
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 24th November, 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); Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Q.C., B.Sc., LL.D., (Leader of the Opposition); Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House); Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry); Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD, M.A., (Econ.); Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Education); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of Health); Mr. J. G. ODLE, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees); Hon. V. L. JOHNSON, M.A., (Minister of Labour and Social Security); Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A., (Hons.), M.A., LL.B., (Hons.); Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, (Minister of Housing and Lands); Mr. L. L. SISNETT; Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs); Mr. P. M. GREAVES; Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE; Mr. L. A. WEEKES; Mr. M. A. KING; Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.A.S., J.P.; Mr. N. K. SIMMONS; Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN and Mr. A. TRUSS.

Prayers were taken by Archdeacon F. A. Cayless.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES, Hon. L. R. TULL, Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN and Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, 17th November, 1981.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, 17th November, 1981, be taken as read.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no observations by hon. members....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, in these Minutes for the 17th November, 1981, I note listed among those present the Hon. H. deB. Forde, Hon. H. B. St. John, the Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham and L. A. Weekes Esq. My recollection, Mr. Speaker, is that I did not see them in this Chamber, certainly you could not see them with the naked eye; not last week. So something has to be wrong with the record of those who were present at this meeting, and I draw that to Your Honour's attention.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are there any other observations?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for St. Michael South has drawn his observations of the Minutes to our attention, and a word with the Deputy Clerk conveys that he is correct, and there should be some amendment to the Minutes.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order, I do not think that the Minutes have been accepted because when Your Honour put the motion the Hon. Member for St. Michael South rose in his place, and I think the Deputy Clerk was a bit premature in moving on before Your Honour had the opportunity to put the Minutes as amended.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no other observations from hon. members, let those Minutes as amended stand confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation for the year 1979-80.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I am in a bit of a quandary because I had intended raising a matter under Standing Order No. 10 (q) and Your Honour was anxious to do everything possible to accommodate the motion under a different procedure, but the problem under that procedure is that adequate notice would not have been given, and under Order of Business it can be raised under (h) Private Members' Notices. I have no guarantee.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Let the Hon. Member give notice, and I have given the hon. member the assurance that I will do everything that is humanly possible to accommodate the situation under the circumstances. Just give notice and we will see where we go from there.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Your Honour, I would prefer not to give notice under this Head. (*Asides*) I have to address the Chair and once the Chair has heard me, that is all that the law requires.
12.30 p.m.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, may I indicate that Replies to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 6 and 7 are ready.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT
OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT
PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, your formal ruling would be, without going into the merits or demerits of the matter, I had made an indication earlier the day before the House met and I would just like Your Honour's formal ruling on this matter.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, Sir, that Government Business be the Instant Order of the Day.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am merely asking for a formal ruling on the matter. You see, what goes on *in camera* I cannot disclose out here and as Leader of the Opposition, I made an approach to Your Honour and I

was given certain indications and I also received an invitation on the Floor of the House to move a Resolution which invitation I politely declined and then the matter came under the appropriate Head that I deemed to be appropriate. I am merely asking Your Honour for a formal ruling on the matter. That is all. I am not trying to force you into any invidious position, just sort of clearing myself, Sir, with my wider constituency rather than *in camera*, out there as it were.

Mr. SPEAKER: Earlier today, I received from the Hon. Leader of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition an intimation of his desire to move the adjournment of this Honourable House to debate a matter under Standing Order No. 18. It was his intention to seek leave to move the House to conduct such a debate.

I am advised that in respect of the matter which the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is seeking to debate, that this year, according to Statute, is the year for the exercise which is presently being conducted and that every three years such an exercise will be engaged in.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition gave the assurance that he did not seek or intended to seek in the course of his debate, if allowed, to question the administrative machinery or words to that effect but that he would be attempting to make known his desires, the sufferings of property owners generally, including his own constituents of course, and I ruled finally that in view of the fact that it was not an exercise by chance but that it was an exercise such as was explained, one which would come up every three years, the question of urgency had just been removed as the Hon. Leader had tried to establish. There was no doubt that it was a definite matter. There is no doubt that it is one of public importance. There is a certainty that there can be no urgency in the matter as it now stands.

I have advised the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that he can table his motion as an Ordinary Motion in the regular manner and I will do everything that is humanly possible to provide time, if the Government is willing, to debate his Resolution as a regular Resolution, as a normal Resolution this day, if possible.

12.40 p.m.

AGRICULTURAL AIDS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1981

Order Number One was called - To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Agricultural Aids Act.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, under and by virtue of the Agricultural Aids Act, Chp. 252, advances may be made to primarily the sugar industry and also for other agricultural purposes under conditions which give those who made advances a lien

over the crop, over annual crops which are growing on the land to which the money is advanced.

When the Act was originally passed in 1905, the rate of interest on such advances was fixed at six per cent, in 1973, it was raised to eight percent following a general increase in rates of interest which was introduced during that year. Representations have now been made by the Barbados National Bank, as successor to the Sugar Industry Loan Bank that a rate of eight per cent is insufficient to allow the bank to make advances, since the average deposit rates which the Barbados National Bank is now paying is between seven per cent and seven and three quarter per cent. The Government has acceded to this view, Sir, and proposes to bring the Agricultural Aids Act under the general powers of the Central Bank. The Central Bank Act does contain a general provision to set rates of interest charged by financial institutions.

