indeed, the warning he gave about the swift change over in the system, from the imperial system to the metric system. I believe, that it was because of the pleas which he made on several occasions that various aspects of the legislation relating to the metric system was introduced. Any measure coming into this Chamber relating to the metric system was as a result of his pleadings. I am sure that some consideration was given to give an opportunity for people to understand and to be able to acquire some knowledge and know-how about this metric system.

1.25 p.m.

These are the kinds of concerns which the hon. member for St. Philip South has demonstrated in his life. He has always been a person who is concerned with the poor and the underprivileged, because I believe it was because of his experience which he has had. I am sure that it can be said of the hon. member for St. Philip South that even although he has walked with Kings and Princes he has not lost the common touch. To both of the honourable gentlemen so honoured, I wish to extend my heartiest congratulations.

Dr. CADDLE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join other hon. members of this Honourable Chamber who have spoken in extending my congratulations to the two parliamentarians who have been honoured in the New Year's honours, specifically the hon. member for St.

Philip South and Senator Cox, now Sir Mencea Cox. If one really wants to appreciate the contribution which these two gentlemen have made to Barbados, one has to reflect quite clearly on the conditions prevailing in the development of the black man in this country in the early half of this present century. Without going into any great detail, I only need to point out that at that stage the black people of this country found themselves under very harsh conditions as a result of the entrenchment of a particular group of people in this country running the political, economic and social life of Barbados, and subsequent to the riots of 1937 when the black people of this country decided that it was time to make a move for their own betterment, we find that these people who were best suited either by way of education or by way of money, I mean black people to come forward and give leadership to the working class people of this country, failed to do so and it was left to humble people like the hon. member for St. Philip South and Senator Cox to heed the call for leadership, and I can recall as a youngster when educated people of this country made fashionable remarks to reflect on the character and ability of a person like Senator Cox being a representative of the people in this country; but the fact that he was there must draw to our attention that the professional people, University graduates and people of that day failed to answer the call, and it was left to people like Senator Cox, a taxi driver to heed the call and make a contribution to this country. If they had not done so at that particular time, one is left to guess what would have been the fate of black people in this country. Therefore to my way of thinking the contribution of these people cannot be seen or judged against what is now taking place in Barbados when you find that professional people and people of means now consider it their right to be in the political mainstream of public life, but it has to be judged against the background at that particular time.

I know as a youngster, although I am not closely associated with Mr. Cox, that many people have remarked on his ability to improve himself as he went along, and I recall that there had been occasions in this country where many people have stated forcibly that the fortunes of the Barbados Labour Party may have been better if he had been the successor of the then Grantley Adams as Premier of this country, but that was not to be his fate; that was not to be his honour, and it seems a peculiar twist to fate that the very man who was overlooked at that particular time is now being looked upon by the son of Sir Grantley Herbert Adams who is now presiding over the destinies of the people of this country. Sir, Mr. Cox has done his bit and I would join with all those in this country who will extend to him best wishes and congratulations on this occasion. I would like to believe that humble people such as other taxi men of this country and other people with whom he has been closely associated in those early days are particularly gladdened by the fact that he has received honour at this particular time.

As regards my own colleague in my own party, the hon. member for St. Philip South, I would like to say that during the short period of time working with him in the Ministry of Communications and Works I could not but have been impressed by the way in which the hon. member set about to represent the people of St. Philip, and I can reflect now and say that maybe if other members of my party had gone about their task as diligently as the hon. member for St. Philip South on that occasion, the fortunes of this party might have been different. The hon. member for St. Philip South is certainly not interested in policies, in big financial policies or policies regarding the financing of big projects, but one of the things that has struck me very forcibly in my association with him is that he was always prepared at all times to find out what the people of his constituency wanted and to go to any extreme to ensure that it was done. I join with those who could point out that in matters of representation of the people the hon. member for St. Philip South has a lot to teach other parliamentarians today.

1.35 p.m.

He has had a long and varied career in politics in this country at the Vestry level, at the Council level and at the Central Government level, and I am saying that he has a wealth of knowledge about social, economic and political affairs of this country which I hope that some day he will set down in writing so that those of us who come after him will be able to glean some education from his contribution and his wide knowledge surrounding the affairs of Barbados.

I would like to join with those who have spoken in this Hon. Chamber and with all Barbadians who are with him on this occasion by extending my heartiest congratulations to the hon. member for St. Philip South and to Senator Sir Mencea Cox, and I hope that together that Barbados will go forward and see this as an occasion where we can look forward to better representation coming from those who will come up at a later time in the footsteps or in the wake of these two gentlemen.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, circumstances demand brevity on my part, but the occasion also demands that I should rise and associate myself with the many kind remarks made by many previous speakers and to offer congratulations to the hon. member for St. Philip South and to Sir Mencea Cox. Lest it be misunderstood in terms of the emphasis in my brief presentation, I have not had the good fortune of any personal association with Sir Mencea Cox, but I have certainly as a young man and as a middle aged man — I am reaching that point now myself — been in a position to assess the contribution which Sir Mencea Cox would have made in this country.

Much has been said about his rise in the country from a humble background, but Barbados could never be

in the state that it is in today unless that groundwork had been laid by people like Sir Mencea Cox, the very important background to social and economic changes of that period which subsequent administrations have been able to capitalise on successfully can be attributed to the very able support which he gave to another distinguished son of this country, the late Sir Grantley Adams. The fact that he was a poor, black man responding to the need of poor black people in this country is a fact which we cannot overlook, and a fact which we must recognise at all times and never seek at any point in time to detract from the contributions of people of that nature.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I have heard it said that not only did Sir Mencea Cox make a major contribution to the political life of the time, but he was perhaps one of the best administrators when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government at that particular time, and whereas I do not wish to go over ground that has been covered in respect of Sir Mencea Cox, I believe it will be all but said of the contribution to administration at ministerial level which I understand and I have heard said repeatedly that he made during his period in office.

In respect of my friend and colleague, the member for St. Philip South, he has been an extremely close personal friend of mine over the past 12 years and his achievements have been listed. There is no need for me to repeat them except to say that I recognise and would wish to pay tribute to the major contributions that he has made in various facets of the public life of this country, but what has been outstanding, Mr. Speaker, is the sincerity of the man, sincerity which is not often associated with politics. He stands out in such a remarkable way that I would hope that when each of us should be in politics for a period of time that someone could stand in this Hon. House and point to the fact that sincerity was a major contribution that has been made of his positions taken in public life.

Much has been said of integrity in public life, even to the point of legislating on matters of integrity in public life. If, Mr. Speaker, one wants to see the personification of integrity in public life, that personification is right here in this Chamber now in the person of the hon. member for St. Philip South. Another very important feature that has struck me is the total absence of hate in his approach to politics. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, if apart from sincerity and integrity that absence of hate could in some way be communicated to the body politic of this country as emanating from such a distinguished citizen and such a distinguished and hon. member of this House, I think it would go well for the future not only of parliamentary institutions but also to the country as a whole.

The next feature that I have noticed and which has impressed me considerably is that he is perhaps one of

the finest parliamentarians that I have known, and he has attached as much importance to his contributions which he makes from the Opposition benches as I understood that he attached when he made from the Government benches, and if this kind of approach, the recognition that in the political life of this country that what one does in Opposition is as important as what one does in Government and that there is no major distinction between the two, except that one particular group may have the responsibility for the administration at that particular time.

