
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1976 – 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 24th February, 1981.

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

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P., (Speaker); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, C.B.E., J.P.; Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment); Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, LL.B., (Minister of Communications and Works); Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Health and National Insurance); Mr. J. G. ODLE, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees); Mr. M. C. C. WARD; Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry) (Leader of the House); Mr. V. L. JOHNSON, M.A.; Hon. L. R. TULL, M.A., (Minister of Education and Culture); Mr. L. L. SISNETT; and His Honour E. E. ALLEYNE, LL.M., (Deputy Speaker).

Prayers were read by Archdeacon F. A. Cayless.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW and Dr. HAYNES entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday the 17th day of February, 1981.

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

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

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

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: His Excellency the Governor General has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, he has appointed Laurisford LeRoy Sisnett, Esq., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, to be a Temporary Minister for the period 23rd February to 1st March, 1981, and to be responsible for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve of the lease of land at Prescod Boulevard, Fontabelle, St. Michael to Bookers Agencies (Barbados) Limited and, Sir, a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Orange Hill, St. James for the provision of recreational facilities.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$14,473 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1980–81, Part I – Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1980–81, No. 41, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.
12.30 p.m.

Hon. L. L. SISNETT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Larceny Act.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Dr. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. I submitted three Resolutions to the Clerk of this Honourable House before 12 o'clock last Friday with the intention of giving notice if permitted to do so at the appropriate time in accordance with the Standing Orders

which would be today. I would be most grateful if I could be advised as to the fate of those Resolutions.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member should be advised through the Clerk, but they reached me at 5.14 p.m. yesterday for the first time. They are being processed and I will endeavour during the course of the day to give the hon. member an opportunity if they are in order to table them during the day.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following questions:

To enquire of the Minister of Legal Affairs —

1. Will the Minister state whether it is intended to hold a Coroner's inquest into the deaths of two young persons formerly of Clifton Hall in the parish of Saint John which followed an explosion from a government owned vehicle parked in the vicinity of their residence?
2. Will the Minister state why no public enquiry has been held so far into the causes of and responsibility for this unusual occurrence?
3. Will the Minister give an assurance that a full investigation will be carried out without any further delay?

To enquire of the appropriate Minister —

1. Is the Minister aware that captains and crews of the Shrimp Trawlers formerly owned by International Seafoods Ltd., offered to remove these vessels to places of safety on the approach of hurricane Allen in the year 1980?
2. Can the Minister state why the officer in charge refused this offer and whether this refusal was on his own initiative?
3. Will the Minister state why the officer in charge did not have the vessels turned around or removed prior to the onset of the hurricane?
4. Will the Minister state the estimated cost of the damage suffered by the trawlers during the hurricane and the actual cost or repairs of the damage?
5. Were the vessels insured against this loss?
6. Has any disciplinary action been taken against those persons whose negligence contributed to or caused the damage suffered by the shrimp trawlers?

To enquire of the Minister of Communications and Works —

1. Is the Minister aware that frequent requests have been made by the inhabitants of Newcastle in the parish of Saint John to have the road leading to Ben Spring made serviceable?
2. Is the Minister aware that vehicles of the Waterworks Department experience considerable difficulty in passing over this road?
3. Will the Minister direct that the surface of the Ben Spring road be upgraded as a matter of priority?

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On motion of Hon. L. L. SISNETT, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, a Bill to amend the Larceny Act was read a first time.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 58 asked by the hon. member for St. Michael South, is now ready.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

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

THE MORTGAGE INSURANCE (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1981

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 2 stands in the name of the Hon. Prime Minister to move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Mortgage Insurance Act.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, this Bill has a twofold purpose. It is to implement Government's decision and the responsibility of the administration of the Mortgage Insurance Scheme to be transferred from the Housing Authority to the Insurance Corporation of Barbados; and secondly to implement a budgetary proposal of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in relation to the creation of a Chattel Mortgage Insurance Fund. I said Housing Authority earlier, but the actual Act set out in the original Act was the Urban Development Corporation Act, but I believe that the functions and powers of the Urban Development Corporation were by subsequent legislation transferred to the Housing Authority, so that the original Act may well have read Urban Development Corporation.

Hon. members will be aware that it is an essential plank of the Government's platform that funds should flow into housing in Barbados. Since we assumed office this Government has taken a number of measures in this direction. I need hardly recall to hon. members of this House that the situation which was in existence in 1976 where the vast majority of borrowers for building of houses or extension of houses had to pay interest rates and capital repayments over a very short period of time. I think it would be true to say that the average period for the average mortgage was somewhere in the vicinity of seven years. However there were a number of Trust institutions in Barbados in some banks who were extending the period of time of up to twenty years, particularly those mortgages which qualified for insurance under the Mortgage Insurance Scheme. However an analysis of the situation in existence at that time showed that further efforts at prodding institutional lenders in Barbados was necessary together with a fiscal and legal regime to ensure that any objections they had to lending, however valid those objections may be, would have to be removed.

Mr. GREAVES entered the Chamber and took his seat.

12.40 p.m.

One of the difficulties that one found as expressed by them was the higher rate of the Mortgage Insurance fee. An examination was done of this and it was found that the existing fee was in the opinion of the Examiner whose opinion Government has accepted too high so that this Bill permits reduction in the fee for the underwriting of Mortgage Insurance by the Insurance Corporation.

In addition, hon. members will be aware that the Government took control by purchasing the remaining interest in the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company and in addition, the National Insurance Board and the National Bank have injected new funds into the Mortgage Finance Company thereby increasing the flow of funds to that public sector Institution which is one of the largest members in this area. However, there was a deciding gap in the Institutional arrangements for lending money to the type of houses which formed a large part of the housing stock in Barbados, mainly Chattel Mortgages.

The Government, after a thorough examination of this situation came to the conclusion that one of the constraints of lending by Financial Institutions on Chattel Mortgages was their belief that a chattel building security was uncertain. Consequently, in the Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance in 1980, a proposal was set out by this Honourable House where the Government would create a Chattel Building Mortgage Fund which would act as a Secondary Mortgage Institution and purchase mortgages as well as it would act as a guarantee to Financial Institu-

tions who lend on chattel buildings by way of Mortgage security.

This also has in it an insurable element so that we really equate the Mortgage on a chattel building from the point of view of insurability of that Mortgage with that of land. We believe that this is another step in the right direction taken by the Government to remove all excuses which we hear from time to time from Financial Institutions as to why they are not lending money for chattel buildings.

The Government feels that this Bill in conjunction with the Freehold Tenancies option of Purchase Bill which was passed by this Honourable House and which relates both to Plantation Tenancies as well as Urban Tenancies, with the passage of this Bill today, all of the reasonable constraints should be removed. But let it not be understood that it is the intention of this Government to upgrade the standard of housing in Barbados.

We feel that a package of measures have now been passed by the Government of Barbados. We feel that Government has made it abundantly clear to Financial Institutions in Barbados that part of the Saving Accounts in Barbados should flow into Housing. We feel that there must be a will now by these Financial Institutions to bend their minds towards the implementation of Government policy in this direction.

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

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

Dr. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in supporting this measure I would just like to comment on a problem to which my attention has been drawn more and more in recent years in the past developments particularly across Barbados.

My constituency has benefited from the housing policy of Government so far as developers have been given the incentives to go ahead with Housing Development and they have developed Lowlands, Chancery Lane and Ealing Park quite significantly. There is an old provision in the Highway Act, Sir, whereby the Ministry of Communications and Works does not repair roads in developments unless the roads have been handed over to the Government in the vicinity. It is a very old official procedure which has imposed considerable hardships on a lot of people.

We have a situation where 200 taxpayers are lot holders and house holders in a particular development which may be five or ten years old. The road is in a state of disrepair but the Ministry of Communications and Works is constantly by-passing repairs of the roads

although the residents are citizens of this country and taxpayers of this country on the ground that the roads have not been handed over to the Government of the day.

It seems to me, Sir, that that has no place in the Barbados of today so that what the Ministry ought to insist upon is that developers meet a certain minimal standard in putting down the roads and thereafter the roads are immediately taken over by the Government since the roads are roads used by the people of Barbados and the people who live there are citizens of this country and the taxpayers.

There is a place particularly in relation to the roads in Ealing Park where the roads in Ealing Park have fallen into a state of embarrassing disrepair and it is gradually happening with the roads in Chancery Lane, a development which has already 150 houses and all we meet with by the officers of the Ministry of Communications and Works is that these roads have not been handed over and they seem to rejoice in that and they never address their minds to the question of the roads, do the roads need to be repaired and are these people entitled to have these roads repaired as citizens and taxpayers of this country? This is a matter which I would like to draw to the attention of the Ministry because it may be that we need to change that policy completely and let all the people of this country benefit from all the services and the facilities which the Government has to offer.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I must answer the hon. member. I believe the hon. member has been in politics long enough. I believe he has researched into the political history of this country and therefore if he wants to make a complaint against the Ministry of Communications and Works, he ought to put it in its true perspective. If he is interested in any particular road in a development he ought to understand the situation and I believe he would understand it far better than I would understand it because he knows the political history of Barbados far better than I do.

It goes back pretty far, Mr. Speaker, and it started with the transfer from the Vestry to Local Government to the present day administration. In the old Vestry system, land owners paid taxes and taxes were divided into various parts, some for road repairs, some for water and all other things like that. You moved from the Vestry to Local Government. You move from Local Government to Central Government. Under the old Highway Act, it was a question of the take-over of roads by the Central Government which meant that the Central Government was taking roads out of the Jurisdiction of the Vestry or the Local Government.

12.50 p.m.

We well remember Local Government disappeared because if you could not get Mottley out of the City you had to take the City from Mottley, and the roads were caught up in this whole thing. We come into the modern day stage when developers developed roads and sold the land.

The Government will be faced with these problems for a very long time, because many of the roads in developments have been put down to a standard which has not been accepted by the Engineers at MCW. We have looked at this. In recent years the Town and Country Planning Department has been insisting that plans show the road construction methods, and they are approved by the Ministry of Communications and Works. There are a number of developments which were passed before that aspect of town and country planning development came into operation.

Every year, in fact for a number of years, you had new developments opening up with roads being put in and a few lots being sold. Now, I must defend my Ministry in this. You have a development with a number of lots, half the lots have been sold and the other half are still in the possession of the developer. No street lights have been put in, the Waterworks has been asked to put in water on one side of the road, so you get one house going up at one corner of a road, a house at the next corner, and they go up intermittently. Waterworks is asked to put in water, so you cut a line to the first house, you cover up that; you cut a line to the next house, you cover up that, you end up with a road with bumps and cracks, but the developer still owns half the lots in the development.

This Ministry is now spending \$496,000 to repair the development in Christ Church by the Christ Church Lighthouse of which many of the lots are still owned by the developer, but when he was selling those lots originally they were being sold at a dollar per square foot. As soon as you go and improve the roads at the expense of the general taxpayers of the country, the developer then charges \$1.80 or \$2.00 per square foot for the land, because he now has roads of a proper standard. You have enhanced the value of the land remaining to the developer.

Now, I am going to call the name of another development. There is a development in St. James — I had better not call the name — and this is a special one, Mr. Speaker. This development had its roads laid out, water put in and all the fanciful things, but the developer sold only the lots, reserving the roads and the verges to the developer. There was to be a Citizens Committee to manage and upkeep the whole development. As I understand it, the original developer, after selling a few lots and after trying to get out one purchaser who got in, decided to sell the whole estate to somebody else. My Ministry is being pressured to come in and fix the roads now, but

half the lots are still available to the original developer. The roads and verges are still in the possession of the developer, but the few people living in the development ring MCW every day asking us to come in and fix the roads.

Now, where do we go? When one gentleman came to me, I said "why don't you go back to the developer and tell him that he still owns the verge, the roads and lots in the development?" But it is expected that Government will fix every road in this country, irrespective of whether the development had been sold completely or not. And it is not only private developers, National Housing took over lands from Barbados Commonwealth Development up in Oxnards and have come up with the same problem. They have sold the houses and National Housing still owns the verges, the roads and suckwells, and then they tell MCW that we must now go in and repair the roads. They belong to them, but we must go and repair them, and this is the problem we face.

As the hon. member for St. Philip South has said, there is no administration that can provide all the money in a year to fix all the roads that are necessary to be fixed. We spend the money to help the greatest number of people along a given road. That is how it is done when I am sitting down in the chair. We go through, we look at all the roads, we look to see how many houses are involved, we look to see the type of ownership, how much money we have to spend, and that is how it is done. Everybody expects that roads in their constituency must be done when they say so. If I had the money, if I had the workmen, it would be done, but we have to understand something. There are a number of people living in 14 x 9 houses down dirt tracks, even today, that must have some of the sweets that are being spread around. They must. St. Michael, Christ Church and part of St. James have had all the attention over the past 15 to 16 years and there are other areas that must have some of the attention. If people move into new developments and have new roads and in the space of four or five years the roads have been broken up, they have got to give a chance to those who have been walking in mud all the time. We want to take the mud from between the toes of the poor people who cannot do better.

The Government has just passed the Plantation Tenancies Bill, and the Government will be under pressure to provide proper roads for those people, because in most of the tenancies from the time the last administration passed what they called the Household Bill, the Tenancies Bill, no roads have been done. Those people have been walking with either two pairs of shoes or one pair of shoes and a bottle of water, because when they hit the main road they have to start and wash their feet and put on the shoes, or put one pair of shoes in the cane bunch until they come back from town and put them back on to get in. Also, as the hon. member said, the doctor cannot get into them. If anything happens, the

doctor can still get into the developments. He might get a little bump or so, but he must still get in.

We did over 23 miles of tenantry roads last year. At the end of this year I am told we will do about 32 miles of tenantry roads, because we are spreading it around, and if those people who live in the high class areas believe that they are entitled to all the benefits, no, they will get some and somebody else will get some.

You, Mr. Speaker, down in your constituency, you know as well as the world.....

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the people of St. Peter.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Right. You know you and I went out and I told you my policy. Last week I went with the hon. member — from where? (A VOICE: Cane Vale). Cane Vale — the hon. member for Cane Vale, and I saw a development that when the rain falls everybody walks in mud. I heard the Town Planner sent an enforcement notice for the woman to rectify the area, but, Mr. Speaker, if you look to the south, if you look to the north, if you look to the east of this development there are nice, good roads, posh houses.

1.00 p.m.

These forty odd houses down in the bottom, all board and shingle houses, two-roof board and shingle houses with banjo strings running all over the place are entitled to some of the benefits as well. They may not be taxpayers by virtue of land, but they pay taxes, consumption tax, all kinds of tax like anybody else; they have to get a little piece too. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can tell the people in his constituency. As the Deputy Prime Minister will tell you, the development up by the lighthouse was passed under the Board of Health Act, 1950. Nobody looked it up since then; we have got to go back and dig up everything. It is \$496 000 in that development alone, so what can we do? We can only spend what money we have and spread it around as best we could, and that is the way that we will deal with it.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition say in here one year that come January he was moving all the equipment into his constituency. He went and paved Kendal from the top to the bottom because he recognised that the people in the tenantry wanted something too. I do not know if he did Henley, but that is how we are going to do it. I apologise for not being able to give everybody what they want at the same time. I just cannot do it. We had problems last year, as a matter of fact, for the last two years. Mr. Speaker, we could not get colas. At the end of last year we were one-third behind in the supply position of colas coming from Mobil to M.C.W. This year we are faced with the fact that we have major development going on, and we

have problems in delivery. We cannot get carpenters, we cannot get masons. In my Ministry I have asked the Minister of Education to start a course at the Community College to teach young men the rudiments of construction so that we can draw supervisors out of there if we want to get work done. It takes time. As the Deputy Prime Minister said some time ago, we are victims of our own doings. Do you know why? We put the country on a good footing; we started a development thrust in this country to find therefore that the last administration did not provide the work force with the technical skills and ability that we need.

I saw a Mr. Ulric Rice writing in the paper on Sunday talking about why M.C.W. should take twelve weeks to fix a bridge in Bay Street. Mr. Speaker, people do not understand. If you go up there now you will see the underground surfaces that are down there. we had to use the skills we had and the best method of finding the underground services. There is gas, there is water, there is electricity, there is telephone. After we took off the top surface then we had to wait for the utility men to come and divert the services before we could go in with the heavy equipment. After we got in the heavy equipment, Mr. Speaker, anybody can say what they feel like saying. We have got the iron bent, we have got the shuttering made, we have everything to move in, we are planning to work sixteen hours a day to put Bay Street back in order; but believe you me, we are short of supervisors with technical skill at M.C.W.

The Government has started a Skills Training Programme. We are getting carpenters coming out now in six weeks from a skills training programme and saying they are carpenters, but we have to take them. We cannot do better. It is useless sending people out to work when they cannot produce, but the country must understand things will get better, not worst, and we are no magicians on this side.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I will make a short contribution on this Bill which from the Objects and Reasons set out very clearly the purpose of the Bill. I believe that the question of mortgage insurance is something which is important particularly when it comes to the question of insurance of properties and the houses in which people live. Today the chattel housing stock in Barbados seems to be undergoing very serious pressure in terms of the damage which is being done by fires to people's homes. I think this is a matter which is of uttermost significance to Barbadians who are concerned about our national life, and when we have situations where chattel houses are being destroyed to the extent that one is finding nowadays, then I think that the time has come when proper stock must be taken of this matter, and certainly an attempt to cover some measure of security by extending the provisions of the Mortgage Insurance Act to make it possible for persons who

presumably would have had a mortgage to construct a chattel house which would have some measure of coverage which they might not have been entitled to before under the existing legislation, I believe this is a step in the right direction. I think it is something which we should look at and certainly this is something which will be of assistance particularly to those persons who are at present buying chattel houses.

I think, however, Mr. Speaker, that on the whole question of the type of houses which we have in Barbados that some serious attention should be paid to the kind of structures which we put up particularly in the future. It would seem to me that any Government in this country, whether it is the Barbados Labour Party administration, the Democratic Labour Party administration or any other administration should be now looking towards ensuring that we have the kind of structure in Barbados that could withstand to some degree the ravages of fire, that is where we are talking about wall structures, and indeed to withstand the possibility of being blown down or destroyed by hurricanes which we find threatening our country from time to time, and therefore threatening the housing stock. I would think that any Government in this country would be concerned with that, and I take it it is pretty clear that both the Barbados Party administration and indeed the Democratic Labour Party administration in the past and certainly the next Democratic Labour Party administration which will be taking over the Government of this country is concerned fundamentally with providing proper housing stock in this country.

I believe that every effort should be given towards ensuring that there is some considerable improvement in the structures which are put up in this country and I should like to urge on the Government and certainly throw it out as a matter of national concern that every effort should be made where considerable resources could be directed towards improving the quality of these structures, and I believe that posterity will commend us for moving in that direction because the quality of housing in any country must of course add to the quality of life which exists in the community.

Now a further point which I should like to make, Mr. Speaker, relates to problems which potential homeowners in this country have. Now as I understand it at the present moment, people are required to provide in some instances I think about 10% if they want to build a house. If they want to get a mortgage at least they have to provide I think about 10% of the amount, and with today's prices this is causing a considerable amount of problems to people. If you think in terms for example of a house which might cost in the vicinity of \$60,000 or \$70,000, it means that one would have to at least start off with probably about \$10,000 when you take

into consideration the other legal fees and the other things which you would necessarily have to provide.
1.10 p.m.

I am submitting that this is causing considerable hardships to a number of people who would like to own houses in this country. Again, I think this is another area of concern for any administration which will be running this country and I believe that any Government which is concerned with providing decent and proper housing for people in Barbados must give again some serious thought to this matter and possibly look at the position of reviewing the kind of payment and the kind of monies which people are asked to put out in order to own a house in this country and this is in the light of the recent cost which we find in the area of housing because, let us face it, with the present cost which we have, the question of house ownership, in my view, will continue to escape a vast majority of people in this country and we should encourage house ownership and we have to do something in the area of removing the kind of deposits which is required even to the extent in moving to a situation where we very well might have to guarantee 100% Mortgage for people in this kind of area.

I am concerned about this and I believe that any person who is concerned about the question of house ownership should have a look at this and I think it is a matter which any Government should give some urgent attention to.

I note, as I said, that part of the provisions of this Act, one of the reasons seeks to make it possible for chattel houses now to be covered by Insurance, particularly those for which Mortgages have been obtained and I would like to say that certainly we have nothing against that. We support this particular measure but will go further, as I said, and suggest that we take a very serious look at the kind of structure of our houses and the type of houses being provided and at the same time look at the kind of deposits which people at this present moment have to provide if they want to own a house and I am saying that this is a hardship and we should try to remove this hardship as much as possible because we would certainly want to encourage house ownership in this country.

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister caught my eye.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was very glad to hear the important social statement made by the Minister of Communications and Works which accords with the political philosophy of this Government. What came through very clearly is that this Government is determined to spread its wealth and resources of this

country in a fairly even way among all sectors of the community and this principle of political egalitarianism should be considered not as a matter of convenience at the moment but as a creed by which this Government operates now and in the future.

The type of social development that is required in Barbados today necessitates a proper understanding of the historical position in which we find ourselves. This Bill that is being brought before Parliament today, Sir, seeks to redress a number of imbalances that have existed in our social system for all of this country's history.

Now all of us are aware, Sir, that the chattel house has been the main means of abode for a vast majority of people in this country for all of its history, yet the people who live in chattel houses and who own them were always placed in a position of being at a disadvantage in relation to those who owned permanent structures and if you take a look, Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the people in Plantation Tenancies, you will find that those people suffer what can be classified as double jeopardy.

These people had no security of tenure because they lived on Plantation land that was renting and for a long period of our history those people suffered sling and arrows and the outrageous fortunes that were inflicted on them by the Plantation owners. They could be moved around at will and it was only in the middle of the 1960's that some serious form of control was brought into the security of the people who lived in the Plantation Tenancies so there was a lack of security first and secondly they were caught in the fact that if they were living in chattel houses they could not get Mortgage finance for the improvement of their homes.

This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, seeks to give them a further measure of security in their social lives and also future security in the area of protecting and developing their homes.

One of the things that always troubles me and I always speak from the perspective of a Parliamentary representative for the largest constituency of agricultural people, the largest agricultural community in Barbados, and something that has always troubled me is the fact that so many of the people who work in the Sugar Industry have to live in very close proximity to the sugar fields and in this country where over the last decade or so there has been a serious rise in cane fires, they have been living in perpetual fear for the few months of the year that their houses might go up in flames at any moment.

I have asked questions on a number of occasions in this place and indeed in the Other Place in another speech about some type of rationalisation of the allocation of house spots in Plantation Tenancies so that people's

houses would not be in so close proximity to the cane fields and the fires that they could feel like many people in other areas the relative security when they go to sleep at nights and indeed when they go out to work during the day.

The Government in bringing this piece of legislation before Parliament is also giving additional assistance to another sector of the workers in this country that I believe as a representative in the constituency in St. George South, I should put a word in for them too and those are the carpenters. The carpenters over a period of our history in this country have made a large contribution to our development and they did it because people lived primarily in chattel houses and they did a lot of work building and repairing chattel houses so they have made their contribution and are continuing to make their contribution and therefore this type of legislation enhances their prospects for their own personal development for the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is important for me, talking again from the background of a rural constituency to make some reference to something that is of current interest and I am talking, Sir, about the surplus amount of money earned in the Sugar Crop last year.

I realise that the amount is \$81 million that was earned from sugar during the last calendar year and this money has been earned not only through the Plantations who plant canes and peasant farmers who plant canes but through the efforts of the people who reap and process canes and these are the people who live in the agricultural districts who work very very hard in the cruel and brutal sun in conditions that are extremely difficult for anybody in these days, Sir, to reap the sugar crop and make it possible for the country to obtain the type of earnings over the last year and justice demands that the people who live in the rural areas, the agricultural areas, be given a fair share of the fruits of their labour.

Now I am not talking about the money they should get as a result of the negotiations between the Sugar Producers Association and the Barbados Workers' Union. Of course they are entitled to the money and they will get it and some of us will make the appropriate noise at the right time and at the right place about it.
1.20 p.m.

I am not talking only about last year's earnings, I am talking about the earnings of sugar year after year after year, and the earnings from sugar go into the general economy of Barbados and help all the people who live in the development areas all around Christ Church, St. James and so on, and when the people in developed areas are complaining about a pot hole in the road, in the street in which they live, the people in the constituency which I have the honour to represent complain that there is no road at all and that they have to walk through the grass-

piece, Sir, and get their eyes taken out by the dunks trees, the prickles of the dunks trees. They have to walk through these areas to reach their homes, Sir, and of course I have to walk through them too, because I have a duty to go and see them from time to time.

When you are hearing these people who live in these development areas complaining about a little piece of the road breaking away, they seem not to understand that there are people throughout this country in the rural districts who are not complaining about a pot hole, they are complaining that they do not have a road at all.

My own opinion, Mr. Speaker, is that it is time that some serious effort is made to do a re-allocation of the resources of this country to allow the people who live in the agricultural belt to have the quality of their life enhanced so that they will feel that they too are proud Barbadians. You look not only at the roads, but at all the services. I go through parts of Barbados and I find that at this stage in our development people do not have running water in their houses, not because they do not want it, Sir, but because there are no mains running through their district and it would cost them a fortune to run water into their homes from the nearest main.

Now, I want to congratulate the Minister of Communications and Works who for the first time that any Minister of Communications and Works has given an undertaking which he has begun to carry out to bring water to every single house in Barbados. I am still a little bit concerned about certain aspects of my constituency in that regard, but I have firm undertakings that they are all caught in the pale of this new policy and development as espoused by the Minister of Communications and Works. Mr. Speaker, in my call for these social services, these essential services for the people in the agricultural belt in Barbados, I am not calling on the Government for them as any favour to the people in the areas of which I speak, I am demanding them as a right. These people make their contributions, they make contributions far beyond those made by other sectors in the community, and they have a right to have all these services, in the 1980's all these services should be brought to them with the greatest dispatch.

Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill that is brought before Parliament to ensure that the owners of chattel houses will be able to get mortgages and will have a greater security in their living is a significant and far-reaching piece of legislation. I know this term is bandied about too often from time to time, but nobody, no member of this Chamber can deny his or her connections with the chattel house at one stage or the other of his or her own existence. Either they lived in one, or their parents live in one, or their grandparents live in one. Even the right hon. member for St. John said that he lives in a chattel house now in Black Rock. That is what he says, and therefore we cannot

lose sight of our responsibility to bring home finally and irrevocably to the people who are less privileged in our community, and who by and large live in chattel houses, bring home to them finally the true rewards of their labour in this community.

I have great pleasure in supporting this important piece of legislation.

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation that we are seeking to have passed in the House of Assembly today represents a very significant forward step in the social development planning for the island of Barbados under the Barbados Labour Party.

I believe, Sir, that one of the most urgent, if not the most urgent, social problem which continues to threaten this island is that of housing. We only begin to appreciate the dimensions of the problem when, as this Government has done, we undertake the most progressive public construction programme which we have seen in this area for a long, long time. Over the last five years this Government has been able to erect many, many new houses on the order of over one thousand houses in last year alone, over one thousand houses in one year alone, and even with that programme of construction, one of the most frustrating tasks that a conscientious member of Parliament particularly in an urban constituency has to face is that of turning away people daily because there is not enough housing to accommodate all those persons seeking to have a house to live in. Obviously, Sir, the Government by itself will never be able to provide the resources with which to embark upon the total eradication of this problem. It will necessitate the co-operative ventures of both public and private sector organisations working jointly and in consort in order to make a significant dent in the problem.

I do not know if it has gone home, even to members in this Chamber, how significant and far-reaching this particular piece of legislation is, because it introduces to the life of Barbados a brand new perspective with respect to the provision of housing for our people. It represents a fundamental departure from the traditional thinking, because of its boldness and because of the fact that it is going to touch a significantly large section of our population hitherto neglected.

Now, Sir, as I understand it, there has been within recent times a call for the eradication of the thinking of the 18 x 10 house. I believe that the Barbados Workers' Union has been saying it is time for us to get away from the 18 x 10 mentality. Well, Sir, if we were to eradicate all the 18 x 10's in this island we would launch one of the most devastating hurricanes that this country has ever seen, because a great and very large

section of our housing stock is still in the neat 18 x 10 structures that can be found all around this island. 1.30 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that even 18 x 10s can still continue to afford a measure of self respect and accomplishment to those persons who would not ordinarily be able to shelter themselves. I do not think, Sir, that the fact that I spent a good portion of my early time in two 18 x 10s, one behind the other, has in any significant manner diminished the contribution that I can make to the further development of Barbados, and I do not think that there are too many of us in this Chamber who can escape the legacy in some small way of the 18 x 10. It is a beginning, Sir, and it is an important beginning because as we look around this country we see the 18 x 10s becoming flat topped bungalows using a little imaginative flair, and if you were to look at the cost of housing, there is no point in building excessively large structures just to demonstrate to the public that you have money to burn.

I believe, Sir, that one of the legacies that Barbados has is a legacy of thrift, and consequently the 18 x 10, or whatever you want to call it, house in my estimation will continue for a long time to represent the settled accomplishment of some small cross section of our people. But this legislation, Sir, is so comprehensive and so far-reaching and so revolutionary that it is now for the first time going to encompass the chattel house which hitherto was a house built completely on self effort and without any assistance whatsoever from any lending institution — the only lending institution that was prepared to gamble on the erection of a chattel house was the lumber yard which usually gave some concession until the crop came in, but the Government of Barbados has started off on this road of complete emancipation of our people by providing mortgage assistance for all classes of houses. The board house has now come of its own, Sir, and with treated lumber I will expect that board houses will continue to be here for a very very long time indeed, but when now a man who aspires to owning his own house can go into the Mortgage Finance Company, meet the requirements for down payment and then leave with upwards of 30 years to finance that house, any thinking man will be able to appreciate the extent and the far-reaching nature of this piece of legislation. Everybody now in this Island who can muster up a few thousand dollars will finally be able to build his own house, and the pressures upon Government for building inner city housing, high terrace housing etc. will no longer be as severe, because people will be able to provide a great measure of their own resources, provided of course as I said before they are able to meet the very minimum requirements.

This Act, Sir encompasses the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. As I look upon recent occurrences in

this Island, a very frightening rash of fires in chattel houses, I believe it is time for us, the Government of Barbados, to give some serious thought to requiring that all wood structures, indeed that all structures in which people live — I mean new structures from here on out — should be covered by insurance. This will be one of the requirements under the new Act, but there will still be a number of people who will be building, using their own resources, and I believe it is an enormous and unnecessary risk for a man to spend \$20 000 odd building a house and then leave it uncovered against all kinds of perils. Even the household items in these houses ought likewise to be covered. The premium in these circumstances will be relatively small and I believe it is a small price to pay against the enormous hardship that ensues when a fire sweeps through one of these houses so vulnerable to fire. We have seen after the hurricane Allen that just recently passed that a good many householders have had their houses damaged by the hurricane, and many of these houses were not covered by insurance, and the Government then had to come to rescue in order to make good some of the losses. I believe, Sir, it is time that we start teaching people the importance of taking these very elementary precautionary measures to safeguard what for them is the biggest single investment that they are likely to make in their life time.

I believe, Sir, that we need as well in Barbados a comprehensive building code that will cover all classes of construction because it is my view that as we become increasingly developed as a nation, we have to become increasingly sophisticated in the requirements of standards which we set to demonstrate to the world that we are truly developed, and I believe that it is not enough to knock together a few boards, but I believe it should be necessary particularly with this class of house we are discussing today for a building code to be drawn so that unnecessary risks to the investment made are not taken by people who are prepared to take short cuts for whatever reasons they may choose to take their short cuts. Electrical, building construction standards, drainage, all these are matters into which I believe at this point in time we need to go if we are to continue to serve the people of this country in the fashion to which I think they are entitled.

Further, Sir, as I look at the hodgepodge of amendments that have come down to this House from time to time, I believe that we again need to sit down for a long time and look at the legislation currently on the books to see whether or not it would not serve us better to introduce a comprehensive new programme of social development legislation. To come down here and delete one word and delete another word and delete one clause and put in another clause does not appear always in my view to be the best course to pursue.

1.40 p.m.

I would like us to take a look to see whether or not some of these old Acts in the book do not need to be scrapped altogether and new carefully thought out measures introduced in order to deal comprehensively once and for all with the 1980 requirements of a sophisticated and developing country.

I believe, Sir, that if we look in these directions we will better serve the people who elected us to serve and we will be able to eliminate some of the inconveniences caused by taking small amendments of Acts that are for most useful purposes outdated.

I would like to commend the Government, Sir, for this very bold, imaginative and resourceful step it has taken towards bringing housing in the reach of almost every single Barbadian working today and those who are not working but who are dependents of those that labour will now, in my view, Sir, be able in a very significant measure to participate in the onward thrust of Barbados and to see the rewards of their labours.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in making a contribution on this Bill which now stands before this Honourable House, Sir, I am sure I will be forgiven if I strike a note on what may not be other than caution.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the last speaker who just sat down suggesting that this was a bold and imaginative step. I think, Sir, that we in Barbados must be very careful not to go thumping our chests and slapping ourselves on the back when we have managed to accomplish that which seems natural and that which seems evolutionary in the context of what we ought by now to have come to expect for all the people in Barbados.

I learn more towards what the hon. member for St. George South had to say in the context of the distribution of resources in this country, Sir, and by this Bill I hope that housing too is taking this step out of the adversary political conflict and into the arena of social development which all of us who claim to be interested in the masses of this country and hope for should strive to see come to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, I will not join those who seek or who may seek to re-establish links with the chattel house, Sir, for I have not yet left it. I do not think that is necessary. I think that anyone who lives in Barbados, who is still unaware or who may be unaware of the virtues of those who have passed through the chattel house days, is either a very young person or a person who is blind to the realities of his own situation.

We, in this country, have a way, Sir, of paying lip service to a number of social and economic issues, words of high purpose and great content having been uttered, there is

a tendency to turn away from the real problem and wait for the next occasion to utter similar words.

I make bold to say, Sir, that there continues to be in this society among a number of persons who ought to know better, Sir, a complete lack of social conscience and this is better exemplified in the attitude which can still be found in the so-called Banks in Barbados, Sir. No one needs to point out the relatively high morality which has emerged from the so-called chattel house and yet, Sir, only last week I had the very painful experience of having to say to a young man of 23 years who had managed to get a job working as a seaman. He had been working for 17 months, Sir.

This young man had come to see me to suggest that he wanted to set up his own house. I recommended to him that if he should purchase a piece of land, since the Governmental system did not permit everyone who wanted so far to be able to purchase a house built by Government. We understand that, Sir, I suggested to him that since he had a fairly good job that he could go to the Bank where he had been banking his money and having identified the small piece of land, 6,000 sq.ft., to be exact, that he should seek from that Bank some assistance by way of a Mortgage in order to own the land and subsequently a house.

Mr. Speaker, you can imagine my disappointment and some embarrassment when he was able to report to me that a so-called Loans Officer said to him that he had not been working long enough to establish credit and therefore the Bank could not lend him the amount of money that would be required in order to own this piece of land.

Mr. Speaker, it would be obvious that the land would form part of the security which such a person would need but, Sir, the land is being purchased in a place that could be described as lower socio-economic. The person who was going to purchase it was an ordinary Barbadian who had no connections. All he had was his character, his credibility as being a working person and a willingness to pay his way in the World and yet he has had to go out to work without the comfort of knowing that he was able to purchase a piece of land in his native country.

Mr. Speaker, I say that that is an indication of a lack of social conscience. The policies with commercial industries in Barbados have not been informed by any society generally speaking on their part to participate in the general upliftment of the ordinary masses in this country. It seems to me, Sir, that no Government ought to be required in the year of our Lord 1980, 1981 or 1982 to foot the entire Bill for the economic and social upliftment of the broad masses of the community.

It seems to me that we have enough Institutions which have benefited from the efforts and the output of a large number of people who have come through the so-called chattel houses and who ought to be in a position now to recognise their social responsibility and who will while being prudent ought to be able to place their stand alongside that of the major political parties in the thrust for a higher quality of life and a better Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I heard earlier reference to the difficulties which are encountered by those persons who live in the rural areas of Barbados. Far be it from my joining in any attempt to pit one set of Barbadians against another set of Barbadians. Invariably those who now live in the so-called Terraces are persons who only yesterday, it seems, were living down in the Valleys and there is not much difference between the Barbadian generally speaking who lives in the Terraces and those whom they have left behind. Invariably part of their extended families and in some cases part of their nuclear families are still living down below in their chattel houses. All of them can look with a certain amount of verity to that phenomenon.

1.50 p.m.

But what is even more interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that one does not have to go into St. Joseph or St. George or St. Lucy to find the conditions which have been described by other hon. members earlier today. I shall not repeat statements and speeches which I have made in here, Sir, I shall not even speak about the situation existing within a radius of one mile from Bridgetown. I saw recently that the hon. member for St. James was talking about Licorish Village. Licorish Village is not in the country, Sir, it is within a radius of one mile from the centre of Bridgetown.

The point I am making, Sir, is that continuously in Barbados, in spite of the best efforts of both political parties, we can still find conditions that are not commensurate with the bold, imaginative steps that are said to be taken with the high, lofty words that are spoken. We walk through valleys, we walk through roads, we walk through tracks just going off Barbarees Hill, just going off Government Hill, just going off My Lords Hill, just going off areas that are discovered and described as urban areas.

Mr. Speaker, the question of placing a road in a constituency is what representatives are forced to ask for, and you will hear more of that as election time comes up and each representative is called upon to give an account of his stewardship. Those who have not been toiling over the last four years will not be able to toil in the last year, Sir, it will be too late. Those who have toiled and have not been successful will be able to point to those whose wont it was not to allow them to be successful, but that is not the point. What is important is that when we come

with a Bill like this we must take care not to give the people of Barbados the wrong kind of hope.

I heard the hon. member for St. Michael West, soon to be a Senator, Sir, I heard the hon. member saying words to the effect that everybody now who could muster up a few thousand dollars will be able to build his own house; words to that effect. Mr. Speaker, the mere allocation of a few million dollars from Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation or the Insurance Corporation will not by itself allow for the kind of promises which the statement by the hon. member holds out for too many people in this country. In the same way that the Hon. Prime Minister in his budgetary statements have led the people to believe that from the following week or month or even year they would have found mortgage finance for the larger houses readily available, and a number of people have been walking up and down in this country from that time henceforth and have not been able to find this money, similarly statements such as that made by my honourable friend will lead the people of Barbados who have been searching for their own houses, whether you call them chattel houses, 18 x 9's or 18 x 10's or whatever, those people who will go and knock on the door of the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation will only be told that they are to supply more information. How much money are you earning? How long have you been working? Do you have a co-signer? Do you have someone to back this mortgage? Are you married? And a host of other questions which are, mind you, Sir, proper questions to be asked, but which by themselves allow choices to be made in who shall be given mortgage money and who shall not.

I make bold to say, Sir, that there is no hon. member in this Chamber who would have difficulty getting a mortgage if he had to get one, except one or two. (*Asides*). Those who want to get a mortgage for the fifth building or the sixth building, there would be some difficulty, but generally speaking, those who wish a mortgage for a house, I am not talking about those who want to get a mortgage for large apartment buildings and 26 vehicles and that sort of thing, I am talking about genuine mortgages. The point is, Sir, that the average person who really wants to get some assistance with somewhere to live finds it extremely difficult to get past the barriers that are set up by the lending institutions in spite of the policy decisions made by this Parliament, by that Government or this Government, and we must desist from these lofty words which hold out hope. Rather we must become involved in the implementation of these kinds of policies. We must review every three months, if necessary, the policies which we set out. Instead of adumbrating larger and larger portions of legislation on to the books, what we must do is get out into the highways and byways and find out precisely what is going on with the ordinary people.

It is not proper for those who are living up in the hills to step down occasionally and then go back up into the hills and believe that that is sufficient. I wish to compliment the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works. The Minister of Communications and Works said today we are not magic men. I heard him say earlier, speaking of the Government, we are not able. I heard him say another time, Sir, we just cannot do it. This is pristine anxiety that is with us in the context of the kind of debate we are having. (Hon. L. R. TULL: Pristine is not right in that context. Do you not know the English language?) Sir, the Minister of Education has, as he has on more than one occasion, in an attempt to deal with language used by hon. members, has managed to get himself confused.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member likely to complete his address by ten minutes after two?

Mr. TAITT: No, Sir, I think that I will probably be going a little far, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: The time is now 2 o'clock. This sitting stands suspended until 2.45 p.m. today.

On Resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. There is a reply to Parliamentary Question No. 58 asked by the hon. member for St. Michael South whom I do not now see in his place. Let the Reply be laid.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to have the reply to Parliament Question No. 58 laid.

NOTICE OF RESOLUTIONS

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

The hon. member for St. Michael South Central has three Resolutions standing in his name. He may now give notice of them.

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

Whereas there is grave public concern over the cost of food of adequate protein content in Barbados; and

Whereas sea-food constitutes a good source of such protein; and

Whereas International Sea Foods Limited has the capacity to increase the availability of sea-food to Barbadians at a reasonable price; and

Whereas there is an urgent need for an effective and productive policy in relation to that Company,

Be it resolved that this Honourable House call upon the Government to give positive directions and assistance to that Company.

Whereas the wide range of consumption taxes levied in Barbados has contributed significantly to the state of hyperinflation which exists in Barbados today; and

Whereas the burden of those consumption taxes falls most heavily on the middle and lower income groups in this society;

Be it resolved that this Honourable House call upon the Government to undertake a complete reorganisation of the Income Tax structure in Barbados in order to relieve those most affected by those consumption taxes.

Whereas there has been an alarming increase in the distribution and consumption of drugs of addiction in Barbados over the past four (4) years, and

Whereas this situation constitutes a grave threat to the social stability of this Nation,

Be it resolved that this Honourable House call upon the Government to take urgent action to arrest this unfortunate development.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: That brings us to the end of Question Time. It is now time for Private Members' Business.

I am advised that there is no Private Members' Business on the Order Paper and we therefore revert to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken, the hon. member for St. Michael South West was addressing the Chair. I do not now see the same hon. member in his place, and any hon. member who has a contribution to make may do so if he so desires.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, this item which is before this Assembly today deals primarily with a matter which was part and parcel of the budgetary proposals. It is primarily a matter which is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Finance, but it has quite a bit of content in it in relation to housing, and I would just like to make a relatively few brief remarks in the light of a few things which were said earlier. I think the item which is now before us is a back-up of the Plantation Tenancies and Free Leasehold Act. Only a few months ago such a revolutionary piece of legislation was brought down to Parliament and we are all aware by now that some 76% of the housing stock in Barbados is of timber. The Government therefore sees the need to protect people who own chattel houses, and in the light of having the Plantation Tenancies Act which was passed in this Session and knowing that in these particular tenancies there are a number of timber houses, I think the Government should be complimented for introducing this aspect of the legislation so as to protect those persons with those chattel houses.

I am told that over the years it was very difficult to get a mortgage or to have insurance placed on these houses, because one considered the high risk by way of fires, and only quite recently, Sir, I am one of the persons who showed very great concern about the unusual spate of fires which particularly we have seen in the houses built of timber. The Government is doing all in its power to make sure that we can improve the housing stock in the country, but this needs a national effort. Neither the Opposition when they were in office nor this Government, like any other Government in the world, can satisfy all of the housing needs of the entire country. The need starts with young people working, when a country is showing signs of prosperity, and young people are moving away from their homes and setting up their own homes, and because of that they add additional pressure on the authorities to provide adequate housing facilities.

3.00 p.m.

I will like to make reference, Mr. Speaker, since I myself would not like to go into any great detail about Housing since I am the Minister responsible for it because I am quite sure that during the Estimates I will have enough time to say what I have to say in answer to any queries that will probably come from the other side or on this side for that matter, Sir.