1.45 p.m.

This would enforce the importance of the functions and contributions of a parliamentarian, and I believe that what I perceive as emanating from this distinguished member — the hon. member for St. Philip South — is a reflection of his understanding and commitment to the role of the Parliamentarian; and I have no doubt that the major contribution he has made to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is a reflection of his true understanding of the role of the Parliamentarian in the democratic, political life of Barbados.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the asset that I have always noticed, that is perhaps overriding, is his fundamental concern. He is concerned about every single citizen in this country. Much has been said about his concern for his constituents. He is concerned when things do not go in the manner he considers to be right or appropriate in this Honourable Chamber. I do not wish to go back in time but I can remember situations in which the hon. member called on me to assist him in relation to his constituents, and there is one particular episode which perhaps it would not be appropriate for me to mention here except to say that a representative of the people taking an elderly patient in his arms, sick and in a state that many people would have refused to touch that person — this I have seen the hon. member for St. Philip South do. And that was over twelve years ago, before I was even involved in active politics. So I regard this concern, this sincerity, integrity and an insistence that the parliamentarian should have his rightful place in the political life of a democratic society as the overriding contribution which he has made in his political life, and those qualities explain his involvement, his performance and the rise to eminence in his chosen field, the field in which he made the greatest contribution to the largest number of people in this country.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, hon. members on this side have made their remarks and I just want to join in congratulating the two parliamentarians in question. Other speakers have said almost everything that can be said but I would just like to say this:

Some time in 1975 the Cabinet decided that it would introduce a system of local honours, which the

present Government has recently announced that they will institute — five years later they come around to this point of view. If the hon. member for St. Philip South did not receive any honour before in his long political career, it must be mentioned that no one received any honours from the time the Cabinet made that decision until the Government changed.

As far as Sir Mencea Cox is concerned, I was a member of the party to which Senator Cox belonged during 1951 to 1955 when he was a member of the Executive Committee. And in 1961 when we took over Government I was assured by all those who had worked with Senator Cox that he was the one Minister who they could guarantee did his homework. Both the hon. member for St. Philip South and Senator Cox are highly deserving of the honour awarded them; what shape or form the honour takes is a question for the Government of the day.

The hon. member for St. Michael South congratulated Mr. Cox, but I do not understand the remarks of the hon. member for St. Andrew in this regard. He pointed out that the former Government of which I was Chairman of the Cabinet had on occasion before taken note and recognized the contribution made by Parliamentarians who were not members of the Democratic Labour Party. Not only did the Government recognize the sterling services at Local Government level and Central Government level of Mr. St. Aubyn Holder of St. James and the services of the hon. member for St. Joseph, Mr. Lloyd Smith, but also the work of Mr. Ernest Deighton Mottley — both at Local Government and Central Government level — who was a member of the Conservative Party and Leader of the Opposition at the time when he was so recognized. As the hon. member for St. Michael South said, there are certain traditions which we are glad are not being honoured more in the breach than in the observance, and therefore it would not be fitting for me to prolong the debate except to say that I heartily endorse the congratulatory speeches made by the hon. member for St. Philip North and the hon. member for St. Michael South.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member for St. Philip South and Senator Sir Mencea Cox will appreciate if I do not spend any time making congratulatory remarks since mine would have been the hand that initiated the honours and therefore the process of honour reflects my appreciation of the services they have given to politics in Barbados over the years. But I do wish to make a short contribution relating to the question of national honours and I think this is appropriate after the remarks of the hon. Leader of the Opposition who has just sat down.

I am glad to be able to say that there appears to be a consensus between the political parties in Barbados, and

indeed, if one can accept the results of the analysis, of public opinion carried out by the Constitutional Committee on the necessity for the institution of a local system of national honours. As the hon. member for St. John said, this proposal first saw the light of day in 1975 when it was announced by Her Majesty the Queen on the opening of Parliament that year. The previous Government instituted the general format that the national honours should take and the present Government has followed the same format. Perhaps a distinctive feature will be an Order of Knighthood for which the Queen creates an Order of Chivalry especially for Barbados. This forms part of the proposals and it has been endorsed by the present Government. These honours which have now been offered to our two colleagues therefore have a special position since it is anticipated that they will be the last Imperial Honours which will be offered to any Barbadian by the Government of Barbados. It will of course be open to Barbadians who perform services in other parts of the world to accept imperial honours, but it will not occur within Barbados. 1.55 p.m.

The system of awarding Honours, Mr. Speaker, will pay tribute to the sentiments expressed by both sides of the House today to the effect that as far as possible the award of Honours should be as little partisan as can be achieved within a society such as ours. It is fully intended by the Government that political services be rewarded in future, exceptional political services by recognition in the form of National Honours but the Government wishes to make it clear beyond any possible misunderstanding that the practice in the past of giving honours to members who have given service on both sides of the House will be continued in the future.

Yesterday afternoon the Steering Committee which is preparing the Letters Patent to be issued by Her Majesty the Queen formerly to set up the system of National Honours had a meeting in my Office but the final form of the Letters Patent for submission to Buckingham Palace has been virtually agreed to and the public will therefore in a very short time know the exact system of awards of local honours.

To put it briefly, it is anticipated that the citations and awards to members which were observed when the system of Imperial Honours was enforced will continue to be observed. There will be a Companionship of Honour for Barbadians which will have a limited membership. It is intended at present to be limited to 15 persons. There will be limits on the number of Honours which can be awarded. Special Honours for the Defence Force, the Police and other disciplined forces will also be instituted.

Most important of all, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the arrangement will be that arrangement which will institute an Honours Advisory Council on which both the

Government and the Opposition will be represented. The Leader of the Opposition or his nominee will be invited to sit on this Advisory Council in order to participate in a system of recommendations for National Honours in future.

It is anticipated, Mr. Speaker, I cannot make any positive announcement in this respect, that the first award of National Honours will be made on July 27th. That will be the initial award which would be subjected to the special rules and further awards which will be made on November the 30th as the first of the initial awards and awards will be made thereafter on Independence Day each year.

The Opposition I believe was invited to participate in the Steering Committee on the Letters Patent but according to my information no response was received. This took place several months ago. I am not assigning any blame in this matter. This was purely a formal Committee indeed of which I was not a member. I think I was a member by substitution yesterday afternoon. I fully expect that in this instance the Opposition will fully participate in the National Advisory Council on Honours.

As soon as the Letters Patent has been promulgated a formal invitation will go out and Barbadians can look forward to awards in July, Sir, which I hope will be fully representative of all aspects of our society and of both sexes.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting now stands suspended until 2.45 p.m. today.
2.05 p.m.

On the resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. I think I ought to enquire if it is your pleasure that we continue with the business which was under consideration when the suspension was given. Is it your pleasure? Mr. Prime Minister have you finished your speech?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I have concluded.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I should like to join in those fine sentiments and congratulations that have been heaped upon the hon. member for St. Philip South and also on Senator Mencea Cox now Sir Mencea Cox this morning.

What I think is remarkable about these two hon. members is that the day when they entered the field of politics and sought entry to this Hon. House, they embarked on a journey when politics was in a state of

something comparable to a wilderness in this country. I feel deep down in my heart that they both set out on their task of doing good without any hope or any thought of reward. They set out doing good for the working class people and that in itself is a commendable achievement for them to be honoured by Her Majesty the Queen.

As far as the hon. member for St. Philip is concerned, I want the hon. member to know how deeply I feel about the honour that has been bestowed on him. He would feel, as I would feel that it is not only an honour for himself but an honour heaped on the entire parish of St. Philip.

As for Sir Mencea Cox, when he first sought election to this Hon. House and was elected, the country then felt that a wind of change had certainly begun to blow through the corridors of this country. When he repeated his victory, we were sure once and for all that things had been consolidated and that the Barbados Labour Party, under whose banner he had contested his seat was assured of making a worthwhile mark on the history of this country and the Government.

I feel that the hon. member for St. Philip South has done more than a duty where serving people of this country is concerned. I have had occasions to be abroad on Commonwealth Parliamentary assignments and I am to say that there could be no better companion, no dearer colleague to find anywhere functioning as a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association than the hon. member for St. Philip South. He and I have shared as a joke among us when I was on the political platform, about his letter writing. Anyone who has gone abroad with the hon. member would have been struck by the number of letters that the hon. member sought to write to those constituents in St. Philip. I do not know if at the bottom of each letter he tried to show his love for his people by putting those little Xs called kisses. However, he has been a worthwhile colleague both at home and abroad. For one, he spoke the people's language. They understood him, and he understood them better still.

It is on occasions such as this that I want him to know how I feel and I believe that all Honourable Members here this afternoon have a common feeling where the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is concerned. As for Sir Mencea Cox, he knows how Honourable Members must feel about his elevation to Knighthood.

I hope that both Honourable Members will live long enough to bear this distinction with the dignity with which they earned it, if not more.

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, you will forgive me Sir, when I say here that today is my day. I am therefore

imploing you to be patient and tolerant with me as you have done in the past. I intend, Sir, to deal with a few salient points on all aspects of my political career. Mr. Speaker, I am at your mercy with the duration of my speech, but I am confident that with your patience and competence you will not deny me the privilege of expressing myself fully in my position, as you too Sir, have served in the past, as a member of the Opposition. You are fully aware, Sir, that this is a unique occasion in the history of my political career and therefore you would expect me to be happy and joyful and speak at length.

Sir, before I continue to speak, it is incumbent of me to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all members of the present Government, and especially the Cabinet for having submitted my name to Her Majesty the Queen for this particular honour of which I am very proud and happy.
3.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, my conscience would not be alive and I would not be performing my duty if I did not express myself here as to say how pleased I am to see that the present Government has dealt with this matter in a non-partisan way. Mr. Speaker, the present Government might have been reading the Holy Bible when they arrived at the conclusion to recommend me and Sir, I shall quote the passage which deals with this on this auspicious occasion: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and unto God the things that be God's".

Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware that if any Standing Order is broken as regards the duration of my speech, it is you, Mr. Speaker, and only you, Sir, to decide, therefore I repeat again, I am at the mercy of the Chair today, and I am craving your indulgence to be lenient with me and permit me to reminisce on a few important parts of my political career which in my opinion will be of inestimable benefit to young politicians. It could in some measure give them the tenacity of spirit to realise that a politician's life is no bed of roses.

Mr. Speaker, I must say here today that I am neither Caesar nor God; I am an humble, faithful, loyal and dedicated servant of the people. My policy has always been and will ever be Government of the people by the people and for the people.

Mr. Speaker, I must also thank my fellow parliamentarians for the glowing tributes which they have paid me and indeed I am happy and pleased to see the togetherness on this occasion. I have no doubt that it was done in sincerity. Those who spoke highly about me I thank them very very much; those who might have said nothing about me and spoke, I also thank them, and those who did not find it possible to speak I also thank them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the time has come now when I shall reminisce on a few important points. Let us deal with the Vestry system. In those days the vestry was dominated by the plantocracy. I may also go as far as to say Parliament was also dominated by them. In those days you would be surprised to know, Sir, that St. Philip carried a list of 200 voters, and the die-hard conservatives, it was their duty to see that they and their children become members of the Vestry because it was in their interest. They were there to lay the rates; they were there to take care of themselves and their relatives and their friends.

Now my political career goes back as far as dealing with an Englishman who came out here and he was a moderate, using my own word, conservative, not in the category of those who were here, and that gentleman was the late Major Peebles, who laid a solid foundation for King George V Memorial Park. I heard his views on the platform and I did associate myself with him because although he was a conservative, he still was by far better than the conservatives in Barbados. But, Sir, I am here to be very frank and conscientious and to express myself fully. I owe an allegiance to one person in this Island for my political career, and it is no other person than Mr. Wynter Algernon Crawford. I regret to say that I have been hearing the record of various people who have contributed to the progress of this country, and for what reason I do not know, I have not been hearing one person who has been saying the important role which Mr. Wynter Crawford played as Editor of the Observer and as a politician in uplifting the people of this Island.
3.10 p.m.

To me it is regrettable, and it was through his instrumentality which motivated me to become interested in politics and that is how your humble servant, Reynold Weekes, is here, and that is how he has obtained the C.B.E., through no other person than Mr. Wynter Algernon Crawford. I must say that before I served in the Vestry he encouraged me, and in those days may I say here, Sir, that the qualifications were so high that only people with wealth, only people who had the resources could become a Vestryman. You will be surprised to know what that gentleman did for me. He said, "Reynold, I would like you to become a vestryman," but Mr. Speaker, I am not ashamed to say I did not own one cane hole of land, and in those days you had to have ten acres of land or you would have to pay the tax equivalent to that, and it was Mr. Wynter Crawford who said to me that the first piece of rab land which was for sale he would try and get it for me, and that happened, and that is the land on which I live today. I bought it from the Provost Marshal's Office, 12½ acres more or less, and I am not prepared to say what I paid for it or what it is worth today. That was the beginning of my political career.

When the Vestry system was abolished he also encouraged me to become a Councillor, and I served from the inception of the Council until it was abolished. Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to reminisce on some of the things which happened in the Council, because those were the days when I had a bitter pill to swallow, especially in my second term, but Mr. Crawford did not allow me to be only a vestryman and a councillor, he suggested to me then, "well, Reynold, I am going to take you along with me under double member constituency as a candidate for the House of Assembly." That decision of Mr. Crawford did not go down well with the DLP, but Mr. Crawford insisted that I should be the candidate, and in those days he was indispensable to the DLP and consequently they could not afford to lose him, so the battle went on until the last moment when Crawford decided to threaten the party and said that if they did not give him Reynold Weekes he would resign from the party, and they could not afford for Mr. Crawford to resign at that time. Consequently, that is how I became a member of the House.

Therefore, my conscience convicts me. To tell me that I should not express my feeling and to express gratitude — and this is for someone who has done so much for me — I would prefer you to tell me to go and dig my grave and bury myself in it, and therefore I want to say that I am a very, very happy and proud man today, but Mr. Speaker, there are some things which went on here today and I want to say from the depth of my heart I do not agree with the present Government, I did not agree with the former Government when they decided to abolish the Q.C. and I shall give you one reason. I am not here to represent the attorneys-at-law, but Mr. Speaker, if a referendum was held with the attorneys of this island and you asked one question, "are you in favour of retaining the Q.C.?" or "are you satisfied with the S.C.?" I would say that 99% of the attorneys will say "give me the Q.C."