I believe that I can feel justly proud with the job which has been done by the National Housing Corporation in producing a better type house, a more sophisticated looking house and a house which is even in its construction and there is even a degree of privacy and strength. I say privacy because the former administration, without any criticism, built houses with a timber fence around them and they now show signs, Sir, of being

tattered and weather beaten and have a rather ragged look.

We have looked at it in the long term since we do not believe in *ac hoc* planning and these houses which we have built, Sir, we have built, for example, with wall fences around them because we have examined the long term effect, Sir, but this debate earlier today went even a little further and the Town Planning Department was brought into the debate and the developers and it is to this aspect of it, Sir, that I would like to address my attention.

I know they have some very ruthless developers in this country. I know that, Sir. I have recognised this since I became in charge of Housing and what the Minister of Communications and Works said today is quite true and that is that the developers put down the roads in these new developments. They sell a few lots recovering almost all of the cost to the developer, and they hold back a few more of the lots waiting for Government to improve the roads and then jack the price up.

For example, a house spot may start at \$1 per sq. ft., but when Government comes in and repairs the road then they go up to \$2 and \$3 per sq. ft. My view, therefore, should be this that I believe a very clear look should be given into this matter by the Government to examine the possibilities of freezing the price of that land. If Government comes in and improve the roads, the developers should not be able to benefit by the improvement of the roads by the Government and therefore, I believe, that both Communications and Works and the Town Planning Office should sit down and examine this aspect of the Law and refer it to the Attorney General's Chambers for a clearly good examination and that is why we in the Ministry of Housing are going to present a Building Code within a few months, Sir.

We have a Housing Planning Unit in the Ministry and it is out of this, Sir, that one should be able to get a clear cut Building Code. The department of Environment should be set up by the 1st April, Sir, and having that many of these problems here we should be able to tackle. It is a very, very serious problem where people buy land and build their houses. The developer puts down the road. The road then becomes all broken up. The Ministry of Communications and Works cannot go in and repair roads and the people who bought the land and build their houses then suffer these great inconveniences by way of bad roads and I believe a very close look should be given to this aspect of the legislation whereby that one should put a stop, should freeze the value of the land after Government comes in and improves the road system in there.

It is not fair for the developer to sit down and wait for Government to improve the roads in those developments and then increase the price on the lots of land. I cannot support that, Sir, and therefore I believe that the answer to that would be something of this nature.

There is another problem in Barbados with our own housing stock. There are some approximately 1,900 derelict houses in St. Michael alone. People are pressing the Ministry and the National Housing Corporation day after day for house spots. They need house spots to put houses which they now own but are living on other lots but they cannot put down their facilities such as toilets and baths and they are examining the possibilities of looking for land so as to improve their own lots and the Ministry day after day is being pressured to get house spots to put houses on for people, Sir.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if I was the Minister of Health in the last administration and represented a district, a constituency in which Licorish Village is, and the only one I will call now, Sir, but there are many I would hang my head in shame knowing that the land at Licorish Village is owned by the Government, Sir. It is Housing Authority land and to see the poor conditions that exist in that area. It is more than depressing and how can a man who represented an area for 10 years as a Minister of Government and had the Portfolios of Minister of Health and then Communications and Works could really visit an area like that and see people living in such depressed conditions.

I made one single visit to that area, Sir, and Dr. Don Blackman, Senator Blackman, took me to that area and cried shame of the depressed conditions. I have never seen anything like that. It is worst than Cat's Castle in the City. We have made provision for Cat's Castle by building St. Cecilia and we are going to make provision for Licorish Village because within a couple of weeks, Sir, I will be bringing before Parliament a Resolution to acquire land in My Lord's Hill owned by the Clarkes to resite the people of Licorish Village there, Sir.

It is something that one cannot really imagine, things looking like bango strings, quarter inch pipes that if you walk through there you would slip. I do not understand how it is possible and knowing that a person represented that area for 10 years as Minister of Government and would have the gall to go back to those people and ask them to support him.

Mr. Speaker, they are changing values in the society. Sir, I hear people talking about being the most amazed persons and we have thousands of applications for people to own homes at West Terrace in St. James.

Thousands of people are applying and the Government has built 500 houses and this is now publicly known but everyday you are having applications coming in for those houses. Now if at that middle income as the middle income group as we refer to it, Sir, you have such pressures you can imagine what it is at the lower-middle income groups. We have thousands of applicants, people applying for houses to buy, not only to rent but to buy and this has only come about because I am told, I would not know, but I am told that the Economists say that when a country is prosperous it can be determined by its building boom and in Barbados there is a building boom in the Housing Development in this country.

3.10 p.m.

My colleague made reference earlier today to the fact that we built over 1,200 houses last year. The correct figure is 1,210. This was a direct approach through Mortgage Finance and the National Housing Corporation. Today the National Housing Corporation is working on five sites alone — St. Cecilia, Bonnetts, the Ivy, Ferniehurst, Rose Hall, Haynesville, and we are going to Maynards shortly, Duncans in St. Philip in a couple of months' time and Six Roads. My colleague just reminded me of Lammings. Those are the seven sites, something that is unheard of in this country by the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I think that in supporting this Resolution we heard nothing from the other side by way of criticising it. I think the member for St. Michael South West made an attempt to be critical of the National Housing Corporation, and of course I will not make reference to the member for St. Lucy because I read what he said today in "The Union Speaks" last Sunday, so that was only reciting what I read. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to support this Resolution, give it all the support that it deserves, and I am quite sure that all Barbadians can be justly proud of the aggressive approach with which the Ministry of Housing has attacked the problem of housing in Barbados.

Only on Friday of last week I made a tour of Nelson Street. I will probably say no more, but at the end of the next Session, at the end of 1976-81 Session I as Minister of Housing — do hear that bold boast? — am going to leave a landmark in the City, because you have St. Cecilia; you have the Greenfields and you have Nelson Street of which all Barbadians can be justly proud, an attack on the City and its environs by way of housing in this country.

I say no more about Nelson Street at this time. (ASIDES). If I used to visit Nelson Street in the day or in the night, it was the university I wanted to go to. I think I saw a lot of my colleagues there also at that university.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the House, there was one point which was raised by the Hon. Minister of Housing.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. Is the Hon. Minister winding up for the Government?

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: No, just one point.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, please, please, please....

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

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 7 were called and passed.

Clause 8 was called.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that clause 8 stand part.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I beg to second that.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it says here: "...loans in respect of which insurance policies have been issued under this Act shall not exceed the sum of \$75 million or such larger sum as Parliament may approve by a Resolution of the House." In the context of setting ceilings, I know that the appropriate clause has been passed, but I am raising this question in the context of setting ceilings.

It seems to me that if we are setting up a mortgage fund for chattel houses, that the concept of limit from 90% would still present some difficulties to a number of persons who will find problems raising the down payment even for a chattel mortgage, even though they might be able to meet mortgage payments increased by, say, another few dollars. It seems to me that there ought to be some discretion, it seems that Parliament ought not to place limits on the amounts which could be given.

I draw attention to the fact that in the old National Housing Corporation system that if a man wanted to get \$6,000 or \$12,000 for repairs, if he met the criteria and if certain circumstances were right, he could get all the money required for repairs. As it stands now, there is a limit being placed, he is not able to get more than 90%, and I am saying that at the level we are attempting through this legislation to assist the public, that it might be worthwhile to include in the legislation a clause which

allows the administering authority in certain circumstances to go beyond the 90%, because otherwise, Mr. Chairman, the law having limited it to 90%, the administrators' hands will be tied and they will not be able to go beyond that, and it may in fact defeat the very purpose for which this legislation has been brought. I wonder if we can hear the Leader of the House on this, Sir.

3.20 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, clause 8 would only inferentially deal with the point raised by the hon. member in that this is a limit to the contingent liability that the Insurance Corporation can undertake, but I presume that he is referring to the practice of ensuring that there is some small equity in the ownership of the house by the borrower. It has been exceedingly difficult to persuade anyone who has to deal with the administration of the Act to accept the view that one can have a 100% mortgage. I know that this is a matter that concerns us all, but the reality does have to come into play. I believe that with the exception of the Veterans Association in the United States and a few other very specialised, mortgage funds have two groups. The limit, even in the United States which has the most generous mortgage terms that I certainly know of, 90% with the exception of certain people. I think that what we have to get across in Barbados is this: that very early in the working life of anyone, people should start to save by way of savings deposits or short term maturity — ten years — insurance schemes to provide this essential down payment. A chattel today would cost somewhere from \$12 000 to \$20 000. That is my understanding.

Mr. TAITT: If the hon. member would give way, the point I was making does not at all move away from the very valid position which the Minister is taking. I am merely saying that just as in the FDA and the Veterans Administration mortgage in the United States, provision is made in the Act for special circumstances. I am only recommending that in this Act we ought not to tie our hands — I acknowledge too that I am speaking *ex post facto* and I should have picked up the point earlier, but I got it in because this is the only point where I could — but what I am saying is that we ought not to tie our hands in legislation. You can have the policy of not lending more than 90% either for repairs or for mortgage, but I do not think that the legislation should legislate that as an absolute. We ought to have left that flexibility which allows the Minister in certain circumstances if necessary to make provision for these special cases similar to the ones in the United States. That is the point I was making.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. I take the point, but I just want to point out one other fact which appears on this matter. The administration of the Act is very

flexible and there is a unique feature about the chattel house situation and indeed about house building in Barbados where people do not buy from a developer, and people must take into account and it is this: that it is 90% of the appraised value, not of the cost. I have been reliably informed that people in Barbados do put in a large amount of their own labour to start with which, having been put in over a period of time, when it comes to getting the mortgage insurance, very often that comes to more than the 10%. It is a unique feature that we have. Anybody who has looked at the conversion from chattel to wall that has taken place in Barbados can recognise that this is something that we must look at in relation to the Barbadian habit. People sometimes buy lumber and accumulate it, get the carpenter to rough it out, the beams and so, and when they come to you for a loan they say that they have the start; so all these factors are taken into account.

I think though that section 4 is the one which attention would have to be paid to and not this actual section because section 4 is the one which sets out the eligibility of the loans for insurability and there is where the 90% limitation is. We are past that but it is a valid point. I will take it to the Ministry of Finance obviously as a valid point, but I only want the hon. member to remember that in our context we are talking about a *de facto* situation in which it has been traditional in this country for people to start themselves. Some people buy every week concrete blocks and put them up until they accumulate a certain number. If we had had in this country a savings and loans movement, all these problems that we are dealing with today that the State has to create institutions to deal with would have been dealt with, but I hope that there will be an expansion of the credit unions and they will take over a lot of this, but the key to this thing is to look at the institutions in other countries which deal with this. In the United States and in North America you have the savings and loans movement, and in Canada the Trust Companies are very dominant, in Western Canada the Cooperative Movement is very dominant, in the United Kingdom and other countries the building societies are dominant because they are really savings and loans associations by another name. In Japan there is a state corporation and we learnt a lot from following the practice in Japan where big companies have their own housing associations within their work movement and encourage people to save, and the companies, of course they have very large corporations, are the ones who do the development. We have to get a mix of institutions. I can only hope that the unanimity which this Bill has met will be such that the banks in Bridgetown will be persuaded that whatever Government is likely to be in power in Barbados for the next fifty years they will understand that it is the unanimous view that money should be lent in this direction, and we are trying to remove all the fears that they have.

The question that Clause 8 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 9 was called and passed.

On motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN seconded by Hon. C. L. BOLDEN Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

3.30 p.m.

On the separate motions of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

VITAL STATISTICS REGISTRATION VALIDATION ACT, 1981

Item No. 4 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to validate certain matters in respect of The Vital Statistics Registration Act (1980-55).

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Parliament last year passed a Bill to provide for the up-dating of Vital Statistics in Barbados. Under the Act a rule-making authority was established for fees and forms, namely, the Registrar of Births and Deaths which is the same person as the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

The Act provided that it was to come in force for proclamation. It was always the intention that the proclamation should not take place on the main Act until the rules and the forms were ready. This was so communicated.

The proclamation took place on the 5th of January, this year but regrettably the rules were proclaimed for a different date so that we had an hiatus between proclamation of the Act and the rules. They should have been the same day. As a consequent the Attorney General's Office to whom attention of this discrepancy was drawn took the matter up with the Registrar and a full investigation took place as to how this could have occurred because, Sir, the Act having been passed by the Legislature and establishing an authority to administer the Act, the date for proclamation would come from the authority, particularly if the authority is to make the rules.

In the circumstances, Sir, we have been advised that it is necessary to pass the Validation Act and I can assure hon. members that the forms that have been proclaimed now, which have come into force from the 28th of January, have in a full sized Birth Certificate, carrying all the traditional particulars and more. For this reason you are now entitled if you were not borned in the traditionally regarded as legal union but nevertheless you were borned in circumstances in which a very large percentage of Barbadians are borned in which you are borned in a house-

hold in which your father acknowledges you as his child, you can have his name now on the Register and that was always the intention when it was introduced here so that all of this talk that you are hearing about a short form Certificate, a short form certificate has been devised for those people who want a short form certificate because there are some things that you only need a short form certificate for.

There is a full form certificate which is available for everything. Perhaps there was a little misunderstanding on the part of the people who have to administer the Act but the Registrar Office themselves devised the rules and they have in both. Anyway, the position has been clarified and made clear and we have passed this Validation Act to govern the situation between the 5th of January, 1981 and the 27th January, 1981. The Rules came into force on the 28th.

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

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I beg to second that.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the House has said that the purpose of this Bill is to make matters clear. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, neither the Bill nor the explanation given by the Hon. Leader of the House have made anything clear to me. Now I may be a bit slow to understand. I do not really feel to be very quick on the up take especially when I hear some of the explanations given on the other side but let us get down to what you and I would call brass tacks, the Bill itself.

The Bill states that:-

“This Bill would validate the issue of certificates and other documents under the Vital Statistics Registration Act, and the payments received in respect of those certificates and documents.”

The hon. member as far as I can remember said that the Bill was proclaimed on the 5th of January, 1981 and then he went on to say that the rules were proclaimed on a different date and then the Hon. member went on to say, Mr. Speaker, that a full investigation was carried out but the members of the House do not know what was the result of the investigation.

Now we have had investigations in Barbados in which the findings have not been acceptable either to the members of this House or anybody of the general public. The fact of the matter is this. It is well-known among the members of the legal profession in Barbados to whom I for the time being continues to be one, that the Registrar of Barbados, I am not calling his name, whoever he is, for the time being has issued Birth Certificates to people who

have paid in money into the Registry and those Birth Certificates issued by the Registry contain neither the name of the infant, the name of the father, nor the name of the mother, nor the grandmother, nor the grandfather, nor the great grandmother, nor the great grandfather, nor any antecedent whatsoever. I think the Hon. Leader of the House would admit that that is so. Under whose authority did he do this so that we are confronted with a situation in which a child born in Barbados in 1981 does not have any paternity whatsoever in so far as a Birth Certificate is concerned.

3.40 p.m.

Without having committed any offence, you are born with a number and nothing else. We are already in 1984 although this year is only 1981; Brave New World 1984, would you believe that, Mr. Speaker? The result is the Registrar has been issuing these certificates. Mr. Speaker, I hope that you understand what we are doing here today. People have been paying money into the Registry, more money than usual too, for what they call a short form, short in every sense of the term, shorter even than one of our distinguished officers of this House who is not far from your right hand side, so short that you would not even have to fold it to put it in an envelope. This short form, no name of child, no name of father, no name of mother.

Mr. Speaker, you know the difficulty that our people have had going to the United States Embassy, let us say, to get a visa and the name of the mother instead of being spelt J-o-a-n will be spelt J-o-a-n-n-e or something like that, and the trouble that Barbadians are put to get affidavits to reconcile the spelling on the birth certificate with the spelling on the baptism certificate, or if the name of the child as displayed on the birth certificate is not the same as the name on the baptism certificate and *vice versa*, all kinds of affidavits from the oldest people in the village and sworn to by Notary Public and I.P.'s and all those kinds of people, the trouble that we have had to go through as representatives to try to straighten out some of these discrepancies before people could get visas, how much the more when they go in there and they do not have any name at all. These things have been completely unacceptable.

Now, what I object to about the present Bill is whose authority the Registrar has for doing that. Are we going forward or are we going backward? Secondly, we are validating the receipt of money for certificates which were illegal. What I am saying should happen is – and the hon. member for St. Michael South west and I spoke to the Hon. Attorney General about this some time in the recent past, and he said that he had given instructions that new certificates should be issued, but the people should get these certificates free, because we are saying that the money that was paid for those bogus certificates

was illegally paid. (Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Not bogus). The Hon. Leader of the House is saying, Sir, that they are not bogus. If they are not bogus, then what are they? They were not issued under authority, according to what he told us, they do not have anything on them, they do not assist anybody who wants to establish that they were born on a certain day of one or two parents, they do not make any provision under the Legitimation Act for the father to come and subscribe his name on to the mother's, so what is that but bogus? Do you want anything more bogus than that? Are we saying here today that it is legal to issue bogus certificates?

What I want is an undertaking from the Leader of the House – I think he has agreed with everything that I have said so far, except that he is not quite sure whether the certificate is bogus or spurious – that the people who have been issued these certificates will be called back in and given proper certificates for their children without any further charge, or refunded the money that they had paid in.

This is not a partisan matter. We have some fan jumbles, or whatever they call them, in Alice in Wonderland, masquerading as Civil Servants who take on certain functions on to themselves. I had the experience, Mr. Speaker, you will hear about that, of travel agents and so coming in to me one day asking me why should I cut down the travelling allowance from \$1,500 to \$1,240 and they showed me a letter from a Civil Servant to all travel agents and airlines saying that the Prime Minister had directed that due to exchange control difficulties the travel restriction would now be £50, and this was after Independence, and after deciphering the signature I sent for the particular officer and asked him when did I issue those instructions, on my letter head it was written, and he said that he was listening to the radio the Friday night and heard Mr. Harold Wilson say so, like if Mr. Harold Wilson was Prime Minister of Barbados. Would you believe that, Mr. Speaker? It happened. He was the fastest gun in the west, or the fastest pen, like one of the young solicitors in Barbados now who I hear is the fastest pen in Barbados now messing up people's conveyances, but that is another matter altogether. I am calling no names, but he thought he was taking initiative before I could give any directives. He just heard a radio broadcast from England and sent out a letter to all the travel agents and airlines saying no more \$1,500 allowances for travellers, £50. This is the kind of nonsense you get.

Now, the Hon. Leader of the House had a full investigation. Has he asked the Public Service Commission to ask the gentleman to retire? Because that is the only thing that will satisfy all the people who have been made to walk backwards and forwards down to Trident House and then from Trident House to my office to get the

thing straightened out. It is not fair to the people of Barbados that this kind of nonsense should take place.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, sometimes some of us can be rather hard on those persons who seek to assist the less fortunate in their times of need. I believe shortly this House will debate a Bill which arose as a result of my discussions or my contribution to the Hon. House when I was a member of the Opposition on the change of name. I do not know if it is politically astute or not, or whether it is politically stupid to say what I am about to say now.

There is no doubt about it, that is this country there are numerous persons who have relatives in the United States, a father who has recognised that he left what used to be called an illegitimate child in Barbados, although he himself has admitted paternity of that child, and because the old colonial laws which we have accepted in this country never allowed his name to be placed on the records as being the father of that child, it is known that we in Barbados have accepted the colonial pride where a man is afraid to accept, or a mother is afraid to say that she has cohabited with a man and has given birth to a child. It is known that the English have made provision for that in the form of a secret trust where Lords and Kings have begotten illegitimate children but could run to the Priest of the Parish Church and leave money in such a form that when they die the Judge of a probate court could accept in Chambers a document which said to the Reverend, or the Priest, or the Bishop of Chichester, I left a million pounds to do what I have always told him, which means that it is to go to the children of some woman in a back street in London, and his wife or his family could not get it, but his children could get it.

3.50 p.m.

We made no provision in the Caribbean for that, and we know that there are a lot of people in Barbados who are trying to get to the United States and the United States Embassy would say, "prove that the man is your father", and you have to go through numerous gymnastics of proving that the man had lived with the woman in a house and then you will hear we still do not accept this as true. If this Government in its attempt to satisfy the requirements of a foreign country to help the children of this country who would like to emigrate, and if those at the Registry in their effort to help have unfortunately issued certificates before the time was ripe, who are we to criticise them in there today?

The short form certificate is no different, Mr. Speaker, from what happened under the administration of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. You used to go in the Registry and ask for a certificate and in many places around the world nobody accepted the baptismal certificate because the baptismal certificate that they asked for would show a number like 5806 at the top, that is the first thing, then the name of the child (blank),

the name of the father (blank), the name of the mother (blank) and the person registering the child, sometimes you could not even recognise what was written there, and even if the man had married the woman at a later date after the child was born, the law provides for a re-registration of birth, but you know you could not get a certificate that said so. So when you went down to the United States Embassy and produced a re-registration of birth, you used to be taken through the horrors as if you were in the C.I.D. undergoing questioning for a larceny to prove that your mother lived with your father in a 14 x 9 that we were talking about before and you were the product of that co-habitation. Today this Government has tried to facilitate the thousands of people out there who still believe that there is a fortune to be made in the United States and who want to go and see, and I know some of them will come alive because especially under this administration we have made it possible for them to understand you can make as good a living in Barbados as you could make down in the dumps of Brooklyn in the United States. So when the Hon. Leader of the Opposition talked about being given a number before you were convicted, you were given a number in his time and we are trying to remove the number because I can tell you something: my father who has just been buried had a number of his birth certificate. He was not baptised in the traditional way; he was baptised in the Pilgrim Holiness Church where at that time nobody recognised the baptism, but his parents believed that was their form of christianity; and there are still a lot of people being baptised by Granville and all those people out there, the Brethren, the Shakers and what not. (*Asides*). The Adventist is my friend; he is a priest, he would know that when it comes to getting some sort of documentation to show who their mother and father are, they are still up in arms.