3.20 p.m.

Let us assume that an attorney has to go to England to defend somebody and he went over there and said I am an S.C.. He would be asked what is the meaning of that and he would have to tell them the meaning. Therefore while I am a national and believe in national honours I am still saying that there is a certain prestige attached to certain honours. I am fully in favour of national honours and I do hope that I will get one too, but what I am saying is that we have to be very careful; we must realize that this country is not a republic, that Her Majesty the Queen is still head of this country. Indeed, I hope never to see the day when this country becomes a republic.

Mr. Speaker, I have just made these points to let you see that regardless of youngsters who say this or that in the newspaper these people have not made any

contribution to this country yet and it is nonsensical to go to a youngster and ask him if he agrees with this or that. I would say that when a person has not contributed anything to become eligible for something like national honours he can say whatever he likes. But, Mr. Speaker, you in that Chair would like — just as anyone else — to receive some honour. Therefore people who have contributed nothing to the country should not be called on to express their views because they do not know the values attached to these things.

But Mr. Speaker, I want to say in all sincerity that this is the happiest moment of my life in this ancient and honourable House of Assembly. Today is my day. (Applause) The number of people throughout this country, the number of letters and cables which I have received — I do not know where they got the password from — but every person who took my hand said: "You deserve it, you deserve it." In the letters they said this; on the phone they said this; on the streets they said it. I do not know where the password came from, but everybody was saying: "You deserve it, you deserve it." It seems to me to be one of the most popular decisions the present Government has ever made.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, perhaps you will allow me, like the hon. member for St. Michael West, to use a Biblical quotation. It can be found in Proverbs 22: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."

And finally if I quote from Shakespeare:

".....Good name in man or woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse steals trash;
'Tis something, nothing; 'twas mine, 'tis his,
And has been slave to thousands.
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed."

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, it is now that we pass on to a less joyful matter. I rise to bring to the notice of this House that since our last meeting a former Deputy Clerk of this House, Mr. Lisle Thomas, passed away.

Mr. Thomas served as Deputy Clerk of this House for thirty years and retired at the end of December, 1969. I entered this House as far as I remember, — on the 5th December, 1951 and from that time until his retirement in 1969 Mr. Thomas was Deputy Clerk continuously. I think that many hon. members of this House have benefitted from Mr. Thomas's counsel and advice during his term of office.

3.30 p.m.

At the same time as he served as Deputy Clerk, Mr. Thomas was a practising Solicitor. I personally knew him at the Firm of Carrington and Sealy. Carrington and Sealy 110 years before had had my grandfather as one of their first clients and Mr. Thomas, Mr. Layne and Mr. Herbert Sealy, Senior partners in the Firm of Carrington and Sealy trained many a young solicitor and afterwards he moved over to the firm of Yearwood and Boyce and it was during this time that he was a senior partner in that firm of Messrs. Yearwood and Boyce that he was also a Deputy Clerk of this House.

The position of Deputy Clerk was not at that time a full-time job. He served at that time I remember under Mr. Lawrence Taylor. He certainly served during the time when Mr. Lee Sergeant, another Solicitor, was Clerk of the House; both Mr. Sergeant and Mr. H. O. St.C. Cumberbatch with whom he served, the deceased Mr. Lisle Thomas, and about a year before Mr. Thomas unfortunately passed away, his second wife, I believe, the former Mrs. Taylor, pre-deceased him.

I have never known, during the time that Mr. Thomas worked in the Legal Profession or as Deputy Clerk of this House, I have never known a single occasion when I have seen him angry. The closest that I have seen Mr. Thomas being angry would be on the football field when somebody kicked him on his chin but the way that he played the sport it was a question of give and take and soon after he received any slight injury the person who was so imprudent to give him a slight injury probably got a good bounce and had to recuperate for a few minutes before he could resume his active place on the football field.

He was an excellent footballer. I cannot really remember during the years when I used to see him playing football whether he represented the Island. He probably did. Specially I remember the colours of Rovers. I remember him certainly as a very very progressive and very active footballer but once he got off the field I do not think that Mr. Thomas had a single opponent who was not glad to be in his company.

Certainly it was a pleasure for me to work with him in the Law Courts. I wish I could say that for all the members in the Solicitors' Profession without in anyway being critical but it was a pleasure to work with some of them and with others we did not get the support because probably they had too many other things to do and considered litigation and interruption of their normal means of making a living which was conveyancing and doing their clients' accounts in their offices.

As far as people like Lisle Thomas were concerned he would willingly go into the Court and fully brief Counsel with whom he was operating. He would have all the references and everything ready for you so that your

work was considerably reduced whereas frequently we had to do the work of the Solicitors as well as our own work. To me that is a great tribute to have people who, if I may mention parenthetically, people like Mr. Boyce, his senior partner and also Mr. Dave Banfield, it was a real pleasure to work in the Law Courts with people who took such a serious view of their work and did not treat having to work with the advocates and the Barristers as an interruption of their normal routine.

When it came to the intervals when we would meet outside of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, you will recall that Mr. Thomas was a great entertainer. He always had some story about Barbados in the old days or some old gentlemen who took themselves too seriously either in the political or the legal arena and he was always entertaining us with some anecdotes of the persons with whom he had come into contact during his long and distinguished legal career.

He would also enlighten us with some stories of the lighter moments of the House in the days when the House was not as representative as it is nowadays when he was relating these anecdotes to us even in those days and so I think those of us who had the privilege to serve in either field, either in this distinguished Chamber or in the Legal Profession, we are all going to miss him. He was a hard working conscientious Barbadian. He was a good officer of this House and I think it will be a long day before we meet his equal.

I, therefore, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your indulgence and I wish to draw this to the attention of the House and I hope that the House will be able to convey to his brothers, those who survive him, I do not know how many still survive him and his relatives the expressions of the sentiments of this Chamber. Thank you.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself and the Government with the sentiments expressed by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition in relation to the death of the late Herbert Lisle Thomas who as he said for many years was associated with this House as Deputy Clerk.

I met Mr. Thomas in 1966 when I first came into this House and liked him, I was very impressed with his courtesy, his willingness to help and his general affable nature. I also was associated with Mr. Thomas for a very long period of time in the practice of Law. Perhaps more than others, I worked very closely with Mr. Thomas in the field of Land Law.

I believe that it can truthfully be said that he was one of the leading exponents of the Law of Conveyancing in Barbados. Many a young Solicitor, Attorney, or indeed a more experienced one had to consult Mr. Thomas on

the intricacies of the Barbadian conveyancing and its peculiarities.

Mr. Thomas, regrettably did not live to see the introduction of the new Land Law Bills which came into force on the 1st January this year. I know that he would have looked forward to the implementation of the new systems of shortening deeds and the removal of some of the peculiarities of the old Land Law system. He sat on a number of the Bar Association Committees which dealt with the reform of the Land Law of Barbados.

Like the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I would like to express on behalf of the Government our profound sympathy to his relatives and family. A Resolution has already been prepared in the necessary customary form and if it is necessary for me to second that Resolution I will willingly do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let my remarks be associated with those two hon. members who have expressed their sympathy on the occasion of the death of the late Mr. Herbert Lisle Thomas. Mr. Thomas served in this House for 32 years. I want to say that Mr. Thomas must have been an asset to this House and to the Other Place but I can vouch for him as from the year 1966 when I became a member of this Honourable House. He had a thorough and profound knowledge of the practices and procedures of this Honourable Chamber.

3.40 p.m.

He was more than familiar with the Standing Orders of this Honourable House. He discharged his duties as a Deputy Clerk with dignity unmatched by anyone. Mr. Thomas was a good Deputy Clerk.

He served both sides of the House in the same way. He made no distinction with them and as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has said, it was extremely difficult to find Mr. Thomas in an angry mood. You would have to search for it.

I would ask Honourable Members to signify their support with this Resolution which I will now read by standing with me in silence for one minute in respect of the late Herbert Lisle Thomas. I will read the Resolution first.

"Resolved that the Honourable the House of Assembly place on record its profound sympathy at the death of Herbert Lisle Thomas, a former Deputy Clerk of the House of Assembly for 32 years and be it resolved that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to his sorrowing relatives."

Honourable Members will now rise with me for one minute.

(Honourable Members stood in their places in silence for one minute.)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, there are no items on Government Business which we are in a position to proceed with today.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. I am advised that there are no replies to questions ready. This brings us then into Private Members Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: There is one item under Private Members Business standing in the name of the hon. member for St. Lucy. On the last occasion when this matter was under discussion, the Hon. Attorney General was speaking when the time for Private Members Business expired. I do not now see the said Hon. Attorney General in his place.

An amendment was moved to this Resolution by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister. The hon. member for St. Joseph seconded the motion. The hon. member for St. Lucy spoke.

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, this amendment as stands before this Hon. House in itself, and by its very construction indicates that there is a considerable element of confusion because the amendment in itself does not make too much sense. For example, it says "Whereas in the parish of St. Lucy the bus service has been inadequate" and goes on to say "And Whereas this inadequacy is causing various problems" not "has been causing". It would seem to me that the past tense being used in one clause would tend to suggest that that inadequacy has been a past matter, but yet the inadequacy is continuing as a present and current matter. However, I do not think that this should be a matter to prevent one from getting on with the substance of the debate in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, whenever there is a breakdown in the transport system in this country, it is always inevitable that those parishes most dependent on the public transport system will be the ones that would suffer more. I would say, that the people of St. Lucy have had a very raw deal, not to mention, of course, the people of St. Michael South Central who cannot get a bus in the morning to get to work because all the buses are already full by the time they get to the area of St. Michael South Central. When they stand on the sides of the roadway, the state of the roads, the size of the pot holes, and the amount of water lying in the pot holes almost make sure that they get splashed. It is pathetic in the morning when

you are travelling down Culloden Road, for example, to see the kind of physical insults to which the travelling public is subjected as a consequence of the state of the roads in our country.

The Government, by this amendment is accepting in my view, despite the grammatical errors, that the transport system of this country is in a complete mess. They have sought to attribute the blame to all sorts of irrelevant factors and irrelevant agencies.

3.50 p.m.

I have heard, for example, blame being attached to the fact that there are insufficient workshop facilities to cope with an expanded fleet of buses. That fact might be true, but the fact is that the fleet was expanded by the present Government and it shows a complete lack of planning to have expanded the fleet without making sure that there was a corresponding expansion of the workshop facilities in order to keep the fleet on the road. You cannot whilst during the period 1977-78 claim that you have revolutionised the transport system in this country, that you had made a tremendous expansion in the number of buses available to the travelling public, and at the same time if you wish to claim that claim that consequential on such expansion there are not enough workshop facilities, and therefore that is the fault of the previous administration.

I would therefore, Mr. Speaker, strongly suggest to the present Government that they must regard an effective public transport system as their responsibility to provide, and they cannot now in the dying days of an administration keep harping back and blaming a previous administration for a matter that is patently their responsibility.

I have heard it said, Mr. Speaker, that the fault partially lies in a commitment which the Transport Board has in providing subsidised fares for school children in this country and that some internal accounting arrangement should be made whereby the Ministry of Education pays that particular subsidy to the Transport Board, but, Mr. Speaker, when I was a boy, it is true that is not so long ago, school children enjoyed subsidised travelling on buses in this country even when they were owned by the private concessionaires, and I cannot accept that the state of transport in St. Lucy and the state of transport in this country in general is anything at all to do with the subsidised transport which the children of this country enjoy.

I have also heard it said, Mr. Speaker, that there has been the question of leakages; that leakages, as I understand it this is a euphemism for stealing, at the Transport Board is a main cause for the breakdown in the public service in this country. I have even heard it has been said that I in my professional capacity am the sole

person responsible for the breakdown of the transport system in Barbados. It is that level of idiocy, Mr. Speaker, that would prevent the Government from focussing its attention on a problem that is absolutely fundamental to the future development of this country.

What are the facts, Mr. Speaker? There is no doubt when you look at the allocation of funds available for the Transport Board over the past three years, bearing in mind the escalation of costs in the area of transport, whether it be in terms of fuel, whether it be in terms of capital cost of new buses or in the cost of equipment or in the cost of wages which I understand has gone up some 65%, you will see that the figure has virtually been static during that period, and whereas there is no doubt that the present Minister responsible for transport must bear a heavy share of responsibility in this matter, I am saying that it represents a significant area of failure of Government policy, and that the basic errors have been made by the Ministry of Finance and by the Government in general, and that they have landed successive Ministers in the area of transport with an almost insoluble problem because of fundamental policy errors, and I am surging that the Government reviews its entire policy in relation to transport in this country, because there can be no question, I do not think one needs to expand on the fact, that an effective internal transport system is not only fundamental to the social welfare of the citizens of this country, but it is increasingly important in relation to the industrial development of Barbados and in order to permit the ordinary citizens of this country to gain the full benefit from the expansion in the industrial sector.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is increasingly important in relation to the major earner of foreign currency in this country, that is, the tourist industry. So that as we go into the Eighties it is necessary for the Government to have a firm policy in relation to internal transport; it is necessary to have a policy in relation to the allocation of costs within that transport system, it is important for the Government to make sure that those roads that have gone into such a disastrous state of disrepair, that something be done about them, because all that is going to happen is that if you put heavier equipment on the roads that have fallen into a serious state of disrepair, you are then placing an additional burden on your very workshop facilities because of the frequent breakages to parts consequential on the deterioration of the roads over which they have to function.

Mr. Speaker, I will also call on Government to take with some seriousness the charges made from the Opposition benches in respect of the operation of the Ministry of Transport. There can be no doubt that once the function of maintaining an adequate transport system has been delegated to a Transport Board, it is important to look very carefully at the management content of the Transport Board, and I do not think that you will ever

get anywhere until you get adequate top and middle managerial staff within the Transport Board.