I would say that I defend the Civil Servants who tried honestly to help those person who wanted a sort of certificate to show that they are the product of some form of co-habitation between a man and a woman where both parties have accepted the situation. We have come with a Bill to correct what was done. I am not saying that it was done out of spite, I am not saying it was done for wickedness, all I would like to say is that I fully appreciate what action this Government is taking to help those poor unfortunates out there who were born in a situation, something which was pushed upon them, and I would say this: I admire the Leader of the Opposition; we have always got on very well, but sometimes he goes astray, he wanders and does not recognise a situation. When we had independence, those are the sort of things that should have been done immediately after independence and not in 1981. We should not be doing this now. He brought home to Barbados.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of elucidation, I do not think the hon. member since he is not in

law practice, really understands what the Bill is trying to do. The form which was put out by the registrar did not have provision for the name of the father or the mother. That is the point I am making. He is saying that we had a form in which you could leave the name of the infant blank. Well obviously if the child's birth was registered before baptism you could not put down the name of the infant, but there was provision for the name of the infant, the name of the father and for the name of the mother, and there was provision in the law for the re-registration of birth when the father and mother thought fit to do so, but these forms do not provide any.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not understand one thing. We were trying to make provision for the issue of the new birth certificate. This Government has tried its utmost best to shake off the last vestige of slavery which was still brought home to us with independence in 1966. Not only did that administration bring home to this Parliament a white Englishman.....they talked about independence and brought an Englishman to sit upon you. They must understand that we are trying to correct the faults which they have brought to us in 1966.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot to say when the other Bill comes to this Chamber. Do you know what happened? They lacked a cohesive form of planning. I must admit that there are one or two Bills which they accepted in their time, but there are a lot of things that go together, and I do not see why they should be criticising a Bill like this. The Succession Bill and I believe the Fatal Accidents Bill are Bills that they accepted, and I say we must look at the Caribbean, we must look at the lifestyles of the Caribbean, the habits and customs, and those who know the history of the Caribbean must recognise that what we are doing today is coming too late. It should have been done immediately after independence in 1966, and we would not be in this sort of problem today. I therefore support this Bill in all its stages.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to get involved in this because I thought the point that had been made was clearly made and I thought that the point had been accepted by the Hon. Leader of the House. I find it difficult to understand, unless he was anticipating a Bill to come, what it is the hon. member who just spoke was carrying on and working himself up about. The situation as I understand it is that they are bringing a Bill to deal with what he is talking about. When the time comes we will talk about that. We are talking not about a Clerk who was working down in a hole and who was over-pressed or hard pressed with work and therefore put out the form. We are talking about the Registrar who puts out a form purporting it to be a birth certificate. We are not talking about somebody who made

a mistake and you are cojing now to validate the mistake. That happens all the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you mean the Registration Office or the Registry.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the Registration Office, the Registry and those who administer it. We are talking about officers who are supposed to be steeped in the law, not neophytes who just learnt it; people who are supposed to explain it, people who are supposed to administer it, people who are supposed to interpret it, therefore when these people make these kinds of errors, we have to look behind the errors to find out why they were made, and we are saying on this side in spite of the allegations that we are disinterested in independence.....I do not understand how a Minister speaking for a political party that said that Barbados did not need independence could get up now and talk about what ought to have been done immediately after independence. That does not move anybody who is familiar with what was going on in this country.
4.00 p.m.

They are the last persons to be able to lecture to anybody about what ought to have happened after Independence. I would not get into that, Mr. Speaker. Suffice it to say that when an ordinary person in Barbados goes into an office and he sees what purports to be a Birth Certificate, whether it is an improved version, whether it is based on the greatest motivation in the World, when he receives it and he asks of that Officer, but that does not state who my mother is or whom my father is, it says nothing at all.

You do not have to be a legally trained person to recognise that something must be wrong with that and then you get people trying to justify that kind of ineptitude. We cannot have that and this Bill, if we have been listening to what the Leader of the Opposition said, as I understood him, that the persons who receive those bogus Certificates ought to receive proper certificates in their places without paying anymore money and if they have paid too much money, they should be refunded. That is what I understood him to be asking for from the Leader of the House and this is a simple request, a request which is not contained in this Validation Bill. A request which seeks nothing more than to give to the ordinary people in Barbados the assurance that when they go to these Institutions they can look to having those Institutions behave in a legally proper manner.

Furthermore, he sought to find out what was the result of the investigations which we are told took place. We have to know why it was possible in this year of our Lord for a Bill to have passed the House and for it

to have been proclaimed in the wrong way or not proclaimed at all or if it was proclaimed in the wrong way or not proclaimed at all how can somebody act on it if that person is supposed to be doing his responsibility and his duty. That is what we were trying to find out. We were not criticising the Government.

When the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and I spoke to the Attorney General, we did not call a Press Conference. We spoke to the Attorney General in the well of this House after a session and we pointed out to him the error that was made, pointed out to him what needed to be corrected and asking of him how he intended to have it corrected. We therefore take strong objection when attempts are made by the front bench members of that side when we raise legitimate questions and we have an assurance from those who know better, we take objection to being castigated in the manner in which the hon. member attempted to castigate us. We take objection to that.

We find that no one holding high office in a Registration Office is not to behave like an ordinary clerk. We stand subject to no correction when we say that we have worked with all of the civil servants in Barbados and that a criticism of a single civil servant is no more than the norm in a society, that civil servants are criticised and are to be criticised from time to time and we have the right and we have the courage to criticise them publicly even if it may be politically detrimental to what we consider that the best interest of the community requires that criticism.

We are not going to pretend that when a civil servant behaves in a particular manner that is detrimental to the welfare of this community that because it is politically expedient that we are not going to criticise them. That is what we are supposed to do as members of this particular House. When we see a wrong in the society we are supposed to speak about it and on some of these matters there ought not to be no partisanship.

If you issue somebody a Birth Certificate to go to the same America to allow them to go down to the American Embassy and allow some second-rate person that comes from down in the backwoods in the United States to look at them and ill-treat them and insult them and then you get up and talk about you are doing them a favour to let them immigrate to the United States.

None of the persons who would say that has ever had to go and look into the face of a so-called Consular Officer seeking a visa and being treated as if he or she was a criminal or some prostitute or some low-lifted person and these persons can find work nowhere else except in the lowest level of Consulate

work when coming to countries like Barbados, enlightened developing countries in the context of them. We have those second and third rate people calling themselves Consulate Officers and treating our people as if our people are second-class.

Mr. Speaker, I get very emotional whenever anybody especially like the likes of some of them who come from the United States working in the Embassy (ASIDES). The British are more subtler. When they are discriminating they do it with class but the Americans are crude and they treat our people who go for visas as if we are begging salt. None of them from the Ambassador right down is in any position at any time to treat any of our people as if we are second class citizens and we have a duty not to allow our people, through error, to be subjected to that kind of treatment in that or any other office by anybody and so when our people went there they had to suffer through what was then called illegitimacy.

Only those of us who have had to represent Barbadians overseas can know the depth of pain which our people suffered because they were called illegitimate, the most stupid, backward and uninformed attitude ever held in any society as the one where we in developing countries allow ourselves to hold for so many years saying that decent respectable sons and daughters of our country were illegitimate like if somebody stole them. We allowed that. We finally came around to changing that. (ASIDES). They finally came around to changing that. You are satisfied? That is all it would mean. It does not matter who changed it. It finally was done.

Mr. SPEAKER: Address the Chair, please.

Mr. TAITT: Yes, Sir, Mr. Speaker. If the other side are to get credit for doing it, I give them full marks, 100%, 1,000%. I would vote for them for doing that if that is what they want to hear. You see, Sir, unlike some members on that side, when something is done for the benefit of my people I really do not care who did it but what I am interested in is that it has been done. I seek no prudence for this side for having done what was our duty when we were the Government.

When you accept the responsibility of the Government there are certain things that fall within the ambit of your duty and you do not go out seeking praise for doing your duty if you understand what your duty is, Sir, so you did it. Thank God, it was done Mr. Speaker, having done it that was the beginning, let us say, and now we have the Registration Office issuing certificates that are not certificates and we raised the question about it. We are right to raise questions about it

because the citizens who are hurt about it raised questions to us and it is our duty when they hurt to hurt with them as, Mr. Speaker, you have done so often. We are to hurt with them and fight for them and curse the Registration Office, the Prime Minister or whomever.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please do not curse.

Mr. TAITT: No, Sir. What the particular persons do, Sir, we are to represent them vigorously and that is what we are attempting to do when we ask why the validation is necessary, who gave the man or woman who issued the short forms the authority.
4.10 p.m.

We wish to know if that authority was exercised legally or illegally. We want to know if it was done capriciously, we want to know if the investigation satisfies the administration that there will not be a repetition of it now, as happened in the past, in the future, and we wish to know that those who got certificates of this nature can look forward to some redress. I believe, Sir, that the Leader of the House understood our queries, accepted the gravamen on it, and I only rose because the Hon. Minister sought to take a simple matter into the political arena, quite unnecessarily.

Mr. WARD: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a very small contribution to the debate in connection with what the hon. member said earlier about our people being ill treated at the American Embassy. He said that they were ill treated, badly treated, humiliated, etc.

I personally have taken a number of persons to the American Embassy and have been politely told that the people could get a visa to go to the United States, but I have never had anybody that I took there, or during the time that I was there, ill treated. What I would say, Sir, through you to the hon. member is that no person from outside of Barbados from any Embassy, Consulate or otherwise should be permitted to come here and ill treat Barbadians, but do not make a blanket statement, name the person and report them higher up. To make a blanket statement that our people are ill treated down there, no name of the person, nobody has been reported — if the hon. member now gets up and says he did report the person to the American Ambassador, that is acceptable — but to make a blanket statement against the country that whenever our Barbadians go there they are ill treated, badly treated, humiliated, who is the person doing it? Name them and report them. I personally have been there, been politely refused, but never saw anybody being ill treated.

Mr. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a point following up on those made by members about the treatment of Barbadian nationals who are applying for visas. What I have found in my experience dealing both

with the American Embassy and the British High Commission, is that too often there appeared to be officers dealing with Barbadians who are requesting permission to enter their countries who deal with them in a very arbitrary, casual and off-hand manner.

On one occasion I had to go to the British Embassy, having filed an appeal, as you are allowed under the rules and the forms that they give these people when they apply, and I had to go there, but I had filed my grounds of appeal that the officer acted in an arbitrary manner and took into account irrelevant considerations, because I thought he was performing a quasi-judicial function, and I framed the appeal like that. They wrote back to me and asked me how I could allege this against them. I said I wanted an audience, and I went and I told them exactly what had been my instructions, and I had the client with me, and ultimately the person was granted an Entry Certificate to England.

In respect to the American Embassy, I do not have much dealings with them, I do not fraternise with these kind of people at all, I keep away from all of them. I do not know any of them, other than one man I met last year, but from Miss Shelton back down I do not have anything to do with them, especially when one of them, Ward Morrow, was more than rude to my wife and I had to abuse him and then let my wife deal with him and tell him how classist he was. Well, he is no longer in Barbados, but I take my own action, and luckily I have a wife who is not afraid to tell people how she thinks about them either, and she had to deal with him.

What I am against is this. I know of a case where there is a body work man in St. Philip who wanted to extend his business. He wanted to get in proper equipment and tools, and he wished to go to America for two weeks to purchase tools and equipment with a view to establishing a proper workshop, getting some financing as a small business from the Barbados Development Bank and giving the Bank a Bill of Sale over the tools and equipment, and they would not grant the man a visa for two weeks, notwithstanding the fact — and I am not saying that this is the be all and end all of it — but I wrote a letter in support of Mr. Went to the Visa Officer at the American Embassy. I do not know them, so I wrote to the Visa Officer, whoever he or she may be, and I made sure I put Dear Sir/Madam, and I tried to be proper with them. I gave the person a letter of recommendation pointing out that he is a man of some substance, he has commitments to Barbados, the usual thing, and they just gave him a document with two X's on the first two lines and told him he did not have enough information, to come back again.

That is what I call arbitrary behaviour. The least they could have done was to have asked more questions about the man or written to me to say "this man has not

satisfied our requirements in that he has not given us information on this or that, can you help." They do not call you and ask you anything, so what is the point of being a representative of the people in your own country and you are trying to assist and going out of your way not to allow any fraud to be perpetrated on the American Embassy, because not one of us in here would be so lacking in integrity as to write a totally fictitious recommendation on behalf of a Barbadian who genuinely wants to go. I am sure that each one of us who has had to deal with these things explained to the people beforehand that they will need to have some money in a bank account, not to put it in on the same day, because that would look too obvious. You tell them all these things, and the American Embassy must credit us not only with intelligence but with integrity in acting on behalf of these people, and it seems to matter not to them in their little petty kingdom in the CIBC building that an M.P. writes in support of the application of a Barbadian. I do not do too many of them for the reason that I know very well that there are some people who just will not pass and it will be futile, but I am only asking the American Embassy in particular, in full recognition of their own rights and discretions, in full recognition of the fact that they have been — for want of a better word — duped in the past by people who pretend to go for a limited time and then overstay and hide and change their names and get up to all kinds of things.

I understand all those problems, but I am asking them to be a little bit more considerate in their dealings with Barbadians and to test the genuineness of the application in a more reasoned and authoritative manner than they do at the moment. They just tend to brush them aside. You get the impression that they just look at your face and say "you are not good looking enough, I do not think we want you out there" and send you back. I do not know what basis they operate on. Or they might say "no visas today".

I have seen that in this matter of diplomatic and consular reciprocity that Barbados has bent over backwards too long, and they do not seem to understand that they have been independent now since 1966, and for the most part under the last administration, and under this, we have never had to rely on them to show up our finances, and we must stand up as independent people in 1981 for what we are, as a developing people but a proud and intelligent, and I believe, respected people.

I must reminisce on one matter, Sir. Many years ago, I think it was in 1970, when the last Government was in power, they took some steps, as a result of the case that I was involved in in England with the police, to limit the number of parking areas in this vicinity which the British High Commission was then commandeering, because our own diplomats in London were being given a very hard time. Mr. Sam Corbin's car, I think Mr. J. C.

King's at one time, the police would just come and drive them away all the way to Heathrow Airport and park them in the compound.

4.20 p.m.

And were it not for the fact that Sir Lionel Luckhoo was a very tough person, it would have continued, but he refused on one occasion to pay the £50 and told them to bring back the car and made a great scene about it, and they brought back the car; but other of our diplomats, regrettably Barbadian, were running every afternoon when they towed away the car and paying the £25 or whatever it was in the compound at the airport. Now when Mr. Cameron Tudor came to England about June 1970, I made certain representations to him, he listened very sympathetically and action, to the credit of the last Government, was taken in Barbados to see that the advantages or the privileges given to the British Government in respect of parking were not unfair in respect of the privileges offered to our representatives in England, and a scene was set and I hope it will be continued and that these matters will be reviewed from time to time because this whole question of diplomatic privileges and so on is based on comity and reciprocity.

The Poles had the perfect answer for the British. When the British towed away their cars in London, the Poles made no noise for two months. They allowed their cars to be towed away. Two months after about eight British High Commission cars in Poland were found down in a ravine. They just took them and threw them away; that was the answer. It never happened since. We have not got a ravine here, but there is a careenage there; you can dump them there too. If they are unfair to our people abroad, you have to be tough with them. (*Asides*) Watch what language? I have never been to a party held by the British, the Canadian, the Americans, any of them. I have nothing to do with them, and especially the British.

Mr. Speaker, I am speaking as a lawyer on this question of the Vital Statistics Registration Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: You speak as the hon. member for St. Philip North.

Mr. SIMMONS: From a legal stand-point also, Sir, in addition to my substantive position. I have seen the short form; it is deficient and as I understand it, Sir, the aim of the Act is not so much an act of indemnity, but this is an Act to validate any defects that there may have been in the type of form that was issued pursuant to the Act. Indeed the short form, as I understand it, Sir, is totally inadequate. From time to time mistakes can be made. I will not go so far as the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and ask that the Registrar be dealt with or be dismissed. I do not think that is fair. If the Act can cure any of the defects in the type of form that was issued for

a short time in January this year, then I think that is good enough in the circumstances. I will agree that some mechanism should be devised that those persons who were issued with forms which were deficient in one particular or the other should not have to pay for a second form which now contains all the relevant and vital statistics as it is called.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, this debate has taken a very interesting turn.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it the hon. member is winding up.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there any hon. member who wants to make a contribution? The Hon. Minister may proceed.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: This debate has taken a very interesting turn, and I want to say at the very outset that Cabinet was aware of the fact that short forms were issued because a number of complaints reached the Cabinet from a number of sources, and when a check was made with respect to this matter, it was discovered that recommendations had been made to the appropriate authorities to proclaim the Act and that the Regulations had not been proclaimed at the same time. The Regulations had to come to Cabinet. When the Regulations came to Cabinet, these matters were drawn to the attention of the originator of the Regulations and the short forms have been deleted from the Act. It is therefore very clear that it is not unreasonable for the other side and for this side to ask that in respect of those people who were given short forms and who paid their money that they should be recalled and given a long form. I do not see any difficulty with that because we do not like the forms.

The interesting thing about this is that the Act itself casts a duty on the Registrar to satisfy himself about a number of particulars, and in the application for registration of the child you have to put in the name of the father, the mother, the date of birth and all of that.

Now there is another section in the Act which says that you must have a true extract of the register. If that is the foundation document, a true extract in my opinion must contain a true account of what was set out there. The new forms that were proclaimed by the Registrar have in almost a facsimile of the particulars that you have in the Statutory declaration, so that everybody who has been around Barbados long enough will know the difficulties we had before when we had no Act really which governed from a civil point of view as opposed to a religious point of view these particulars. The law in Barbados prior to the passage of this Act, and this is a very valid point made by the hon. member for St. Joseph is that for the first time the Vital Statistics Act sets out in a civil form the totality of the requirements which we

had before in a combination of a civil and a religious form, so that we have no difficulty with this. I will certainly draw it to attention the strong feelings of both sides of the House. I believe the Minister of Finance will in these circumstances have to waive. The sticklers will say that the money is in the Treasury already and therefore they do not want the Auditor General to surcharge them and all that sort of stuff, so the Minister of Finance will have to give a waiver. This will have to come through the Director of Finance and Planning. He will have to say in respect of these matters that since the validation Act has been passed that they should be able to issue certificates in respect of the new form without charging. That would be on the file for the Auditor General; but there will be no more short forms, in accordance with the Regulations that have been proclaimed on the 28th January. They set out the full birth certificate.

In answer to the hon. member for St. John who asked what about the authority, the Act says that the Registrar is the one who is to issue the certificate and section 35 says that the content of all certificates under this part shall be compiled from the appropriate registration under the Act. Certificates issued in this part must be in the form prescribed.

4.30 p.m.

The prescription has now been done and I do not think that we should really make a strong point on this. All the wrongs that have been done will be rectified. That is the object of a Validation Bill. In the context of Barbados it is very important that full particulars are kept and this Government for a long period of time has been convinced that a lot of our problems in relation to documents in Barbados arise from the fact that we have not kept up-to-date with modern micro-filming techniques.

The science of micro-filming and micro-fishing combined with computers now-a-days are such that even you can recapture them on computer. You can have an Indexing system that you can go and press a code and you get back the whole thing and you can have on a video display system the whole extract of it.

I believe that you all tried it but for five years we have tried it and we cannot get across the concept. I think machines were even bought but we cannot get across the concept but I know that this House is very convinced that the days of writing in big books in long-hand are over. That kind of clerical labour nobody can handle now-a-days. It is a waste of time. You must hire sophisticated machinery.

A specific project has been formulated by the Planning and Priorities Committee with the approval of Cabinet. A Task Force has been appointed to get on with this job of micro-filming and micro-fishing the public records. We cannot afford, Sir, to build office space and

vault space for all of the records in Barbados when they can be compressed by modern photographing techniques into small little images which can be filed.

It is not only the Registration Office, but also the Hospital records and all records and we are determined to see this come into play, Sir.

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

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

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

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on this Bill.

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

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

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On clause 2, Sir, I really do not disagree with anything. I would like to congratulate the Leader of the House for one of the most sober speeches that I have heard in this House for a very long time, Sir. I do not mean sober from him. I mean well reasoned and able speech.

I do not share the view of other members of this House after listening to the hon. member for St. Joseph when they said that it is clear that he learnt his Law at Night School during a black-out but I was surprised at the difference in tone. I said I did not share that view, Sir. Some statement was made in here that the hon. member for St. Joseph must have learnt his Law at Night School during a black-out but when you compare the two speeches which were made, Sir, I do not support that view at all. I am defending the hon. member and he does not appreciate it.

I am saying, Sir, that I hope that the hon. member for St. Joseph will take a leaf out of the book of the Hon. Leader of the House when he is dealing with serious matters of this kind and I think that occasionally we have to bring these overseas people in because they come from big countries and we have to bring them to a Christian understanding.

I also congratulate the member for St. Philip North on the contribution which he made. (ASIDES). I am dealing with the cross. I am dealing precisely with the cross because a lot of interesting points have been brought out here today which I would like to congratulate all hon. members, even the hon. member for St. Joseph.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member I know full well. He likes to believe that everything happened in Barbados in 1966 with Independence. It has always worried him every time you have to criticise anything that he did around Independence. I sat down here and I said to my colleague he has to get up and say something about me so I am not worried. I am not worried about anything he says.

He knew that during his administration I argued over and over again that something should be done with Birth Certificates and he knows full well but his contention has always been that nobody on that side should tell us what to do over here so that is all right.

I am not worried about what he says about me. Whether I learned my Law at Night School when there was a black-out I know that I know sufficient that whenever the records of this House are written, the name of Lindsay Bolden, the hon. member for St. Joseph, shall appear in those records as having done something tangible to the development of this country.

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

Clause 3 was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, the Bill was read a second time and passed.
4.40 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Item No. 1 be now taken.