Another major factor has been the question of morale among workers of the Transport Board, and in this area I think that the Minister responsible must carry most of the blame, because that falls within his immediate responsibility. Whereas particularly as I understand that he is leaving the Government shortly I have no particular wish to launch an attack on him at this moment, I think it would be a bit ungracious of me to do so, the morale factor is most important and it is contributing considerably to the failure of performance at the Transport Board. Then there is a question of training that falls within the Ministry. It is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that transport is an area that requires specialised knowledge. What is important is for those people who are responsible to understand that they are not the reservoirs of all knowledge in the world and try to make available to the Transport Board the greatest kind of expertise possible in that field.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that the employment policy of the Transport Board has been one that has been a major cause, and I think that even the hon. member for St. Andrew would agree with me wholeheartedly that there is a need for a significant reduction in the amount of political interference with appointments in the Transport Board. Mr. Speaker, I would go further and say this; that when we consider transport, whether in its social area or in its economic benefits or its economic relationships to the society, we are a small community.

4.00 p.m.

I believe that most of us will agree that where benefits are subsidised from the public Treasury that the vast majority of our citizens should be in a position to share in those benefits. It was this enlightened policy, Mr. Speaker, that led the previous administration to introduce the subsidised bus fare in Barbados of 25 cents. That fare has now gone up to 45 cents and we heard, I think the Minister of Finance, on a previous occasion indicate that it would probably go to 50 cents if there is any further improvement in the bus service in this country. What we find today, it is my understanding that the scandalous situation has arisen where the people of St. Lucy have to pay 90 cents to get into Bridgetown. Now, this is a complete reversal of a fundamental approach to the distribution of social benefits in respect of the transport system within this country.

We must bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, that the users of public transport system are largely the lower income groups in Barbados. We must also bear in mind that a man's wages are not adjusted in relation to distance he has to travel from his work place to his home, therefore

if you have two people working in Bridgetown, one from St. Philip, let us say, and one from St. Lucy, why should the man in St. Lucy be paying more money in order to get to and from work? This is the whole point behind the recognition that there is an important social content in any transport service.

Now, the hon. member for St. Joseph some time ago quite foolishly got up and challenged me to say whether or not the transport service is a social service. I would not like to spell it out in that way, but it is important.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure you do not intend to reflect on anything said by the hon. member during this Session.

Dr. HAYNES: I can assure you that I would not do a thing like that. What I am saying is that I believe that when you take a study of the buses in this country, when you take the amount of suffering and discomfort of the travelling public, when you take into account its effect on the industrial sector in Barbados at the moment when many people cannot get to and from work, when you take into account the disruption in the home that the absence of the facility to travel within a reasonable time is causing to the public at large, I believe it is time that Government gets down to the business on an overall policy in relation to transport which is going to take some time to get off the ground, and in the meantime try to alleviate some of the worse ills presenting the public transport system of Barbados.

In the determination of any such policy it is for the Government of the day to determine the extent of social content that should be built into any such policy, because quite clearly the Government launched out on a policy by raising bus fares, maintaining subsidies at relatively the same level in the hope that the increased bus fares would enable them to carry out their transport projects. What has happened now is that there has been a total collapse of Government policy based on the assumptions that they made in 1977 in respect of transport and there is an urgent need to have a new look, a new policy in relation to transport for this country, otherwise we shall move into the eighties in a situation where it will become more and more expensive as each year passes to have an effective transport system.

The Minister responsible for energy is here in this Hon. House at the moment and he knows perfectly well what would be the cost of repairing a road or what would be the cost of replacing a bus three years from now. He would have a reasonable idea and therefore he must recognise the urgency of this problem and try to get the best advice available to him and to have a proper transport policy which can be spelt out to the public and stop this foolishness of trying to allocate blame to the

past Government, to school children, and to a whole range of people, recognise that the policy has totally collapsed and start out on a new path forward for transport policy. It is very vital, because I rather suspect that more and more Barbadians are going to be forced to use the public transport system in the interest of individual economy and in the interest of national economy when you look at the borrowing prospects in relation to energy down over the next ten years, so that the problems facing the people of St. Lucy are but symptomatic, perhaps more acutely symptomatic than the problems facing the entire country, and I would like to get an assurance from the Government that they will seek a transport policy, recognise the urgency of the matter, recognise that there is going to be increasing pressure on the public transport system as the industrial programme of this country goes ahead, as the tourist industry expands, and also as the price of fuel and the price of cars go up, then there is going to be a greater and greater demand for the use of the public transport system, and we have to be way ahead, we have to be way in advance of these changes, otherwise it is going to prove extremely costly to this country.

We have already lost three years, it is going to take about five years to get the roads of Barbados back in the state they were in in 1975 and 1976. It is probably going to take about five years, the capital cost that is going to be involved is tremendous and when you have all the new road developments that would be needed, when you think of the question of getting existing roads back to the state in which they were, when you think of the replacement of the fleet and the extension of the transportation system to accommodate the sort of needs I have tried to outline, then you will see that this is a major problem requiring people with ability. It is true that the democratic system which we inherited and which we enjoy places greater importance on numbers which they enjoy on that side, and the most we can do, since we have the brains on this side, is to take the opportunity on the floor of the House and try and bring broad, progressive, dynamic concepts and put them before the Government in the hope that they will understand what we are saying and recognise that when we win the Government in 1981, or whenever an election is held, when we win the Government the decisions in relation to transport would be already three years too late and unless they are taken now they are going to land this country with an increasing deteriorating transport system, so you can take the decisions now, get moving and hope that in five years' time you will have an effective and improved transport system.

4.10 p.m.

I will tell you this, if you mess around for too long and not get moving in this area, the cost in the 1980s will be so prohibitive that we will not be able to catch up with the situation and provide transport to meet the

demand, and this will have a negative effect on the whole programme to increase productivity in this country in the industrial sector, the tourist sector or any other sector. This is one of the most serious problems facing this country. It is more than just a matter of the provision of buses, more than just a matter of economics, more than just a time to get cheap political advantage by attributing blame where it should not be attributed. It is fundamental that an effective transport policy demands the kind of vision which should be paid to the development of the tourist industry or to the development of the industrial sector.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is repeating himself.

Dr. HAYNES: I want Sir, to impress the importance of the transport industry as being so fundamental and related to other industries and fundamental to productivity while at the same time it is an area which is perhaps more susceptible to the inflationary effects consequential on the rise in oil prices. It is therefore an area that demands a kind of vision which should always be kept up-dated, because whenever you try to move away from this you will find that you cannot even maintain the existing services that you have.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I could not allow this occasion to pass without making the position clear as to what the Government has done so far in this exercise both before and subsequent to the introduction of this Resolution. I would also like to say that from my position as Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism I have had the opportunity to inquire very carefully into the requirements and the impact of the requirements of these particular areas of activities upon the transport sector in Barbados. I am also in a position, because I have the responsibility for minerals and petroleum, to recognize the impact the rising oil prices have had on the cost of transport. I admire the diagnostic ability of the hon. member on this question, but of course — as usual — we have had no curative measures suggested. It is one thing to diagnose but another to prescribe remedies that are effective in curing the problems diagnosed.