Mr. SPEAKER: Item No. 1 is the instant Order of the day.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and

the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1980-81 No. 40

Head 12 - Parliament - was called.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, this is to supplement the vote for Parliament and General Administration. In respect of Parliament, Head 12, Subhead 1, the Legislature will have to vote the appropriate increases of salaries and allowances which were agreed to in respect of the Civil Service and in respect of people who come under the Head of Parliament. That takes up one Item.

In respect of Subhead 2, Sir, Barbados is a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It is fairly impossible to predict at the time of Estimates what visits will take place and what will not take place, so that although we had put in some money, mostly for travel by our parliamentarians abroad, sometimes we do have to reciprocate.

This year we are reciprocating in respect of a delegation from Canada, and I understand, Sir, that although it is not a member of the Commonwealth, that the Chinese system of Government does provide for Parliament, and in view of the fact that a bi-partisan delegation representing both sides of the House, not only Government and Opposition, but even the Independents, paid a visit to China last year, there is a representative group of Chinese parliamentarians within the Caribbean area and quite naturally, Sir, they did request that they be received in Barbados, so that we have to reciprocate in respect of this matter also.

The sum of \$50,000 is needed to supplement the CPA Vote, Subhead 12.

I beg to move that Head 12 stand part.

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

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, in the immediate days after the birth of Christ the Roman Empire was run by a triumvirate. There were three wise men who were the harbingers of the birth of Christ, and the Russians during the 1960's were governed by a triarchy, three men. It seems to me that this Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's local group falls into that hallowed category, because I understand that there are three wise men, or triarchy, or triumvirate that are running the local branch of the CPA.

I am a fully paid up life member of the CPA and I believe that the same rules of democracy that operate in the island at large and that govern this Parliament

should govern this Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's local branch. I have not received any invitation to any Annual General Meeting of the CPA for the last year and a half, or whatever it is, and I want to know why should we continue to get in here and vote money for the CPA, whether it is for hosting parliamentary groups coming here or for the members of CPA who have a lot of fun travelling all over the world on their joyrides. I am very serious about this, I am not being facetious about it, I understand that you have to belong to the club to know what is going on, and you have to belong to the same club to go places where you have a lot of fun.

I am very, very reluctant, although I am strongly in favour of giving hospitality to the Chinese parliamentarians, but I feel a little bit reluctant to give my vote to anything that will preserve the *status quo* as far as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is concerned.

I do not know if the Leader of the House who introduced this part of the Resolution can throw any light on it, because when you ask questions about it everything seems to be shrouded in mystery. I really would be glad to know what is happening in the local branch of the CPA and why do they have to run it as a private club and why are they avoiding summoning an Annual General Meeting so that people like myself can go and tell some of them exactly how we feel about it.

Dr. CHELTENHAM: I need not say that I am not a member of that club, Mr. Chairman, it goes without saying that I do not get any invitations either. That, however, is not the important point. It seems to me that the real reason is that we have allowed ourselves in the parliamentary system which we operate to be too dictated by Prime Ministers. When I got close to the system and enquired what was going on I was led to believe that you could not get on unless the Prime Minister said this is the team, and I am really very disappointed in the men who run it, that they are lacking in independence of spirit that they would not tell the outsiders or the non-members who want to dictate, this is not your business, full stop.
4.50 p.m.

I make no noise about it myself because I have always remembered Nye Bevin's words to Harold Wilson and others ever since in the late Forties or early Fifties; he said "serious politicians do not concern themselves with CPA." To that extent it is neither here nor there with me. I would just like to remind the House that I was the actual person who negotiated with the Speaker of the Ontario Parliament in a hotel in Ottawa some three years ago the exchange scheme which is being presently operated, and he said they were thinking in terms of two members on either side - two would

come down to Barbados and two from Barbados would go up to Canada, and I told him "look, I do not operate myself on that mini scale; I think we should be thinking in terms of at least six members" and he consulted with the Clerk, Mr. Holtby was his name, and they then decided that they would start off with six members. Now it has gone for three years. Every time they come down they impose on me at IDC to help them to fill out a programme and spend a day on our estate and then ask me at IDC if I could host a luncheon, and I am indeed delighted to do so, but it would surprise you to know that not on one occasion have I been asked to go. In fact I could have gone last year or the year before, but I have no doubt that some members will be asked repeatedly and the others will be repeatedly excluded, and I think that it is a sad reflection on those who manage the CPA. They are the ones that I am condemning because more and more you are appalled by the lack of independence of spirit which you find among your political colleagues and that is the real tragedy.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, first like the hon. member who has just sat down, I am not a CPA person. I never was. I think I probably attended about two meetings in my whole life of the CPA. I am supposed to be one of the Vice Presidents of the Barbados Branch of CPA. I pay my dues, but I am not a whole-hearted, perhaps I am not even a good half-hearted supporter of the whole concept of the CPA, so what I say here now, Mr. Chairman, has got to be taken in the right spirit.

I think members have themselves to blame, if members would attend the meetings and get together in their little caucuses and decide that it is somebody else's turn rather than *habitués*. I remember I decided once at the last moment when they had elected me to go not to go, in fact I had no intention of going — I learnt this at a very late stage — on the very morning it suddenly dawned on me or somebody rang me and said "this is the day you should be going to Australia" and I said "who me?" I did not remember a thing about that, but there was somebody padded up ready to go even at that late hour. There are some people who like these things and others of us who take our work more seriously, but there are arguments which are advanced as you know for the CPA as an institution, and when I was on the other side — and I would like to correct the hon. member for Christ Church East — I never at any time dictated who should go or who should not go; I never even knew what was going on when it came to the question of these conferences and so on. But I think that we have ourselves to blame, because we get in here and we vote funds for the CPA and then after that we lose interest and then we say that somebody is always going on a trip.

We had two Joint Presidents. I do not know if they are part of the triarchy or the triumvirate or the wisemen. I just do not know because I do not go, so I am in a position to know. I do not know how their decisions are arrived at, but when I look at the Minutes of the C.P.A., I discover that the attendance of members of this House is severely lacking. Members do not attend the meetings when important decisions are being made, but I have another complaint.

I left my work on Thursday to come down here, as the Clerk of the House will attest, and waited patiently for a Canadian delegation.

I suppose I have certain official things which are expected of me as Leader of the Official Opposition. There are certain things which I cannot avoid doing, although I do not find them particularly palatable or constructive, and one of them is receiving Ambassadors, and another is receiving delegations, like the hon. member for Christ Church East, and being polite and indulging in pleasantries and things like that. My mind is frequently on other matters of greater pith and moment, probably concerning the party or my work or something else, but when you take on these jobs such as you and I take on, they throw the weight on you of doing all the entertaining. The people that are going on the trips do not appear to make their houses available for these entertainments but the beauty is always thrown on you, Mr. Chairman, to spread the festive board. It is true I did not get an invitation. If I was not there, two members of my family were and they had a good time, but you accused me of not attending functions, so may be I am to blame as well. But I think you should have the courtesy of sending me an invitation so that if I can make it at least for you I would come, but I am not complaining now, because probably on that particular occasion I would not have been able to come anyhow; but you can always have a quiet drink together, so that is no big thing as far as I am concerned.

When I leave my office or the hon. member for Christ Church East leaves his office to go down to the I.D.C., and I come here to Parliament to meet a delegation and they cannot turn up because they are regaling themselves in another island or for some other reason, I would expect somebody to have the courtesy to call up and say the members of the delegation cannot come and we are sorry to have kept you waiting, or tell me even before so that I do not come down here and sit down for an hour and a half. Now that is ordinary courtesy. I understand that the Canadian delegation has been having a good time. If this is the pattern that you impress them and that they had a good time and you accomplish something by that, that is all right, but is this serious parliamentary business? Our delegation went to China including the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, so we cannot be

churlish right now. It is true that all we got back were some cucumber seeds, but we are still waiting for the gentleman to come to show us how to plant the cucumbers. Now we have a return visit and they are the most expensive cucumber seeds that ever landed in Barbados — \$87,000 one way and \$50,000 more the other way for the cucumber seeds, and if they had gone to somebody like the former Minister of Agriculture when he was experimenting with planting in St. Philip, he would have shown them how to plant the cucumber seeds and save us all this money, because I know he knows how to plant cucumbers. He does not know much about raising ducks, but he has taken me and shown me he is proficient, and you see how we could save a lot of money. It is a simple communications problem. Even within Government, if they communicate with the hon. member for St. Joseph, we could save all this money so that we would not have to reciprocate by spending this \$50,000 to entertain the Chinese, but having gone there, we would have to support this Resolution because you have to return hospitality.

I only enjoin hon. members if they want to bring some kind of direction into the deliberations of the Parliamentary Association that they should attend meetings and let us have some kind of sense of order and democratic procedures introduced into these deliberations.

The question that Head 12 — Parliament — stand part, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 37 — MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS

Head 37 — Ministry of Communications and Works — was called.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 37 — Ministry of Communications and Works — stand part.

The addendum is I believe adequate under the circumstances.

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

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what the circumstances are for which the Hon. Minister for Communications and Works finds this Addendum adequate, but I do not find it adequate and I will tell you why.
5.00 p.m.

Yesterday afternoon after I got my Order Papers I tried to find my copy of the Estimates for 1980-81 to see what the \$8 million that we are voting for the Transport Board, whether it was in respect of equipment and matters of that kind.

We are now being asked to vote nearly \$4 million, \$3.9 million to be exact which means that the Transport Board has been subsidised at exactly the same rate as the Lockheed 10-11 which the Trinidad Government foolishly purchased to enlarge the fleet of British West Indian Airways, a loss of \$1 million a month. Therefore when the hon. member says that this Addendum and the Explanatory Note is adequate, if we go back to Head 37 in the Estimates all it said at that time was that the \$8 million provides for financial assistance in the Transport Board by way of a subsidy but if you go to the Capital Estimates you will see that the sum of \$2,530,000 was provided to buy 50 buses, a car for the General Manager, 2 petrol cars — I do not know whether they meant petrol or patrol but I can only read what is there. Whatever they are I do not know. Perhaps the Minister can enlighten me on that; two petrol cars, one jeep and one van, fifty buses, a jeep, a van, one car for the General Manager, 2 petrol cars, etc.

It is clear that the \$8 million that we are providing in this Financial Year, just a matter of 9 or 10 months ago was not for the purpose of capital equipment because that is a separate vote of \$2,530,000 and with that none of us would have had any quarrel but soon after we have voted this \$10½ million for the Transport Board you thought that we had voted \$10½ million for mini-bus services in Barbados we had an explosion of minibuses and contraction of the Transport Board services in Barbados so that many people in the rural areas are still crying out about the inadequacy of the transportation system in this Island.

Now those of us who represent rural constituencies do not even have the benefit for our constituents of the services of the mini-buses because they have been issuing licences for mini-buses because they have been issuing licences for mini-buses left, right and centre to operate over short routes and therefore not going down in to Glenburny in St. John or Pie Corner in St. Lucy, just to give an illustration. Other members who represent rural constituencies will be able to say what sufferings their people are putting up with but do you think it is reasonable, Mr. Chairman, in this year of grace when the Department is voted over \$10½ million and now we are going to be asked to vote another \$4 million making a total of \$14½ million in one year for the Transport system and for them to have it so well run and supplemented with the efficient management that we thought we would have had the best transport system in the World. They have taken over all of the buses.

We have voted money the year before that and the year before that for capital equipment and the buses are breaking down everyday. The drivers some of them are not highly qualified. I wonder if the Minister should not go out there because he at least has been exposed to more civilised systems of transportation and I think he is

very proud of his exposure and this is not a criticism but if people like him would go and give up some of their time to explain to them about serving the public and that kind of thing it would be very useful. We get scenes of barbarism in the bus terminals so that people who respect themselves and their girl children will not be seen dead in the Bus Terminal between 4.00 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. in the afternoon.

A decent law abiding law abiding goodfearing priest was assaulted and arrested by a Policeman in the Bus Terminal, Rev. Sawyer from Codrington College, a disgrace, Sir, and he had to be defended by the hon. member for St. Philip North, I understand, Sir, and he managed to get him off since he had him defending him. I do not think the hon. member heard that but you can expunge that from the record because that is not a criticism. You see I even give rulings against myself, Sir. (ASIDES) Sixteen murders. Seventeen out of seventeen.

Mr. Chairman, I want to be very serious now. I want to be very, very serious.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: We get on like if money does not matter in Barbados, that money is not a problem. Money is still a problem in this country because we are still taxpayers and if we are not paying this money directly in the way of Income Tax we are paying for it indirectly by way of Consumption Tax, Sir, and the increased cost of revenue and the other indirect taxes that we have to pay and the Transport Board alone has absorbed on Current Account 50% more money than the total budget of Barbados was when I entered Parliament.

If you go and check the records, you will see that the total Government Expenditure in 1951 when I came into Parliament was just over \$10 million and not \$11 million and the Transport Board alone this year, if and when we vote this \$3.9 million would have absorbed \$14 million on Current Account and \$2.5 million on Capital Account. Do you think that is right, Mr. Chairman?

Get rid of the Board. Get rid of the Chairman. Get rid of the buses because the Minister has to make up his mind. If the mini-buses can do the service for the people of Barbados and we have no responsibility, let us have all mini-buses but do not let us have this half-way house where the mini-buses are getting all of the most lucrative routes encouraged by the Minister because we had a very severe restriction on the number of mini-buses. It is true that some of them operated illegally as all the hon. members on the other side would know but at least they did it free and easy as they are having it now because they never knew when the Police was going to stop them and they would lose three or four days attending Court at Holetown or District "A" or District "F" as the case may

be so at least they knew that they were operating illegally and there were about 56 licences and probably about 30 operating illegally. I cannot tell you the exact figure now. I really do not know but the Estimate is about 30.

Now I understand there are over 400 on the road. How do you expect the Transport Board to make money? You come and take over all of the bus services and then you go and issue licences. For what reason? For political reasons that anybody and whosoever will may come and now you are telling the people that they have to paint up the buses in the colour of the Transport Board buses. That is the latest I heard.

The Minister is suggesting that is not true. The Minister has issued a directive that the buses have to be painted in colours approved by the Technical Officer of the Ministry, whoever he is, and some of them have anticipated the desires of the Minister and painted the new Transport Board colours. We are not blind. 5.10 p.m.

These are sheep masquerading in wolves' clothing. I have a copy of the letter right here, Sir, would you like me to read it? We have a copy of the letter saying that you must have these colours, and they are no longer minibuses, one fellow has a full scale bus but he reversed the colours. He has yellow with a blue stripe instead of blue with a yellow stripe, just to make sure that you do not mistake him for a bus. That is the whole situation. The whole situation is chaotic. I am not against Barbadians trying to earn a living, but if this is a fit area for private enterprise, let us turn the whole thing over — I am all for it, Sir, to private enterprise, regulate them, give them rules and so on, and let us have a thousand minibuses and let us stop spending a million dollars a month subsidising the Transport Board.

Since the Minister has taken over, the cost of running the Transport Board has escalated. I am not saying that he is directly responsible for escalating the cost. You know, the Minister is hypersensitive and he takes everything as a criticism, but you cannot tell me that a Board which is collecting revenue from an increased number of passengers, 43 million a year — Lord, it was only 23 with us — and the bus fare is 45 cents and ours was 25, and you are collecting from 43 million passengers, and you have to subsidise the Board at the rate of over one million dollars a month? Even the Lockheed 1011 with the escalated price of fuel, a Captain gets \$8,600 a month. There is no bus driver drawing that in Barbados, so how come the Transport Board can lose the same thing as a 1011.

One of the things about a minibus is that the driver usually collects the fare himself and maintains law and order within his vehicle as he goes along, but one of the new regulations is that the driver shall be divided from....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is this going to be a document of the House?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Gladly. You are dealing with minibuses now, you are not dealing with any Lockheed 1011, but you are applying Lockheed 1011 hijacking rules here. "The driver shall be divided from the passengers in a manner to be approved by the Chief Technical Officer, so as to prevent the driver from having any conversation with the passengers." Now, how is the man going to get his fares? He cannot even say you owe him 45 cents or 50 cents. Rule 12, they deal with the height and so on, but that is not of immediate concern. "Minibuses shall be painted in such colours as the Chief Technical Officer determines." That is one of the rules. (ASIDES). Do you want me to read the whole document? I do not want to read the whole document. (ASIDES). I am going to make this a document of the House. If the Minister has not seen it, I want to tell him it came from his office, it came from the Ministry of Communications and Works, P.O. Box 25. (A VOICE: Who signed it?) The Permanent Secretary. Another Civil Servant acting beyond the scope of his employment? Is that your defence? Make sure that your defence is sure.

Of course there are some things I would approve of, Sir. The minibuses have to be equipped with a speedometer and a fire extinguisher and so on. I am not really against that, but I am showing some of the things that are happening. I think that there is general concern in the country that the Transport Board is losing money, some of this loss is directly attributable to the large number of minibuses operating, and it is very clear that the two systems cannot operate side by side, particularly if the minibuses are going to have the short routes, which are the lucrative routes, and the public has to pay for the long routes which are not the profitable routes.

I am not a nationalisation man, I am for a mixed economy. Whichever works best and whichever costs the least I am in favour of. If the Government is going to run an efficient transport system, let us run an efficient transport system, but if the Government finds that it is not capable of running an efficient transport system at an economic cost to the general public, it means that people like me who do not have the time to stand up and wait for a bus but who have to pay for expensive gasoline have to subsidise the people who are travelling on buses. We are subsidising people in the way of income tax, indirect taxes and everything of that kind, but the non-bus-travelling public must pay for the bus-travelling public because of the inefficiency of the Transport Board.

Fourteen million dollars within a 12 month period is a lot of money to spend on any one service in Barbados, and I am asking the Minister seriously to consider whether it would not be feasible to have complete freedom, but with regulation, and turn the whole system over to private operators. I do not mean private concession-

aires, because that has not proved to be the best system, but let us have all minibuses, minibuses that would go down into Boscobelle, that would go down into the Baltic, that would go down into the Whim, that would go down into Glenburnie in St. John, and regulate them in that way, but right now I think that this is much too high a price to pay for the retention of the Transport Board.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, if there is one person in this Hon. House who has been relentlessly bringing the problems of the travelling public, particularly those members of the travelling public from the rural areas of Barbados, to the attention of this Chamber, it is me. Now, we have had over the last four years or so complaints about the operation of the Transport Board and the insufficiency of buses to satisfy the needs of the travelling public, and ever since the present Minister of Communications and Works occupied the position which he now holds, as Minister of Communications and Works, all that this Hon. Chamber has been getting from him are words, promises and promises but no kind of action. The same kind of record which he had in the Ministry of Agriculture that forced a Cabinet reshuffle and forced him out of the Ministry of Agriculture, words, promises but no action.

It is clear, Mr. Chairman, that the public transportation service in this country is to all intents and purposes sadly lacking and indeed approaching the point of a national disgrace.
5.20 p.m.

The hon. member for St. John and Leader of the Opposition referred to scenes which takes place in the bus stands, the Fairchild Street bus stand and particularly the Lower Green Bus Stand on evenings, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Hon. Minister has ever taken it upon himself to visit these bus stands without announcing his arrival to really see the kind of scenes which take place in these bus stands, with people scrambling over one another's heads to get into the bus so that they can get a seat in order to get home. I have been, as I said, relentless in my attack on this particular kind of inefficiency because I believe particularly for persons who have to travel long distances to go to work or to come to school that a proper, efficient and adequate transportation system is of paramount importance. We have situations today in Barbados, and this has been so far, I would say, well over three years now, where the bus service is so inefficient that when people cannot get a bus which would get them to work on time that they either do not go to work or they report for work half day, and I believe that this is really a scandalous situation and indeed the Government must be held entirely responsible for this kind of situation. Whosoever is occupying the position of Minister of Communications and Works with responsibility for the

Transport Board must accept the responsibility for the kind of chaos which we now see clearly evident in the public transport system of this country.

Speaking as a representative for the constituency of St. Lucy, as I have had to bring to the attention of this Honourable Chamber already, I would want to repeat that indeed the situation far from getting any better is getting worse, and we have situations now, Mr. Chairman, where people in order to get to work at half past seven have to get up and catch the 5 o'clock bus, or if there is a bus before that, sometimes they have to be able to catch that. The question of getting a bus at 6 o'clock or 7 o'clock from certain parts of St. Lucy to get to work on time is out of the question, because there are no buses or the buses are jam packed. In spite of the many pleas which I have made to the Hon. Minister and others from this side of the House, one finds that there has not been any improvement, but rather a deterioration in the services. People who live particularly in areas apart from the point at which the service begins, as for example the point where the Pie Corner bus begins, the point where the Josey Hill bus begins or the point where the Connell Town bus begins, those persons who live on the route as it were, find it extremely difficult almost every day to get proper transportation to get to work.

Talking, Mr. Chairman, of persons on the Pie Corner route in the Chance Hall, Benthams and St. Lucy's Church area, if you take the Connell Town route when the bus gets up by St. Swithins's Church, by Greenidges and very often beyond that point people find it extremely difficult to get on the bus, and so too the people in the Checker Hall area; so that all these are matters which I have been continually drawing to the attention of the Hon. Minister and indeed calling for some kind of remedy. This is still very much the position today, and again I would want to reiterate this point to at least make the Minister become a little more aware of some of these difficulties and problems, because as I said, I think that it is important that we provide an adequate transportation for the people of this country.

This is nothing of course to do with the additional problems which are experienced by other people, the travelling public. I am talking in terms of the school children where very often there is difficulty in their getting buses to get even to St. Lucy's Government School from points in St. Lucy. This is nothing to do with persons who have to come to school in St. Peter or in St. Michael. One can remember just a couple of weeks ago the Headmaster of Coleridge and Parry School made reference to this at the Speech Day, the problems which pupils of that school experience in getting to school on time. These are matters I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that should gain some kind of immediate attention, but instead of that, all we are getting from the

Minister are words and words, promises and promises, but no kind of performance.

Now I thought that in looking at the whole question of public transportation, and since this money is required among other things, to deal with utilities and general operating costs, that it would be necessary for me just to make mention of some other things which I believe have been mentioned in this Chamber already, but which need to be repeated particularly if we are thinking in terms of having a public transportation system, a service of which we can be all proud. We can for example, look at the facilities which exist in the various bus stands in this country, the Fairchild Street bus stand, the Lower Green bus stand, and the Speightstown bus terminal. These are woefully inadequate both for those persons who have to use the bus stand waiting for buses, and also for persons who work at the Transport Board. There have been numerous complaints about the lack of general facilities for these persons, and I believe that the Minister should give some urgent attention to this particular area. There have also been complaints made about the general condition of some of the workshops which are operating by the Transport Board. Again I think the Minister should look at this with a view to having them properly upgraded, because I believe if you are going to ask people to work particularly in the repair and fixing of buses, at least the kind of facilities which you offer to them and the environment they work in should be adequate and indeed should be suitable for the performance of their work in a proper manner.

It is interesting, Mr. Chairman, to note that the timed bus service which was introduced by a so-called expert brought in by the Transport Board or the Ministry of Communications and Works is going to be discontinued because that seems to have created more problems than it actually solved, and one would like to see the return to a system which people can follow and which is reliable, and I think that certainly it is a good decision to remove the timed bus service which was introduced by a person who obviously brought considerations other considerations relating to this society to bear in introducing that kind of system which obviously has no place here, and the sooner we get rid of that, the better it would be for everybody. I believe that the Minister himself, as far as I understand, suffered some kind of casualty, not him personally, but his constituency had some difficulties with the introduction of this kind of, what could be considered, very inappropriate system which the person who was supposed to be an expert and was brought in here attempted to introduce in this country.

I should like to make a further plea for particularly the whole question of the servicing of the north, particularly in the St. Lucy area. I really think that the

Minister should get down to a serious study of the movement of people from the various areas with a view to re-organising the system to cater particularly to the needs of people in the peak hours.

5.30 p.m.

I believe that in any area in Barbados you will find that there are going to be times when traffic is going to be heavy. In the mornings when people want to get to work, in the evening when people want to get back home and at some point in the midday around there but if this can be done then I cannot believe it is beyond the abilities of the people in Barbados to be able to regulate this kind of system in a satisfactory manner provided we have enough buses to be able to do this. This can be done.

We do not have to go to England or go to Canada for an Expert to come and tell us how this can be done. It can be done and I am totally dissatisfied with the way how people have to travel with the kind of problems and pressures they have to put up with because in this day and age we should not be in this kind of position as far as public transportation is concerned.

I would further like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that when you talk of let us say having some place in the North which is proper for people to work and repair buses, I know that there is a plan for modernising Speightown and presumably there will be some arrangements there to provide facilities for the Transport Board. At least I would like to think so but I know for example that the Government owns some land in St. Lucy. We have Spring Hall yard there an open area where repairs of buses could be done and it could become a kind of repair area for buses which need to be serviced in that area and I think that Government should look seriously at utilising that compound which I believe will be a better facility. There would be less mud and slush when the rain falls but these people who are called upon to carry out repairs and service buses will be able to do it in an atmosphere which is a little better than the kind of situation which they have to work in at the present moment.

Although what I have to say may be a little critical of the Hon. Minister, I think the Hon. Minister should recognise by now that there are criticisms given in good faith with a view to seeing that the persons who use our public Transport whether they be from St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. John, St. Joseph or any other part of the Island that the service caters to the needs and that it is efficient and at the same time people can rely on the services to the extent that they can get to work and get back home. Their children can get to school and get back home at a reasonable hour and that the general movement of people can be the kind of movement that is befitting our society at this present stage of our development.

Dr. CHELTENHAM: I think, Mr. Chairman, I ought to start at the very beginning and indicate that it is a matter of great dissatisfaction when in a matter such as this, the Transport Board has been coming to Parliament from time to time for vast sums of money by way of a subsidy and the Minister introduces a Resolution for a further \$3 million by saying nothing. It is a matter of dissatisfaction.

I am only an ordinary M.P., and I am referred to as a double digit man. I came in by less than 20 votes and who am I to be suggesting to any Minister how he should conduct his Ministry and his business in Parliament but the fact that I had such a slender majority and I am lead to believe that it will be very substantial next time, it does not deter me from speaking very frankly on these matters.

That is no way to conduct the public business and as a custodian of the public purse. That is what I am. Whether I came in here by one vote or by 10,000 votes, I am one of the custodians of the public purse and I am saying that that is a very unsatisfactory manner in which to conduct the public business by way of your position as a Minister (ASIDES). I am not asking for any apologies because I really give them myself. I am not asking for any apologies but I am only telling you how I feel about a matter such as that.

Now I will continue at the beginning and the Transport Board is suffering from the manner in which it was born in 1955. It came into being without any serious forethought and any planning and it has suffered from 1955 until now from an absence of serious planning and sustained and tough intellect. That is what it needs, the application of sustained and serious intellect.

There is no policy at the Transport Board. There has never been any policy since 1955, neither in the Barbados Labour Party Administration nor in the Democratic Labour Party Administration. Ministers have come and gone. They have done very little and attended to short-termed difficulties. We have brought in Consultants. We have had the King Report. We now have the Transportation Study and at no time can we get any Minister saying now these are the options ahead of us. These are the problems. This is the way ahead and let us move forward.

The result of that is that I cannot walk through my constituency without hearing how inadequate the bus service is. The people in Parish Land cannot get buses, two buses in Parish Land on Sundays. The people in Fairy Valley Rock cannot get buses. The people of Foursquare and St. Patricks in the adjoining areas cannot get to work. Constituents have been getting

warnings about losing their jobs all because of the transportation system inspite of this substantial subsidy and inadequate system.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I know that there are problems but we are here to solve problems and it is not beyond the Barbadian intellect as the hon. member who just sat down has been saying. It is not beyond the resourcefulness and intellect of the Barbadians to regulate and solve the Transport problems. No doubt the Minister will say that at peak hours he has to take out 72 buses for school children. So what? That is the reality. Get up and solve it. To repeat year after year that that is a problem does not carry us forward. Solve it. That is what you are there for. (ASIDES).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Dr. CHELTENHAM: You hear a lot of men about to resign from time to time but when the hour comes you do not get any resignations. I speak very frankly, Mr. Chairman. I do not give people any particular apologies unless I generally feel I am wrong. Any day I tell a man I will resign, I will resign. That is me. I will resign. I do not make fancy threats and so on about these things. I am a serious man and people know that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The time has not come yet.

Dr. CHELTENHAM: That is neither here nor there. I am very dissatisfied, Mr. Chairman, about the attitudes of a lot of the drivers at the Transport Board. I observe them on the road and I do not think that they are careful about the buses. I do not think that they drive them in a safe manner. I am told that regularly on mornings many routes cannot be serviced because of the fact that employees do not turn up. It is an attitudinal problem which is wide-spread in certain parts of the community but I think that perhaps enough training has not been done in that particular area.

In addition to that, Sir, I do not think that the Transport Board has been allowed to function. Now I am a Chairman of a Board and I want to say very frankly that no Minister under whom I worked, and I have only worked under one, and he has never interfered partly because I do not think it is in his nature but I think he also knows that if he interferes that he has the job. That is known. That is no secret. The Transport Board cannot do its work for one thing because there is enormous interference. There is no doubt about that. It is a matter of fact.

It is also a fact and I have never understood how it has persisted since 1955. You have one of the biggest Organisations in the country, 1,800 employees and you have never had a Personnel Manager.
5.40 p.m.

You cannot run an organisation of 300 workers without a Personnel Manager. You have 1800 workers, all sorts of problems, you have never had a Personnel Manager, no attempt as far as I know has ever been made to fill it. You have never had a Deputy General Manager, the General Manager in recent years has never been appointed, he lives under the threat of dismissal hour after hour, and as far as I know he does a very good job in all the circumstances. In recent years we have never had a General Manager. He does Personnel, he does Administration, he does Route Planning, he does Scheduling, he does Public Relations, he does everything; the biggest organisation virtually of a para-State nature in the country. (ASIDE). Well, I don't know anything about minibus operations, all I know is this, that we must resolve the problem of how to get the minibuses to co-exist with the Transport Board buses, and one of the suggestions that I have been hearing recently, which seems to be making sense — although it would have to be carefully considered — is that the Transport Board should perhaps do all the long routes, since we are subsidising it anyhow, and do them well and allow the minibuses to bring people from within three and five miles in.

One problem with the minibuses is that they will work at peak hours, but at slow periods when people must still have a reliable service they are not prepared to work. It seems to me that the permits must be given out on certain conditions, and one would have to be that if you have a route you have to service it effectively, and that is, that so many times per hour you would have to go out on that route. That might be difficult to police, but it seems to me that some attempt would have to be made.

With respect to the school children, Sir, it seems to me that we have a big problem really, which may have to be tackled by way of allowing the stores to open at 10 o'clock and go through till 6.00 where you would find that the school children are at school by the time the store clerks and others are coming into town, and by the time they are ready to go out the school children are back home. I am not saying that that is necessarily the solution to the problem, but it seems to me that it would go some way towards alleviating this particular difficulty.

I agree with the Rt. Hon. Leader of the Opposition when he says that it is a cause for concern when we are spending so much money on the system and when we are getting such poor returns. I think that all of us, particularly those who have the responsibility of representing rural constituencies, are brought face to face with this problem often indeed and that we have a responsibility to speak out, especially in the context of a situation where the Minister himself is saying nothing. That is the point. No doubt, as he has promised, he will deal with some of us, even in an *ad hominem* way, but that will not solve the problem, what is needed from him is a clear

statement of policy and direction. Where are you going? The time frame within which you expect to go from Point A to Point B, and when we can look forward to an alleviation of the problems.

I am told, Mr. Chairman, that last year the Ministry refused to order 30 buses, and that that delay in putting through the order has been very responsible for some of the difficulties which we are experiencing. Perhaps there were good reasons for that failure to replace unserviceable units in a particular year, but that is one of the points, for example, that I think the Minister should address his mind to and let us hear something about it. We are much better off in this country than we were, for example, when I was a boy, but we are still relatively a poor country and we just do not have money to throw away, and I think all of us are concerned about the fact that in that particular area of national alignment the investment does not pay any dividends whatsoever.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I think one of the things that made this party a very strong and powerful organisation over the past 40 years is because members on the Front Bench and members on the Back Bench can be critical of each other and yet stand up together. I think that is what made this party such a powerful party, because we can be critical of each other, a Minister can be critical of his Back Benchers, the Back benchers can be critical of the Front Bench, and yet this party can stand up like the rock of Gibraltar.

On the other hand, Sir, it is now history — and quite recently — that if this had happened on that side the Senate revocations would have come, reshuffles would have come, Presidents would have been removed, Vice Presidents would have been dropped and heads would have rolled. Then you would hear who would bite the dust from who would not bite it.

This party is strong enough, it has been through too many waters. I have seen the Leader of the Opposition resign on the floor of the House in 1955, I think it was, because he differed with this party, but this party remained strong, took its punches, rolled with them and came back in 1976 to capture the Government of Barbados and bring this country from economic disaster. This is what we have done.

Now, Sir, we have to ask ourselves one question. Is the bus service in Barbados worse in 1981 than it was in 1976? That is the question I will ask. There are more buses, there are newer buses, there are more minibuses, licensed, they are going into more routes, they are operating longer hours, the Transport Board is employing more people, they have better technicians and a better Board than they had under the regime of the Democratic Labour Party. So confused were you

that your bus fare in 1974 and 1975 was something like 65 cents to the farthest point. There was no oil crisis, but your bus fare was way higher, and so confused were you that in the run up to the 1976 election, after examining the King Report, you reduced your bus fare to 25 cents, so confused were you with a policy.

I am not going to stand up here hear any of my colleagues being criticised without coming to their defence, although I know they are capable of taking care of themselves. I am saying that one of the problems with the Transport Board, I believe, is that the development in Barbados is so rapid and so many more people are working, that the Transport Board finds it difficult to meet the demands of the travelling public. This is my conception.
5.50 p.m.

There are more people working and more people going to school. You have not got all coming into Bridgetown, to St. Michael or to Queen College or going to Combermere. You have them now all across the country. You have tourists using the buses today. You have all these things and yet I can stand here and hear criticisms made of the Transport Board without examining the facts behind it.

Now I know as a fact that you have no problems with the Transport Board when the school children are on vacation. If that therefore is the problem, that it is so when the school children are not on vacation and you have been able to diagnose that problem, the Transport Board must now have a policy to correct that particular whether it is going to zone the schools, whether it is going to have buses only to bring the school children and from school or whether you are going to improve your bus service; but to sit here and hear the nonsense about the Minister having introduced a ministerial approach..... (*Asides*) I am talking to the Chairman; you are a clown, nobody pays you any attention. You are idiot. You are telling me about Ralph Walker and that sort of cheap talk.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair. No cross talk please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Now, Sir, a Minister has his own style.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: (Standing).... Let us have order, please. The stenographers must do their work.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: A Minister has his own style in introducing a particular piece of legislation. The Attorney General and Minister of external Affairs,

I do not like his style in introducing it. He wants to make a long, big, pond water, long-winded speech covering up all around. That is the Attorney General's and Minister of External Affairs' approach. He wants to cover every single area because he does not want to get attacked. I like my colleague's approach. I tell you what the business is all about. It is \$3 million, it is to buy parts, it is to buy cups or whatever it is. I present it to Parliament and the Opposition must find fault with the Resolution and then give me an opportunity to reply. That is my approach, but you have others who want to make a long speech. If you come to Parliament and you have an Addendum and it is for \$3 million to buy buses, your duty is to get your friends at the Transport Board or the experts to tell you what they know about it and come and make a contribution. But why should the Minister get up and tell you it is for \$3 million? Do you mean he must recite the Addendum? What he has in the Addendum are the thoughts of the Minister. I am no expert on the transport system in Barbados. To be critical of the state of the Transport Board system in Barbados, to my mind, I do not know if we have the brain power in Barbados to do it. I do not know if we have people who have made studies of this throughout the entire world, and if you can get a person to do it, why not? Why be critical of people that you bring from overseas to make these studies? I do not understand why! What is wrong with that?

You have people in Barbados who know about birds, but there are people who have had more exposure and therefore you want to be in a position to be able to pick their brains. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the Barbados Government today has fulfilled its obligations in the manifesto. On page 7 it says: "The Barbados Labour Party believes that Barbadians are entitled to a cheap and efficient transport system." Our transport system is one of the best in the Caribbean; that is what I know, and it is one of the cheapest in the Caribbean; it goes beyond that. "This can only be achieved if the buses are all brought under the control of one authority with an overall plan for public transport." That is what we have done. This is what we have offered the country by way of our manifesto. We have brought all the buses under one authority and that is why they were nationalised.

We have taken the mini-buses. You had the mini-bus people galloping up and down here, they did not know where to go and could not get money to buy new buses. They were broken down, running on four tyres, not painted, nothing at all. If you got in the buses, your clothes got torn. Now you can go on the road and be proud of seeing the minibuses in Barbados. Do you want to deny the minibus people of the minibuses too? Do you mean the minibus people should not be in it, or do you want to have them like in your regime, going before

the law courts every morning? We have regularised them in five years of Government, something that could not be achieved by you as my colleague from Christ Church East has said. The birth of it was bad; it started on the wrong foot. We had fifteen years to rectify it, you had fifteen years to rectify it, and the Minister of Communications and Works with a more complex operation is doing its damnest best to give this country the best transport system in the Caribbean, and there is nowhere in the world that I can think of with any Government transport system that is not subsidised. In the most powerful and richest country in the world, the United States, you see people jam packed in the subway on evenings; men on to each other, women with hatpins jucking the men from rubbing up on them, and you are talking about a system which between the hours of 4 o'clock and 6 o'clock moves nearly 5,000 to 10,000 persons in two to three hours. You are complaining about people being trampled. The old age pensioners travel free. All of these things you have. When we told the old age pensioners to travel after 9 o'clock, there was a big hurrah from them that we did not want them to go to church. We tried to protect them. If you have school children remaining in the city on evenings rather than going home and they then start to wrestle with the workers to catch a bus, you must have confusion. It is as simple as that. Therefore the Ministry must have, I would say, a clear cut policy which it is working towards; but you could not rectify it for fifteen years, the former Barbados Labour Party administration did not correct it in fifteen years — they gave birth to it — but after five years the Minister has to come with a magic wand and all of a sudden every single manjack must get to work on the dot of 7 o'clock. I sympathise with those persons who get to work late because they have problems with the bus, but I believe the business houses, unless they are family to Mrs. Ram would be able to appreciate the problem which they have.

Talking about introducing a Resolution in short, you cannot tell me how to introduce a Resolution when I am here. I know how and why. I know what item to call and when I should call it. I want to end on this note, Sir. I know as a fact that there are additional buses ordered and they are here. They opted for Butcher's engineering works to build the buses so as to keep some foreign exchange here and to employ additional people. Butcher's place cannot produce the amount of buses that we have ordered neither in the meantime can they even overseas give the Ministry and the Transport Board as I understand it the amount of chassis. It takes something like six months to get buses, I think, and Barbados is still a very poor country. I have travelled, you have travelled. You go to Trinidad and you can't even get a telephone call from Piarco to Port of Spain.
6.00 p.m.

When you were in power you could not get a bus. You could not get a bus in St. Peter or Pie Corner after

11 o'clock in the evening but now you have buses running up to 12.00 p.m., 1.00 a.m. and 2.00 a.m., in the morning. You have buses on the road and you say that the Transport system is worse. At the peak hours it is difficult but the system is not that bad and I believe that the school children at the time when the workers come out make it an almost impossible task and the Transport Board should be lauded for trying to get so many people off the road between 4.00 p.m. and 6.30 p.m., Sir.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am a little surprised that this Resolution has generated so much heat. I thought that we had been debating transport for a sufficient period of time in the course of the last five years that any hon. members who were nervous about the reaction that would take place now that the time is approaching would have recognised that despite the limitations of the Transport Board, despite the occasional annoyances and inconveniences that occur to everybody's constituents in Barbados that overall there has been a material improvement in the service in Barbados.....

I do regularly a little bit of research into matters. Transport is so vital an area affecting trade in Barbados in its wider sense that I have made it my business to study some of the problems which inconvenience and a lack of inadequate Transport system which would affect trade, industry and Tourism in Barbados.

I have also as is customary had a look at the situation in other countries so that if possible we can learn from the experience of those countries. There can be no doubt about it that the best bus service in the Caribbean is found here in Barbados. If you go to other developing countries in the World, whether in Asia, with the possible exception of Singapore and South Korea, our system would still be better than the others.

I certainly went to Manila and I saw the situation there. There was only a token bus service by Government. I have been to Jamaica. I have been to Trinidad. I have been to Guyana. I have been to Liberia. I have been to Kenya and I have been to New York. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, a very interesting article appeared in "The Economist" not so long ago on the impact of present-day cost on traditional industries, particularly the motorizing industry. Few members appeared to have noticed this article. They would have seen that in Boston, the City of Boston, less than a month ago the whole bus service collapsed.

In Caracas, an oil producing country, any hon. member who has been there would know the chaotic situation there. The truth of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that all of us must recognise one thing. No business can operate unless it earns revenue to cover its costs. This is a fundamental law of business whether you are in the Communist System, the Capitalist System or the Mixed

System. If you do not get in enough revenue to cover your out-goings, the difference must be found from elsewhere.

Here it is that a criticism is coming from no less a person than the Leader of the Opposition about the amount of money that is being voted to subsidise the Transport System in Barbados which last year carried 43 million passengers with 250 odd buses of which some 30 - 40 in any eventuality would have to be devoted to servicing to cover normal accidents and break-downs and things of that kind so you have 220 buses per day to carry this number of passengers.

It is also undeniable that in the course of the last year a lot of the items of cost of the Transport Board have increased. Between April last year and now it is undeniable that oil prices have risen. The Transport Board uses diesel oil. There has been a rise in the cost of diesel oil so that the cost of fuel has gone up for the Transport Board.

No one has designed yet a bus that has become so fuel efficient as to be able to absorb a significant portion of the rising cost of fuel. Certainly there has been no comparable engineering breakthrough in engine techniques and body techniques comparable to what has taken place in the Airline Industry between the 707's and DC 8's and the Jumbos, none.

Spare parts, the essential ingredients in any bus service have risen. You can index these things through circumstances. What was the cost of the pound in April, vis-a-vis the Barbados dollar. What is the cost today vis-a-vis the Barbados dollar. We are living in a world of unreality if we cannot recognize the fact that an essential input to cost in relation to the operation of any transport system is replacement cost and the source of that replacement cost is foreign currency and that foreign currency is moving against you in terms of your dollar. Again, cost must go up.

6.10 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, we all are ignoring the reality of the fact that if we do not want bus fares to go up we have to subsidise the Transport Board. That is the reality of the situation, because their wages go up, their fuel goes up, their spare parts go up, and if you have no movement in the revenue, then there will be a gap and it has to be met, and this Government comes to the Legislature to meet the gap. When we come to the Legislature to meet the gap, we get all kinds of suggestions, particularly from the other side, as to how it could be solved. Well, they know it all over there, despite the fact that they had it for 15 years, despite the fact that they used to subsidise the transport system. Despite all that, they know it all, the reason

why the Transport Board is costing so much is because it is incompetently run.

Mr. Chairman, this Government has spent substantial sums of money in re-equipping the Transport Board. We would have loved to re-equip it at a faster level, but economic reality dictates that there is only a given amount of money that we can spend and appropriate towards re-equipping the Transport Board each year. I believe there must have been well over 110 new Leyland buses bought since this Government has been in power. I agree that it was a pity that last year the 30 were not bought, because my memory of it was very clear, that when the Government decided that it would take over all the large public service vehicles, we said that over a period of five years we would systematically re-equip the Transport Board, so that at the end of five years we would have at least 150 new buses. I well recall that. As a matter of fact, so urgent was the situation at the time when the hon. member for St. Andrew was Minister of Communications and Works, he came in here with a Resolution for 50 buses, 25 to be built abroad and 25 to be built locally, and the people on the other side criticised him for buying bus bodies from abroad and said that all should have been built locally.