Government's achievement with transport in Barbados is one of which we can be justly proud. No other Government in the history of this country has ever invested more capital in the transport system of Barbados than this Government has. A look at the fleet of the Transport Board as a whole will demonstrate quite clearly that we to a large extent have a better quality fleet than any other territory in the Caribbean, despite the fact that we are only an insignificant producer of oil. Since this Government came into power we took the decision which for many years the other side did not take, namely, to bring under public ownership the totality of all of the

omnibuses in Barbados. Honourable members on the other side can object if they care; they are entitled to criticise us for doing that. But the basic position was that faced as we were in 1977 with a situation in which you had a Government transport fleet and three other people operating a transport fleet with a disparity of standards of equipment and the people on the other side saying that the fares which were being charged were totally uneconomic for them to maintain their fleet much less extend it to meet requirements, the only logical thing to have done once you accept the fact that it is the responsibility of the Government to provide a reasonably efficient transport service for the public of Barbados was to bring all transport under the purview of the Government to be dealt with as a whole, or else permit a discriminatory fare structure or pump subsidies into the coffers of the private concessionaires. We decided as a matter of principle that transport is an area of operation — whatever the political philosophy of the Government involved — to come under the purview of the Central Government or some aspect of Government.

Pursuant to that decision we had a number of compensatory matters to be settled. As usual in a democratic society these matters take some time. But we are only talking about two years ago. Thank God we were able to settle this matter to the reasonable satisfaction of all the concessionaires. In addition to that, while these negotiations were going on, negotiations also went on with a view to purchasing equipment for the refurbishing and replacing of worn-out equipment. That also takes time and money. Honourable members should not forget that in 1976 when this Government came to power it found a Treasury that was acutely short of cash. We had an economy in which unemployment was over 25% — and these are not my statistics. We had an economy in which tourism was sluggish, in which industry was sluggish. We had an economy in which confidence in both the public sector and the private sector was lacking. With all of that we still found enough money to invest over \$8 million in new capital equipment. Some of that money went to buy as a matter of urgency ready-built buses from the United Kingdom. But we also had to face up to the fact that a number of local people had been engaged for some period of time in the building of bus bodies in Barbados, and we had to split the number of buses that we bought between ready-built buses from England and buying chassis and doing the local manufacture of bus bodies.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been told that the last five of the locally manufactured buses will be delivered this month. We now have an increase in the fleet of new buses bought in the last 1½ years on the route to the tune of some 60 buses. I believe it was split 40:20 or something like that.

Now, Sir, to say therefore that the Government does not recognise the need for a proper fleet which is an indispensable part of any carriage of an additional number of passengers is therefore to fly into the face of those facts. To say that the Government will not devote resources to the Transport Board in the light of the fact that we gave them over \$8 million on Capital Account alone is again to fly into the face of facts but parallel with those we also have to face the problem that in September 1966 oil, which is the fuel of transport, was \$9 a barrel, today that same oil is selling for an average of \$24 a barrel.

That is a fact of life therefore the operational costs of any equipment which runs on fuel must have gone up. Unlike the Airplane Industry I do not know of anybody yet who has designed a new bus which can carry a number of passengers to have the same economics of fuel saving that the Jumbo Jets have had in relation to the carriage of passengers by air. If it has been designed, unfortunately so far our routes cannot take it. I have seen double-decker buses which carry more passengers. They cannot be used in Barbados. I have seen two buses that can be fitted together but again the length is not suitable for our roads.

Now it is because of these problems, as the Prime Minister announced earlier that the Government commissioned a study. We commissioned a study by Transport Experts of the traffic and ground transportation in Barbados. We now have that Report.

Again to say that we have done nothing, again to say that we are not thinking of the problem flies into the face of actual facts which demonstrate very clearly the steps one by one that have been taken. The Transport Study, as the Prime Minister pointed out did reveal that in all the developing countries of the world a balance has to be struck between provision of an adequate fleet by the Government and the operators of similar units who provide specialised services.

In 1974 it was the Government on the other side which took the decision that no more mini-bus licences would be issued. It was the Opposition that took that decision. Obviously in a country like Barbados when you have refurbished your fleet, when you have brought in new buses, when you take into account the various people who use the buses and the various needs that the buses are put to, a route has to be found for those people who need transport, not only to transport their bodies but also to transport their goods.

The Government has already announced that there will be licences granted for an additional amount of supplementary vehicles. We have said so. If the hon. member drives about Barbados he will notice that since that announcement by the Government there have been

additions to the fleet of supplementary vehicles carrying passengers in Barbados on many of the routes.

As a matter of fact, Sir, I have been told that because of other decision taken very lately in relation to permitting private contractors to do some of the repair work on some of the older buses and in particular that the Transport Board in the course of the last month has been able to put on the road a higher daily average of units than every before in the history of the Transport Board. As I understand it, they now get out per day some 220 to 223 vehicles.

Now I know. I have a constituency. I live in my own constituency. I get complaints like others and I investigate the complaints too. I know that the public in many of the areas, particularly, and this is something about Barbados that we do not recognise, particularly those who hitherto had access to buses, this is something about Barbados that we do not know, that they are people who always had a bus and that they will kick up hell if they do not get a bus, even if it may be necessary to give for the first time people in other areas who never had a bus at least the opportunity to have a bus and that has been part of the problem.

Part of the problem is that there has been an expansion of the routes and the frequency of other routes has not been as great as the people who were accustomed in the past to have had. That is a fact. As a Government we cannot discriminate against the various sections of the population. All the people of Barbados are entitled to a good service and that is our aim so that, Sir, an improvement has already taken place.

When we mention, of course, the question of the problems of school children and the problems arising from this fact (*Asides.*) You cannot take it away. You cannot move it away. All the evidence is there now. Since 1976 there has been a rise in the number of people who are in employment in Barbados. They cannot take that away. There have been greater demands on the Transport system and what is more, Sir, because of the rising cost of fuel, because of the rise in the cost of vehicles, a larger number of people are putting aside their vehicles and using the buses more and more. We will deal with that.

Already a number of additional vehicles has been increased and we will increase them more. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has already pointed out that it is estimated that we need an additional 50 buses immediately plus additional licences for somewhere between 50 or 150 mini-buses.

Now we have also had to make a decision in this country which this Government made a long time ago in its Manifesto in 1976 that there must be decentralisation of a number of activities and services in Barbados.

Schooling is one, shopping is another and industry is the third.

4.30 p.m.

All of those decisions we took when we were in Opposition. We did not hide them. We put them forward as positive ideas to be implemented by Government.

In the 1966 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, we said that we should build towns at Oistins, St. George, Speightstown and St. Philip. All of those years from 1966 right up to 1976 you have not produced one positive act towards the implementation of that policy, if you agree to it. All you have said is planning. When we came into power there were a lot of sketches but no firm plan. You never took any decision in relation to even encouraging the development of the thought in our society that it would be necessary at some period in time to look for decentralisation in school places in Barbados. No positive action was taken. You ran away.

We are willing to face it because we know and we believe that the public regards it as wasteful that every day 8,000 school children have to be transported up and across the country. Some coming from St. Lucy to go to Christ Church, some coming from Christ Church to go to St. Andrew and some coming from St. Andrew to go to St. John. It might have been all right in days when you could afford to pay for the fuel, but every community in the world today irrespective of its financial position has got to recognise that fuel is a scarce and expensive commodity and they must tailor their likes towards contributing to the world's effort at fuel conservation.