We agreed with the concept of encouraging the fabrication industry in Barbados, and it was pointed out at that time that some of the equipment that was taken over was unserviceable and had a very short period of life, so therefore the urgency demanded that at least we had some new units but that systematically we would increase the fleet by a minimum of 30 units each year. We voted the money in this financial year for 30 units. Two things happened. I want to illustrate something that very often people do not recognise, how when you are living in a country with the best will in the world, with all the money in the world, there are still unfortunate coincidences of factors which can disturb your intention having absolutely nothing to do with you.

Two things occurred. The chassis were ready in England to be shipped to Barbados. They had the first of the seamen's disputes. They started to come in, I believe 20 are here now. The bus builder in Barbados had some of the material, he ordered all the balance, but they had a seamen's strike in England and it was there, and that seamen's strike has been going along now for about three months, it is only now that they have gone to arbitration, so that there will be a delay, but you have the money in your pocket ready to do it. We have voted the money, the Legislature has voted the money, we should be getting now a regular schedule of delivery of the buses, but that will be postponed by a couple of weeks because of the lost time.

We do not manufacture fibre glass in Barbados, you have to buy the materials from abroad. If there is a seamen's strike, what are you going to do? Fly it in by aeroplane? Are you going to charter an aeroplane to fly it down here? What are you going to do? These are factors beyond the control of any of us. It is a recognition of the fact that you are living in a country in which you are dependent for certain essential raw materials from outside, and therefore factors can intervene which are beyond your control, but 30 buses are due, the money is in the Estimates for 30 buses. Twenty-two have arrived and work is proceeding on it, but even that 30, Mr. Chairman, will only go towards the improvement in the regularity of the service.

There are 30 more which will be in the Estimates this year too, so that by the time this term is finished we would have ordered well over 150 new buses. There will have been over 160 new buses that we in five short years by re-equipping some of them would have done more than the Democratic Labour Party did in 15 years. They did not buy 150 new buses in 15 years.

We also have another problem. The problem is that all of the debates, all of the problems that transport people have relate to how to have enough equipment for a peak period of time. That is a problem in transport economics. How do you solve a problem to deal with a sudden peak demand? We have peak demands in Barbados arising from the fact that our society has an engrained belief that everything must open between the span of an hour and everything must close between the span of an hour. So that between 8.00 and 9.00 in the morning all the businesses must open, between 5.00 and 6.00 in the evening all the businesses must close. This is a problem that somehow or the other the whole of this society will have to face. Other countries have decided that it is necessary to stagger the opening and closing of businesses and major industrial undertakings and other forms of economic activity to even out these peaks.

We have also the problem of transport of the school children. Not that this is a problem, because every country in the world has to provide transport for school children, but where it appears for the Transport Board to be unreasonable is that it is a charge on the vote of the Ministry of Education.
6.20 p.m.

Hon. L. R. TULL: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I do not feel that I have to defend the interest of school children any more than any hon. member of this Chamber, but it is a fact that school children do pay a fare to the Transport Board and on every occasion that the school children ride the buses, the buses are over-packed.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I really do not appreciate the point he is making because I never said that they did not pay. What I am saying is that they pay a different level of fare from the normal standard fare. That is all I am saying. Nobody understands the argument, but the argument is very simple. The argument is to the extent of the fare. The difference in fare between the regular standard fare and the fare charged to the school children means that there is a subsidy, and if the Transport Board received the same level of fare for the carrying of school children over the same journey, that additional revenue would accrue to them; but because we have a system of Government in Barbados where it all comes out of the Consolidated Fund, the attitude is adopted that the travelling Ministry is the Ministry of Communications and Works via the Transport Board, so therefore the totality of that falls under that vote. It is the same thing with old age pensioners. In some other countries the Ministry of Welfare would pay to the Ministry of Transport that amount. If you looked at the situation in other countries where the bus services are run by a municipal authority as opposed to Central Government, you would see the validity in the point I am making, because there the state would pay over to the municipal authority for the services they provided for their special groups. That is the only point I am making. I am making the point that if the real cost of transferring school children was a charge on the education budget, the Transport Board would have derived more revenue from the school children. The proof of this is this: let them tender to the same mini-buses and see what tenderers they would get. Let them tender it and see what price they would tender at. They would not carry them at the fares which they now pay to the Transport Board; so when we are talking about \$11 million or \$14 million during the course of the year for transport, we must remember it is not only to cover inefficiencies — and there must be some at the Transport Board — but the physical plant needs upgrading the general conditions need upgrading, they need better training of workers, they need better management and things of that kind.

I saw a lot of new jobs advertised in the newspaper. I wonder how many applicants they got. The salaries are certainly much better than what they were in the past; they have been substantially regraded. I hope they have a sufficient number of applicants for the jobs such as the Chief Personnel Officer, Chief Financial Controller, Chief Engineer, General Manager, Traffic Manager. A whole raffle of jobs have been created up there.

Now, Sir, on the question of minibuses, everywhere in the third world countries there is a zeal for small businessmen to get into an independent area and nowhere does this manifest itself with greater intensity than in the mini-bus business. Wherever you go, to Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, Manila, you can see them. There have been repeated attempts in all these countries by all of the

consultants in the world as to how to solve this problem. There are two theories: one is that you insist that all licensing fees that these minibuses pay — and you charge them an exorbitant one — you put into the funds of the Transport Board. It is similar to what the hon. member did when he first formed C.B.C. Their source of income was not only through advertising revenue; all the licences for the television sets and all that had to go into the funds which went to CBC by way of subsidisation. This is a continuation of that concept. It is an extra special tax the proceeds of which go into the funds. That is one way of doing it.

The second way is to encourage the formation of some sort of sub-company by the Transport Board so that they would participate in the profits that are made by the minibuses. This is the way in Jamaica. They formed a single minibus cooperative and the Public Service Commission in Jamaica are supposed to be shareholders in that company. I am not sure of the percentage shareholding, so that any profits derived from that go back by way of dividends to the Transport Board, the argument being that they must be suffered and tolerated to deal with routes that the Transport Board either cannot or will not service, but the mere fact that they are on the road means that they are depriving the Transport Board of revenue particularly at peak periods of time. That is another concept.

Here in Barbados the first point that we have to recognise is this: that there are a lot of individual capitalists in Barbados and they do not come from any particular class or colour in Barbados. Any opportunity they get to make a dollar they are there and transport has always been such an area. I remember the former Leader of the Opposition, the immediate predecessor of the hon. member when he was Minister of Communications and works in 1974 breathing fire on the minibuses saying "when I licence what they are now, any man I catch with a minibus again we will run him off the road, we will prosecute him." It was an idle threat, because no sooner than he said that in 1974, by 1975 there were more. Only draconian measures such as condemnation of vehicles and things of that sort could deal with this question.

Now there is a new Road Traffic Bill which I believe hon. members have heard about for a long time, but being a democratic country we have to go through consultative procedures and sometimes those who are the loudest when you do not consult them, when you do consult them keep it back because they really have nothing to say. They are only interested in the concept of consultation. Anyway a new Road Traffic Bill I am positive will provide the framework for registration of vehicles which will facilitate, I can only say that, the enforcement of a restriction of the number of minibuses,

together with other measures that the Government has taken.

6.30 p.m.

It is a fact of life that no licences for the import vehicles above 10 seats will be issued in Barbados except by specific authorities of the Licensing Review Committee. The object is to ensure that at least from the imports side you do not have the garages hustling people to buy mini-buses and encouraging them in illegality because you cannot trust them. If you ask them not to sell a vehicle that it is not for a licence they will tell you that they function is to sell vehicles, not to monitor licences. You cannot deal with them. I believe the other side has tried to get them to co-operate with issuing licences but they are hustlers. They are out for selling. They will sell anything they get. They are hustlers.

This question of colouring vehicles so as to identify them there is no big thing about this. This is an attempt made by the Licensing Authorities to provide ready identification of certain classes of vehicles so I do not think that a big thing should be made of that because just as you have different registration numbers, different registration numbers for different classes of vehicles, if you have a moving object and it is a larger object, it is felt by those who are responsible for enforcement that you should have the additional means of identifying it readily so that it can be spotted at a glance so there should be no big thing about that, absolutely.

If the painters can get some money, so much the better. In Barbados the competition is so good that some will quote one price and some will quote a lesser price so do not worry your head about that. That is again another attempt. Now that helps to deal with a very valid point that has been made by the Leader of the Opposition which has been raised by members of this side repeatedly.

Discipline is necessary to ensure that mini-buses stick to their routes. I have quarrelled more than anybody else in the Christ Church area when I see "O" vehicles there and I have even seen the other morning an "L" vehicle. No wonder the hon. member for St. Lucy can complain. There are mini-buses which are chosen to do the routes but they are trying to hustle passengers up in Christ Church between Silver Sands and Bridgetown. I quarrel myself when I see it. I do not even mind a "P" vehicle because that is on the way down and anyway the distinction between St. Philip and Christ Church is so blurred because the corrugation will soon go right up there. It is there.

You only have to go up there and see that between St. Patricks and Foursquare is one continuous mass, between Charnocks and Four Roads up by where Johnny Webster used to live. It is not surprising that the designer of the boundaries saw that obvious fact. There is no

difficulty in that at all but the position is this. We must and this is where politics must not be played in this because the Leader of the Opposition comes in here in the House of Assembly and quarrels and criticises and says that there is no discipline among the enforcers of the law relating to the mini-buses because they do not stick to the route. Now when we enforce the law he is going to go on the platform and say that we are cruel. If the Leader of the Opposition does not do it he is going to be present when his own members will do it and he will sit down and laugh but these are the difficulties we have.

The difficulty we have here is when we sit down and agree on a plan, when we identify a difficulty, we identify a solution but we do not act in concert in trying to execute the solution because we want to play politics. Now this has got to come to an end if we really want to solve the transport problem.

I hope, Sir, that it be recognised that there are deficiencies. All of us have constituents who quarrel about it but I believe that in fact, bearing in mind the additional number of the people who are working, the additional number of school children, the additional number of tourists who are using the buses, the additional number of people who hitherto were in the motor car ownership business are not now because of the fact that fuel prices have gone up and many people who were able to use their motor cars everyday now find it more economical for them to use the bus.

When we take all those factors into account as acknowledged by the statistics that 43 million passengers were carried last year in this country, it is not as good as we would like it to be but it is certainly not as bad as hon. members would like to paint it, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I see the hon. lady from the City.

Mr. TAITT: I understand, Mr. Chairman, I refer to the lady. I understand, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: I am much obliged to you, Mr. Chairman. Let it be understood that the front bench will defend itself. I am not making any apology for that.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make just one or two points. Hon. members have spoken in and out and around the fringe on a lot of basic problems which exist at the Transport Board. I am of the opinion, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that this whole impasse is larger than the Transport Board. I believe that the Genesis of this problem is bigger than the Transport Board which is the subject of this Resolution.

It must be remembered, Mr. Chairman, that the Barbados Labour Party was the Party which nationalised transport in this country way back in the 1950's. I do not believe that in the 1980's that the Barbados Labour Party is about to denationalise transport. I do not believe that that is the case, Mr. Chairman, and that is not what I would want to see and I do not think that it is the intention that this Government will even begin to think of denationalising transport.

The concept of nationalisation of essential services in this country, Mr. Chairman, must be supported, the Water Services, the Sanitation Services, the Transport Services and the other essential services. This Government by policy, by Manifesto, by philosophy, the Barbados Labour Party has always supported such a view but the first and the last basic mistake, Mr. Chairman, I think is going by the modern day interpretation that nationalisation necessarily means day-to-day operation and there is where I think the first mistake which was very briefly adverted to by the hon. member for Christ Church East who then allowed himself to be deterred by other subjective matters, that first mistake was the basic mistake made in the 1950's when the Barbados Labour Party nationalised the transport system in this country.

I agree with the Rt. Hon. member for St. John that we do not ever want to go back to the system where private concessionaires will run the transport system in this country but I think that what we want is for all of us to sit down and have no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that the thinkers and planners of the Barbados Labour Party have got this problem in hand. Have no doubt about that.

We have been putting plasters on sores. Successive Governments, successive Boards and successive Managers of the Transport Board have been putting plasters on sores. We have been treating the effect rather than looking at the cure, the basic cause and this is true not only of the Transport Board and this is why I say that the basic concept is wider than the Transport Board. No Government such as ours in this region has any right being in the retail business. No Government has any right picking up bus fares on a daily basis. No Government such as ours has any business buying and selling fish through ISL or selling potatoes or figs down at the BMC.
6.40 p.m.

If you look you will see that the Boards running all of those retail operations come here time and again for subsidies out of the taxpayers' pockets. (ASIDE). Yes, the BMC too. Successive Governments have come here for that too, it is only now that the BMC is in the black, when we first came in here, Mr. Chairman, the BMC came here year after year for a subsidy. However

you dress it up, it was a subsidy. This is not a debate on the BMC and I do not want to say anything more on the BMC, except to draw it as yet another illustration of an operation in which a Government must not be involved.

The fact is, Mr. Chairman — and this point was made by the hon. member for Christ Church South Central — we have an entrepreneurial class in this country second to none in the developing world. He is perfectly right when he says that a Barbadian man or woman would turn a dollar out of anything. There are Barbadians today selling ordinary dirt, you understand dirt, they are putting it into plastic bags and selling it at so many dollars a bag.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I draw attention to the Standing Order which says that any hon. member speaking on a Resolution must be relevant. I submit that the BMC, that the digging up of dirt, and the buying and selling of dirt is totally irrelevant to this Resolution, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You are very much late. It is no longer a point of order, it cannot be.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Now that is a classic example of what I am trying to say. Dealing with fringe issues, trivia, when I am talking about wide horizons, principles, I am talking about comprehensive policy and he is talking about the same kind of trivia.

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not giving way to any fake or bogus points.

Mr. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. However wide she may be, Sir, however wide and how much principle she is talking about, she is not able under the rules of this House to be insulting in her remarks. The rules are against that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, what I am saying is that I think that the solution to this basic problem has got to be found in a recognition of the fact that nationalisation does not necessarily have to mean day to day operation. The Government must be there to monitor, to regulate, to control. If the Government has to import all the buses into Barbados, including the mini-buses, because the Government has the foreign exchange facility to do it or because we want to standardise buses or for whatever reason you have to do this, if the Government has that kind of thing, let that be the Government's job, let that be the job of a Transport Board, but I do

not see how either before, now, or in the future any Board or any Authority which is comprised normally of Civil Servants and political appointees who do not necessarily have these entrepreneurial skills can be expected to make a success of any retail operation.

I go back to my first point, which is that Governments are not expected to be in any day to day retail business, and that is where the cardinal original mistake was made in all these enterprises. Let the Government order, regulate and control, but let the Government find a formula, let the Government find a mechanism to either by way of franchise, by way of tender or however to give out the day to day operations to the entrepreneurs in this country who have the skills required to do the job.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that in the end the cure for the BMC, the cure for the Transport Board, the cure for ISL and such other bodies lies in drastic policy changes, and this Government.....(ASIDES)..... such as what I have just outlined, what more do you want me to tell you now? The answer to the whole thing? I am not the Minister of Transport, Mr. Chairman, and I have no doubt that the Minister in charge of that Board will get up and defend his operation, but I think that it was important that this point was made. We cannot go on year after year by way of subsidy in here putting plaster on sores, we have to treat the basic disease, and the disease lies in the fact that too many people feel that nationalisation means that politicians and political appointees must run these operations.

Mr. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, this debate has gone far and wide, and it is remarkable that in all the speeches that have been made, since the hon. member for Christ Church East spoke, that they have not in my opinion dealt with the very pertinent issues which the hon. member for Christ Church East raised.

Mr. Chairman, the question is not whether there should or should not be a subsidy, no one, including the hon. member for Christ Church East, questioned whether there should be a subsidy. I heard the Hon. Leader of this House explaining the subsidy in all kinds of terms; fuel has gone up, this has gone up. What the hon. member for Christ Church East said, as I understood it, and the hon. member for St. Lucy, and the hon. member for St. John, was that in spite of the large quantities of money which have been spent, the Transport Board continues to be one of the more inefficient aspects of life in this community. That was the issue, Sir.

No one can gainsay the fact that since 1977 \$20,095,836 in subsidies to the Transport Board has been voted by this House, and that excludes the \$13,603,335 that has been voted for Capital Works, mostly buses; \$33,698,000, roughly \$34 million having been spent, the

people of Barbados have a right to expect, anticipate and demand efficiency for \$34 million. That is the issue. No one who is progressive can deny the fact that subsidy is necessary in a society like this. There has been subsidy for education, there has been subsidy for agriculture, there will be subsidy for health. The Hon. Minister who just spoke does not quite understand what is going on in this community. There has been subsidy and there will continue to be subsidy, but what hon. members are demanding is service for that subsidy. When we spend \$34 million on transport and the people in St. Andrew cannot get a bus to come to town, the people in St. Lucy cannot get transportation, the people in St. Patricks cannot get transportation, the people in St. James cannot get transportation.....(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is not true, I have no complaints). They do not see you to complain to, and in any case they are not bothering with you any more, we have some pain in your stomach, you have pains all over.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, when they are spending \$34 million, those people in this community have a right to have their representatives come in here, instead of some of them going outside and saying that they do not really want to hit the Minister any more, they have to come here and have the courage like his colleague, the hon. member for Christ Church East, and tell the Minister he is not doing his job, or so it seems.
6.50 p.m.

No one has anything against the Minister personally; he is a very nice person, but, Sir, he was at the Ministry of Agriculture, that closed down; he has gone to the Ministry of Communications and Works and that seems to be closing down too, and the hon. member for Christ Church East has called for his resignation. (ASIDES: Not so.) You did not call for his resignation? You said he should stop threatening to resign and resign. I understood the hon. member to be saying that there ought not to be threats of resignation if they are not going to be followed through. Since I had knowledge otherwise, I assumed that the hon. member had the same knowledge I had and therefore he was suggesting that if his time comes he will resign, and now that the Minister's time has come he should resign too. I obviously misunderstood him. (A VOICE: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.) I am still here though.

Mr. Chairman, it is not fair for the people of Barbados to have the front bench members of the Government party, to have Ministers seeking to defend the indefensible on some rather parlous concept of all for one and one for all. They said they would put Barbados first and that is what the hon. member for Christ Church East was attempting to do — put Barbados first. We cannot have this business of ministerial camaraderie going before Barbados. You promised to put Barbados first. Among the first things that will help to put Barbados first is an

efficient bus service. That is what we are raising questions about, and if the Minister, whether it is through — his fault, whether, as I believe, it is the fault of the fact that the Minister of Finance wishes to get rid of the Minister or whether it is because he has some other reason.....The Minister of Finance has constantly not permitted the Minister to do his work in the efficient manner which most of us believe he can do it.

I have no quarrel with the Minister. The Minister is doing his best under the circumstances, but I believe that his colleagues are not giving him the latitude, they are not giving him the resources, they are not giving him the finances to carry on the work which has been promised in the manifesto. The hon. member for St. James — I nearly said South — asked a question. His question was, is the bus service worse today than it was in 1976? I am going to give him the answer, Sir, Yes.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, the present administration bought 125 new buses in four years. Your administration bought 25 buses in fifteen years. The bus service would have to be better. There are more routes, they are on the road longer hours and more hours, they carry more people, you have more technical men, so therefore it has to be better. What is wrong is that you have more people working.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Mr. TAITT: I agree with you. Now, Sir, I understand the Minister's attempt, but these are the facts. During those fifteen years the Government did not own the buses, so the need to order 110 buses did not arise. We did not take over the whole system. Furthermore, during those years the bus service was regulated by the Public Utilities Board. And in answer to another question he raised, it was the Democratic Labour Party, when the Public Utilities Board decided that bus fares should up to 65 cents, I was the Minister responsible for Public Utilities, and I recommended to Cabinet and they accepted that we should remove the transport system from under the aegis of the Public Utilities Board, and that was the first time that the Government took full responsibility for the transportation system, and it was during that time that we reduced the bus fares to 25 cents based on a simple principle....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The King Report did not reveal that. What nonsense you are talking?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TAITT: I was a member of the Cabinet when the decision was made. I was the person who signed the Cabinet Paper and they can't tell me that it is not true. I challenge them to bring the facts.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You said it was a 40 percent inflation in this country and the Central Bank said it was 34%.

Mr. TAITT: The point is that the 25 cents was based on a concept that it is discriminatory to charge Barbadians who lived farther away more money to participate in the working programmes of this country, and when that Government came into power after making tremendous promise, they raised the bus fares, and they have continued to raise the bus fares. The fact is that the people in the rural areas have suffered under their hands for the last four years, and I agree with the hon. member for Christ Church East that the transportation system is the most chaotic and most inefficient this country has ever had.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I am advised that it is 7 o'clock.

Mr. CHAIRMAN left the Chair and Mr. SPEAKER took the Chair.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chairman has reported progress and asked for leave to sit again.

The time is now 7 o'clock and this sitting now stands suspended until 8 o'clock p.m. this evening.
7.00 p.m.

On Resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is now resumed. When the Suspension was taken, the Chairman had reported progress and had asked for leave to sit again. The House is in committee.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. ODLE resumed the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If no other hon. member wishes to make a contribution to this debate, I will ask the Hon. Minister to wind up.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, when I went to the Ministry of Communications and Works in October, 1978, I was greeted with a statement. "Mr. Minister, we wish you well. This is a difficult Ministry but it is even more difficult in an election Year because you will be attacked and criticised by every member of Parliament, including your own fellow colleagues."

I am satisfied today that that statement is correct. If members feel that their position is so threatened in a constituency and the only thing they feel can save it is to attack the Government, not the Minister, of which

they form part, good luck to them but I have often said I will do of my best and remember that I am one of a Cabinet and decisions taken in any Ministry in this country are basically ratified by Cabinet.