Already the plans are being implemented as you would know, Mr. Speaker, towards the centralisation in Speightstown. We have started negotiations for the land for the industrial estate. You know, that the schools at Coleridge and Parry and Alexandra are being expanded. In addition to that, you know, that only last week, in the public media it was published that additional shopping facilities will be provided in Speightstown. My only regret about all of this Sir, is that you got off before me in Speightstown. That your constituency kicked off in the implementation of what we thought about, what we talked about and what we put into our Manifesto since 1966. Now that we have an opportunity to kick it off, that you are able to kick the ball faster than anybody else, despite your position, or maybe it is because of your position Sir, that the facts have come out in such a way that you can point and demonstrate that what we dreamed about since 1966 we now have lived, thank God, to see it put into reality.

We also took a decision in Government in industry to allow the shift system providing adequate transport to the approval of the Labour Officer. We had to do that, because we were faced with a problem of under-utilised

equipment and people who wanted to be employed. That has also contributed to the rise in the demand.

I do not want to talk about the tourist industry, because the tourist industry does not use the buses in Barbados to the same extent that many people believe. Already, we have taken the decision to permit specialised coaches for the tourist industry run by the Taxi Associations and Co-operatives. The Government has gone so far as to make it possible for them to be imported duty free, and for the Development Bank to lend to the Taxi Association. It has approved 30 and some 24 are on the road. Five Taxi Associations, or six Taxi Co-operatives. They are registered and they are eligible under the criteria.

When I hear the hon. member talk about victimisation, I must dismiss it as being a warped thought unrelated to facts. What victimisation? When you lend money to the South-East Co-op at Sam Lord's? Mr. Harper has a coach. Mr. Kentruth or Mr. Boyce has one. I do not even know Mr. Boyce or any of them. What victimisation? You can talk about the people that deal with the transport business. In 1974, they were denied by the Democratic Labour Party, by Mr. Morgan because he said that only the Co-operative taxis would have coaches. I have the facts on file. They argued that as the aeroplanes were getting larger and larger that the time had come for the ground transport equipment to be slightly larger. You could not have the big coaches like the hon. member and my family when we go to Europe. We are talking about intermediate coaches. They were denied by the Democratic Labour Party to their own members. When we came in in 1976, we had to go over the whole thing and it took some time to persuade the taxis that this was an inevitable trend when you took into account the different type of planes which were coming.

There has been a revolution in the 1970s in transport in which larger types of equipment are carrying more and more people causing problems not only at airports and to Immigration but also on the ground, so that a great deal of thought has been gone into and we cannot accept this Resolution as it stands. We have amended it, because we recognised that the transport system in Barbados is not as ideal as it should be. We know that it is better than any place in the Caribbean. We know Sir, that already the Government has taken positive steps to improve it and we have amended the Resolution so as to make it clear that while we recognise that there may be some dissatisfaction in a little section of the population, we also take the opportunity to point out what we have done and what we are doing and that contrary to what the hon. member for St. Michael South Central has said about us not having any plan, we have pointed out that we have commissioned the study. We have reported and we are well aware of the recommendations. We are planning for the 1980s. We will

be able to implement our plans. The hon. member has not made any constructive suggestion yet as to what he would do.

We know what they did when they were in power. They prevented and disallowed coaches from coming in here other than to a select band. We know that they failed to take over all the buses. We know that they said that there would be no more mini-buses. We know that they did not build any proper garages for the buses and they had no proper workshop.
4.40 p.m.

We have not heard yet what they would do in the future, so that, Mr. Speaker, is the position in relation to the Government.

Mr. SANDIFORD: What we know, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact is that the people of this country are dissatisfied with the public transport system as it exists now and not all of the loud explanations from the Deputy Prime Minister and member for Christ Church South Central can erase that fact, that the people of this country are dissatisfied with the transport system. It is this particular point that the hon. member for St. Lucy by his Resolution put on to the Agenda for national discussion, and I think a debt of gratitude is owed to him for having brought this matter out in the open for public discussion and discussion in this Chamber, and now what we have is an amendment tinkering around with the originally well-drafted and clear statement by the hon. member for St. Lucy and now a very imprecise amendment by the Government; but not all of the amendments however inelegant, however ungrammatical can change the fact that there is gross dissatisfaction with the transport system.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there is a sense in which when the facts are there it does not matter how many explanations you try to put out, how many reports in the press or on the radio, television or newspaper in trying to say the facts are not so, when people know and experience a situation, these words are mere emptiness, and that is the problem we have as far as the transport system is concerned. We cannot believe anything that is said, that the transport system is satisfactory, and to say that we now have the best transport system in the Caribbean, apart from a general boasting that is inherent in that statement, the transport system in Barbados has always been superior to transport systems in the large number of other Caribbean territories. But what is the point of saying that when the people themselves here are experiencing difficulties? That is all the hon. member for St. Lucy said in his Resolution, that his constituents are finding difficulties, that the constituents and commuters in other areas, St. Peter as well, were finding difficulties. For those in the area surrounding Bridgetown itself the

problem is even more acute, because up to two Saturdays ago I was in the Brittons Hill area, that part that is in my constituency and I heard someone advising a person that there was no point standing up at this bus stop because when the buses got there they would all be full, you could as well start walking.

Now this situation has been blamed on an inadequate economic situation, that it takes money in order to bring about improvements. What we are saying is that the Government has had three years' responsibility, over three years for the transport system of this country, and this concern to go back and blame a previous administration and sometimes to invent what was really not there, I think the people of this country are well alive to the fact and intelligent enough to see through that type of ploy. Now we have heard today a number of statements by the hon. member for Christ Church South Central, the Deputy Prime Minister. He said when they came in that the whole economy was sluggish; unemployment was over 25% they used to say 30%; tourism figures down, cost of living high, high rate of inflation. Now I wish to quote; I am going to demolish all that right now because it is time that we get away from merely hearing the words of the person holding an office and to deal with the facts as they are as set out by independent bodies.

I am quoting from the Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year ended December 31, 1976. Let me start with this unemployment thing first. I know the hon. member for St. Philip North. We quote this document. He refers to it as the Bible for these matters. I am quoting on page 40 under the section "Employment" in which it relates to the Quarterly Continuous Household Survey conducted by the Barbados Statistical Service and it says, and I quote: "The preliminary results of these surveys indicate that unemployment ranged between 15%

and 17% during 1976". The member says after they came in in 1976. In power for some three months, don't even know where their offices are yet and they can bring about some massive improvement in unemployment in that period of time.

As far as the economy is concerned and this sluggishness that he referred to, this is the same report I am referring to, the Central Bank of Barbados Report. I am on page 3.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: If the hon. member would say how long he will be....

Mr. SANDIFORD: I am using up my full time. I am quite prepared if the session is ended now to continue on the next occasion.

Hon. H. P. St. JOHN: I understand, Mr. Speaker, that we will not be in a position to finish today. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member because he would like to continue, so I believe.

Mr. SPEAKER: Private Members' Time has expired.

THE ADJOURNMENT

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 22nd January, 1980, at 12 o'clock noon.

Mr. SISNETT: I beg to second that.

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