Today the Transport Board is asking for a supplementary vote of \$3,900,000. The problems with the Transport Board did not start in October, 1978. We had problems with the Transport Board for many, many years before that. I remember sitting in Opposition, when one Minister fired the whole Board in the middle of a term because he could not get them to function in the way that the Board should function.

I want to deal first with the hon. member for Christ Church East, who, as I said earlier is a political scientist. Now he says that there is enormous interference in the Transport Board. I want to know interference by whom. Any Minister as far as I am concerned is entitled to interfere with anything that comes under him because he gets the lashes every day.

You get members of Parliament, you get the Press and you get everybody saying that the Minister should keep out of the affairs of the Board but when it comes to the criticisms, the Ministers get the criticisms so I do not understand the write-up or the problem that you must not get in but you take the lashes when things are going bad.

Now, if I were interfering with the Transport Board would I have to write to the Transport Board and send a petition to say that my constituents in St. Joseph had presented me with a petition because they were standing by the wayside for four hours to get a bus? Could I be interfering in the Transport Board then? Would I be interfering in the Transport Board when I called the whole Board before me and pointed to letters written to the Transport Board that the Ministry has never had a reply?

When I hear a statement that we did not buy buses, Mr. Chairman, this Government has bought 155 buses in four years, brand new buses. Today, there are 22 chassis in the Transport Board yard lying down out of last year's Estimates. We had to send the money on a Letter of Credit to England. There was a problem in the National Bank, a new Bank, a Government Bank, in processing a Letter of Credit.

We went out to tender because the shippers in Bridgetown said that the Transport Board or the Government was giving all of its business to one particular agency. We went to tender and asked for quotations on freight. When the quotations came back, the agency that had been accustomed bringing the buses to Barbados was still the lowest tender and it was Geest Line and we were told that Geest would ship five

chassis every two weeks to Barbados as long as they were available from Leyland. Acme Engineering told us they could build four buses a month. Twenty-two chassis are still lying in the Transport Board yard because we are now told that Acme cannot acquire the material for building the bus bodies.

Now, as you heard the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister said, the Planning and Priorities Committee decided that if you want to foster industry in Barbados that you must allow the local businessman to build the bodies of the Transport Board buses. It would create employment, it would develop techniques and all kinds of things, so we said "Yes".

Only recently the Chairman of the Transport Board came to me asking me if there is any way that we can find out the method of bringing complete buses to Barbados because by the end of this month you will have 30 chassis sitting down at the Transport Board of the 1981/82 Budget without one bus body being built upon them, and we have got money this year for more buses and they have now decided to bring them as completed buses.

Now, the Board all last year they took it in their own hands, Mr. Chairman. They went to Martinique, they looked at buses, they determined what they wanted although it is the Ministry of Communications and Works that pay for the buses. We did not get into it. We said if the Transport Board wants to run their business, let them run it. When they give us a decision, we will ask for a draw-down of the money. That is all we did for it. Can you then blame the Minister if you have 30 chassis at the end of this month lying down with no buses on the road.

You must understand something that this administration was forced into the situation it is in now. The Rocklyn Bus Co. suddenly decided that they were not running buses anymore and when the hon. members of the Opposition talk, they should remember a little bit of history. The Transport Board when they were operating only 80 buses were allowed to bring in buses into Barbados duty-free and paid for by the taxpayers of this country and had selective routes.

They were getting the same busfares as the Rocklyn and Elite who had to pay duty on their buses and had to find their money to bring in the buses and the two concessionaires decided that they could no longer run the buses anymore. Coming up to the 1976 Elections, the then Government took a decision to drop the busfares to 25 cents and I have said in here before that the busfares should have gone to 65 cents immediately after the 1976 Elections. That is on record.

Mr. Chairman, the Opposition would not tell you that they dropped the busfares to 25 cents and this is what it cost the taxpayers that nobody knows. They had to create a Department in MCW. It was staffed with 12 Inspectors. You had another Department with 10 other Clerks and they were paying out \$3 million in subsidy direct to the Concessionaires and they had to bring the Inspectors in because they had to inspect the two Private Concessionaires to make sure that when they claim their subsidy, that the subsidy was correct. They printed the bus tickets and gave them to the Concessionaires and the ten girls at MCW had to check the tickets when they come from the Printery and then pass them out to the Concessionaires.

8.10 p.m.

Now, if you talk about what it costs the taxpayers of this country, you will find that it is costing the taxpayers no more than under the Democratic Labour Party, because we have transferred ten of the twelve Inspectors down to the Transport Board. We also shut down the Department with the 12 girls who were checking tickets and let the Transport Board deal with it with their staff. The Government was forced to take over the Transport Board with a situation that you had 8 service pits at the Transport Board which were adequate for 80 buses, you ended up overnight with something like 220 buses with the same 8 service pits. You end up overnight dealing with some \$14 million without a Financial Controller, overnight the whole structure of the Transport Board changed because the concessionaires decided they could not handle it any more and asked us to take it over. What was the Government to do? Sit down and say no, we are not going to deal with it? Or are we going to deal with it? That is what the Government had to do. We immediately injected enough money into the Transport Board to buy 100 buses, of which half came to Barbados ready built and the other half were built in Barbados. We found out that those which came ready built gave us endless trouble. The front would drop off in the road, the windows would drop out, all kinds of things, and we took a decision how best to run a Transport Board under those circumstances.

In 1977-78 the number of passengers rose to 43 million passenger trips a year, when in the King Report it was forecasted that you would never reach 43 million until somewhere near 1985. In 1981 we are doing the 43 million that the King Report said we would reach in 1985. Over 13,000 more people are employed, so you can calculate, 26,000 more trips a day with employees making their way to and from work, you can see the stress under which the Transport Board has been put.

Mr. Chairman, we have been accused of everything. Nobody will tell you that old age pensioners, some 13,000 of them, are now travelling by the Transport Board without paying one cent. If we had to charge the

Ministry responsible for those trips, the Transport Board would not need a subsidy. If you look at the school children, you go in the bus stand any evening and you will find that 5.00, 5.30, 6 o'clock any evening there are school children struggling among passengers to get into buses, although there are 77 buses used daily to move school children to and from school. When I hear the member for Christ Church East saying he will hear about the school children, let him find the solution. I have said before, and I have told the Cabinet, that there will come a time when the Transport Board will have to be taken completely from under the Ministry of Communications and Works with a full time Chairman, give them a subsidy and let them run as a commercial entity, and every other Department of Government would have to pay for carrying their passengers. Even the policemen are carried free. The Regiment is now asking to be carried free, so when you put \$13 million in subsidy all you are doing, Mr. Chairman, is paying for those passengers who would normally pay if you did not extend that social service to them. That is what the situation is.

Nobody will tell you that in St. Lucy there was a two stage fare, although it was not recognised by anybody in this country. People living in Josey Hill, Pie Corner would have to go from Bridgetown to Speights-town, get out of a bus and board another bus to get to their final destination. The Transport Board has extended its routes at the same fare, without any extra fare, it has increased the number of journeys and that has caused a tremendous impact on the rolling stock.

Today we are accommodating three shifts in industry in this country. The last bus under normal conditions leaves the bus stand at midnight. Under the Democratic Labour Party you could not find a bus leaving anywhere in Bridgetown after 10 o'clock at night. There is now a by-pass that ends up in the depots at 2 o'clock in the morning. All of that has been achieved in the last two to three years, and nobody talks about that. I am sorry that the member for St. Lucy is not here, because nobody knows that the Trade Union has insisted that the Transport Board staff must be paid double time and treble time at night, when the Transport Board is required to carry workers to work, workers do not get treble time for working from 11.00 to 7.00 in the morning, but they come in with a phrase "unsociable hours" and they want you to pay the people who work on the night buses, after 6 o'clock they want double time and after 11.30 at night they want treble time for bus drivers and conductors, but they do not want to pay the increase, so how are you going to have it?

The workshop that should service the buses, the people there are being paid double time for a weekend, and how many buses are serviced on a weekend? Nobody wants an increase in bus fare. In September of last year after everybody talked about how the Transport Board was

being run, the existing staff at the Transport Board has a double regrading in 1980. They had a salary increase and they were regraded in 1980. We advertised for top level staff, we did not get any. We advertised for a General Manager, we advertised for an Engineer, who came, spent a few months with us and as soon as he got Barbadian citizenship he left within two or three days of that. We advertised for a Chief Personnel Officer, we did not get one, we advertised for a Financial Controller, we did not get one. Cabinet took a decision. We waited, nothing happened.

In September last year I sat down in my office with my officers and I said if the Transport Board is handling some \$16 million a year, the same as the Port Authority, then we should fix the wages at the same level as the Port Authority. Now, I went to Cabinet with a Paper on that basis. The Cabinet said that we want to give Barbados the most efficient bus service there is in the Caribbean go back and raise the salary levels even higher. Today if you read the advertisements in the newspaper you will find, Mr. Chairman, that the salary levels advertised for General Manager and top level staff far exceed any other Statutory Board in Barbados. We have advertised, and that was done by my Ministry in September last year. I am not responsible for the further administration of it. If the Board does not want to get on with it, that is their business, but I have done my job as Minister. I have carried a Paper, Cabinet agreed with me and we had said to the Board, go ahead, get the staff you want, so I cannot understand where this interference came from? Where is the interference?

Mr. Chairman, the Transport Board is now giving free uniforms from 1890-81, which it never did before, costing the Board some \$94,000.
8.20 p.m.

Fuel Cost, Mr. Chairman, went up by 39.1% up to September - October, 1980. Spare parts went up by 36.9% in actual cost, besides which the exchange rate on the pound rose by 16.8%, something that we could not calculate in the last Estimates. We then had as a result of the Budget a consumption tax of 10% on tyres. The Transport Board gets no break on its imports. It has to pay like any other business in Bridgetown; so when I hear members talk about the Transport Board, I wonder if they really understand what is going on at the Transport Board.

Now you talk about minibuses. I have said before when I was in Opposition and I have said since I have been in Government that the minibus service has got to be incorporated into the Transport Board service, because we are faced with a problem that will not be easily solved. Back in the Sixties and Seventies the chassis that came to Barbados to build buses were seven feet wide. No manufacturer will build a bus chassis to suit Barbados.

They are now eight feet wide and that is why you find many of the buses hitting head on on some of our roads in this country.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about incompetent bus drivers. I do not know if they are, but I know and the ground transportation study has revealed that our buses are too wide for our roads. We are now negotiating for new buses and we are told that the buses have got to be specially constructed if we want them under 8'6" that are now being produced commercially all around the world with an extra cost it costs us in Barbados.

Now the minibuses. Every little nook and cranny in Barbados now wants a bus running to them. Every member of Government, every member of the Opposition daily will tell you they want a bus running down in this place, like you heard today down in Crab Hill. You go in St. Lucy and you notice the width of the roads and everybody wants a bus down there. The bus drivers will tell you when you get them in, you can't get them out; so you have to use the minibuses. Last year in the Budget the Prime Minister authorised the licensing of 150 more minibuses. We issued those licences with conditions. Mr. Chairman, it will be an impossible task at the present moment to police the minibuses to make sure they run on the routes for which they have been licensed. We have been trying, I have been trying for nearly a year now to bring the Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic Act in this Parliament because under that Act minibuses will have a specific number, a licence plate; you will be able to recognise the illegal from the legal ones, and that is the way the police or any inspector would be able to carry out his duties in relation to Government policy. You have now, I believe, about 330 minibuses on the road. We said openly that people should not put them on the road against the policy of Government.

If you go out there and say let the police do their work, you will hear this Government is harassing the minibuses, but if you go in the bus stand Mr. Chairman, you will find that people all want to get home within one hour of coming out from work. I have said before that I don't care who is the Minister, I don't care who forms the Government, until the same Trade Unions and the business sector in this country decide to stagger their opening hours so that children will go to school at one time, various industries will open at another time, there will be no solution to the transportation problem in this country. The ground transportation study has already said that there is no way with its present economy that the Government can provide all the buses you need to move the rush hour traffic within the time that people want to move. When schools are out you do not hear one complaint of anybody not getting to work. It has just been reported to me, Mr. Chairman, that children from St. Philip come to town in the evening, children from Speightstown come to

town by the school bus and then they are the ones fighting trying to get back to St. Philip at 5.30 at night. Most schools shut down at 3 o'clock. There are children at the Lodge School who will stay behind until 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock and then try to get in the passenger bus. What are we to do? If you say the children must pay the full fares, you will get criticised. If you say they must travel on the bus at the ordinary rate, you will hear that the people who are working cannot get in the buses.

We came in here and said that senior citizens are free to travel but they must travel within specific times and we were criticised by the Opposition. What can you ever do right to satisfy an Opposition like that? But as I said, I was told that you will be criticised by everybody including your own. Jesus Christ was disowned by his own, and on the day of reckoning Peter said "I don't know him. I wash my hands." Peter didn't know him and that is what you got in here today. Nobody knew him. Well, I didn't create it. I found it.

They talk about buses breaking down. The King Report in 1975 showed, Mr. Chairman, that 60% of the Transport Board buses had long past their useful life. I have got an instance that in 1978 or late in 1979 we had some five buses laid up in the Transport Board yard. Do you know what they were waiting for? They needed just a fan belt. You could not get a fan belt for them in Barbados. They were bought over twenty years ago. The Democratic Labour Party never saw fit to renew the fleet at the Transport Board. They had an arrangement with Mrs. Rock who was the agent for most of the buses, but never brought one item of spare parts to Barbados, and those were the buses that we had to contend with to move people about this country, and then they come in here today and talk about the Minister not doing his job. They passed a law that dealt with queueing in the bus stand; they were supposed to put in all sorts of arrangements in the bus stand for people to queue, yet I could hear about a Priest jostling to get in a bus. I cannot stop a Priest from jostling to get in a bus. I know a lot of so-called Priest in Barbados who like to get involved in that sort of affair, then they go back in the Church and preach on Sundays because they have political ends to meet. I am not saying this Priest is one, but why would a Priest have to be jostling in a bus stand at 4.30 or 5 o'clock to get in a bus? I never heard of any Church service beginning at Codrington College at 6 o'clock. He could have taken his time and caught a bus, but if a Priest is jostling in a bus stand I am sorry, but you cannot blame that on the Government. The Priest above anybody else should be a leader in the community; he should know what is going on and should preach a sermon and tell the school children to use the facilities provided for them and let the working people get the buses when they come from work. But I do not hear that. I heard somebody come in here and talk about a Priest getting arrested.

Now you talk about the minibuses on the most lucrative routes. We have sat down at MCW and we have seen anything like fourteen minibuses plying in the Pine alone. They go to Kendal Hill, and now there are too many on the Kendal Hill route and somebody writes and tells you that Kendal Hill is no longer lucrative and they want to move to somewhere else.

8.30 p.m.

Now, I go further and show you something. I drove down the Harbour Road one day. I saw a big long thing, longer than a Transport Board bus going down the road and I saw it marked "Barbados Workers Co-operative Transport Society". When I asked about it, the next week you noticed it was gone but it travels all around the place.

We have had the same Acme Engineering producing a minibus, bringing it to MCW, bringing it to Cabinet and when I said hold the bus for a little while that we would like to buy it as a model to try out the one-man system, it had in two more seats than the new Law would provide for. The thing I know, I saw the bus on the road with the two seats covered over and it was plying. One day it is in Deacon's Road. The next day it is in the Pine. The third day it is up in Christ Church, all around the place but I cannot blame a businessman if he went on a venture and put it out there. I would not like to start disclosing things that I know.

Mr. Chairman, you get accused for everything in this Ministry. If the rain falls and the crops grow and the gutters get full of grass, you get accused of not keeping the gutters clean. If the rain falls and Mobil does not have the bitumen to fix the roads and the potholes come up, you get accused despite the fact that the Technical Officers tell you that the colass is like a dry weather man. It runs for shelter from the time the rain sets up. You get accused for it.

If the workers take their lunch time and sit down and play dominoes, you get accused that they are taking 12 weeks to build a bridge and if you tell them to go up there and work for 24 hours a day, you get accused that you are hustling the poor workers. Somebody once called it the Ministry of Confusion and Worries. I believe they were right because it seems that you can never do anything right, Mr. Chairman.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition tried to criticise the specifications that we issued. Yes, the specifications were issued by the Ministry of Communications and Works. They said today that I went to Night School to do my Law and I attended when there was a black-out, but I believe that he went to Law School when the sun was bright and the glare was too much for his eyes because if he looks at the Motor Vehicles Road Traffic Act and if he looks at the Regulations made thereunder,

if he looks at the English Regulations he would see Construction of Vehicles in which Specifications are set out because you cannot let any and everybody build any and everything they feel like and put on the road so you have to have specifications. What would you build by?

As a result of the disorderly conduct which has crept into Barbados since the Democratic Labour Party has been in Opposition, we have people importing trailers in this country 48 ft. long and 50 ft. long and demanding that you license them. The disorderly conduct has crept in since that Party has gone in Opposition because they can find nothing right. Whatever you do that is right is wrong for them.

All right. You want to regularise the Transport system. You say you want to recognize the Government buses from the private buses, from the coaches, from the taxis so what do you do? They did not regularise them. They allowed them to run helter skelter, just like the one-armed bandits. They allowed them to come in and operate openly, illegally and when the Police was about to raid them, somebody high up informed the operator that the Police were about to raid them and told them to hold off, but when you license them and try to bring them under control, you get criticise, Mr. Chairman, so how do you operate under the circumstances, Mr. Chairman. I really do not know.

Now, I want to turn to the hon. member for St. Lucy and I am sorry that he is not in here because I want to tell him to stop going into the Speightstown Depot and interfering with the operation of buses down there. That is what I want him to do. If he would stop interfering with the buses down there and if the Acting General Manager at the Transport Board would refer or follow the Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic Regulations that say that all route changes must be referred to the Ministry, we would not get the confusion we have now because the Act lays it down but as he opens his mouth, you read in the Paper that bus route changes in St. Lucy without following the prescribed form and that is what I would like to have told him. You know you hear certain things but you never wait for the answers.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I would be very grateful when the hon. member in his speech referred to the hon. member for St. Lucy that he would not stop going into the Speightstown Bus Stand and interfering, I would like him to elaborate on when he said he would not stop interfering. When he said interfere, is it in connection with Union business or he is administering the routes. I would like to know when he says interfering what he means, Sir. I would be very grateful if he could help this Hon. House with that information, Sir.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, there is no wonder that we have heard the people saying that they

cannot get to work and go to work half day. When Intel was operating on the Harbour site, we held a meeting with Intel because industry wanted for the longest time to have three shifts in this country. Up to this day, you cannot get the Trade Unions to agree that three shift work is beneficial to this country.

We have had to put on buses to bridge the gap between Uptown and Downtown running along the Wharf. We have been trying for two years to get the Union to agree to terms and conditions for opening the Shallow Draft facility in order to use the Wharfside and we cannot get agreement yet. Buses can only go down the Wharfside and come up Broad Street at limited periods from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. in the morning and after 6.30 p.m. at nights because the Wharfside is clustered with lorries, cars, trains and every sort of thing because the Shallow Draft facility is still lying closed up to now, but the hon. member for St. Lucy will talk and run outside.

Let us look at the Complex situation, the whole situation we are in now. I would very much like to let the buses that come from the North turn around in the Fairchild Street Bus Stand and those that come from the Eastern side turn around by the Port Authority. You would be providing a service but they cannot go down the Wharfside during the daytime. Ask him what has happened to the Shallow Draft Facility, closed for two years now and the Union refuses to make one suggestion to ease up Bridgetown.

You see, when you get a Government that is tolerant, a Government that is running away from battles, a Government that is trying to cooperate with the people, that is the sort of thing you get. That is the sort of behaviour you get and the criticisms you get. Mr. Chairman, let us look at the developmental process.
8.40 p.m.

We have moved a building from the wharf and put it at Weymouth. The Union complains that the staff is all pressed up together. We have plans set out for the development of the depots. Out of the \$30 million you hear them talk about, they never provided a recreational hut for any staff of the Transport Board. Mr. Chairman, you only have to take a look at the Transport Board and you will see the development that has taken place in the last four and a half years. We have problems, there is no doubt about it, but we have not got the major problems as you hear people trying to tell you. Go in the bus stands any evening. They ask if I go in the bus stands? I go in the bus stands nearly every evening and you will find that within one hour of peak time the bus stands are literally empty. Go in any bus stand after 11 o'clock at night and you will see buses running with a few passengers. Go any weekend and you will see people

travelling all over Barbados in buses, and they talk about a bad bus service, because they cannot get what they feel like.

Mr. Chairman, I am satisfied that the circumstances which necessitate a further \$3.9 million being put into the Transport Board are justifiable. As I said before, you have to look at the achievements of the Transport Board, you have to look to see that buses now leave the bus stands in Bridgetown at 12 o'clock midnight and arrive at their outward destinations between 1.00 and 1.30. You have to look to see that there is now a by-pass bus connecting Speightstown to the airport and finishing at 2.00 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, when it comes to economics I do not know anything about it. Many Departments of Government used to hire private people to transport their staff from the airport all over Bridgetown. That has now been changed and two buses move all Government staff from the airport to town. Where you were paying out thousands of dollars a month for that service, each bus only get \$45 a day. Customs Guards, Immigration Officers, Airline Traffic Controllers, Cleaning Staff, all get free transportation from airport to town every change of shift. Nobody looks at that. Where is the money to come from? If Government accepts that it is running a quasi social service, somebody has got to put the money in, because you must recognise it is now a quasi social service.

Pensioners, policemen and all these people travel free of cost, Mr. Chairman. If you expect the Transport Board not to come to Parliament for a subsidy, the only alternative is to raise bus fares, and if the Government in its own wisdom decides that it does not want to raise bus fares to any intolerable level, then, Mr. Chairman, somebody must provide a subsidy.

The question that Head 37 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Head 43 – Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment – was called.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$34,600 is needed under this Head and I beg to move that it stand part, Sir.

Mr. SIMMONS: I beg to second that.

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

Head 45 – Ministry of Information – was called.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that Head 45 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That concludes Government Business for today, Sir. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 10th March, 1981 at 12.00 noon.

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

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