We propose therefore, Sir, to give the power to the Central Bank by virtue of Section 36 of the Central Bank Act to prescribe rates of interest to be charged on agricultural loans. It is intended, Sir, and I say this only provisionally because this decision was reached before other recent increases in interest rates, that the rate will be set initially to give a two per cent spread and will therefore be of the order of nine per cent.

It should also, however, be pointed out, that the Barbados National Bank has adopted the policy of other commercial banks and it charges a premium on unpaid crop advances. The premium, at present, I believe is two percent. It may very well be that it will charge more than that in the future.

This is a very simple Bill, Sir, and I recommend it to the Honourable House. It is bringing the Agricultural Aids Act into conformance with other financial measures and doing away with rates of interest specifically prescribed by Statute in economic areas.

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

Mr. L. L. SISNETT: I beg to second that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, this is a relatively straightforward matter and I do not wish to make a long contribution to it.

As I have stated, before, I have every confidence in the Central Bank of Barbados and recent statements issued by that institution have fortified my confidence in it. With that confidence being readily available to me, I could have no objection to the Central Bank being given the authority to regulate the rates of interest in respect of

borrowings from the Barbados National Bank to the agricultural sector.

However, there are one or two brief points I would like to make largely by way of asking clarification, and also, by making a very brief contribution. In his presentation, the Rt. Hon. Minister of Finance referred to that loan section which was taken over from the Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank. I wonder whether the same considerations would apply to the financial arrangements which have been taken over from the successor of the Peasants' Loan Bank, namely, the Agricultural Credit Bank. I think that is the correct name, the Agricultural Credit Bank which was the successor in title to the Peasants' Loan Bank. In other words, will it be a global arrangement affecting all agriculture or only relate to the inheritances from the Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank.

The second point I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, is that I am a little concerned, that at this point in time, when quite clearly, the centre stage of our development effort should be our thrust in agriculture and where the Honourable Minister of Agriculture with tremendous fanfare has announced that he has a special incentive package for agricultural development in the country, that we should see a situation, where the loans would now have to carry a higher interest than before, when in fact, it would be my feeling that some method has to be found in order to divert more and more soft loans to the agricultural sector and, if possible, at lower rates of interest.

I am also concerned, Sir, that this will constitute a very serious and grave problem in the light of an administrative error which has just been made by a department of Government which falls under the Rt. Hon. Minister of Finance, whereby lands which have been, constantly and continuously, in agricultural production yielding more than the prescribed amount per hectare, that these persons are now by Law to pay up front in a year in which they have suffered substantial financial losses, by way of a levy — approved in this Honourable House, a considerable amount of money which they do not have and which perhaps they will have to borrow, in the next few days, at the rate of 15 per cent, in order to conform with the Law or in the absence of that to break the Law.

It would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, that the Rt. Hon. Minister of Finance should issue an immediate directive to correct that error which has taken place because it is a burden not only to some plantations, but persons with ten acres of land, fifteen acres of land, the very people whom you wish to draft into the agricultural production exercise.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, there is one particular instance which I know of, where a person who has ten

acres of marginal, arable land out of a total of 21 acres of land and he has been sent a levy in the region of \$2 700 which he has to pay by the end of this month and thereafter, file an objection, that is, if he wishes to benefit from the 10 per cent deduction, but certainly, by March next year. I also know that that person is unable to pay it — he has not got the cash. I also know he cannot get access to finances because he is one of the persons who would have lost money and therefore, he would have to pay the premium for being in a situation where his plantation or his holding has been running at a loss.

And I would think that this major administrative error should be corrected immediately and I am sure that a public statement by the Rt. Hon. Minister of Finance on the Floor of this Honourable House would give a considerable amount of assurance to those people who are interested in agricultural production, who have been trying. Many have been trying at a loss. Just to tell them to ignore the levy which has been sent to them, so long as their land has been under cultivation, because no officer from that particular department had gone to visit to find out whether the land was under agricultural production or not, is not enough.
12.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate that I did say I would not be making a long speech and I do not propose to do so, and I will stop at that point.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: If the Hon. Member could help me, I really do not know what he is talking about. If he could tell me what levy he means I might be able to be of some assistance to him, but really I have not the foggiest idea what he is talking about.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well, Sir, it would appear that the Hon. Member does not know what is going on in departments under his own responsibility, and I deeply regret that, if you wish to know.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Sir, there is another solution. The Hon. Member may not know what is going on; not me.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well, I happen to know what is going on. What I am saying is this.....

Mr. SPEAKER: What the Chair is concerned about is what is going on in this Hon. House and what is before this Hon. House at this point in time.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well, I am referring to the interest rates which have an important bearing on all financial aspects of the entire agricultural sector in Barbados. The interest rates are one component. I said it is regrettable that it has had to go up to nine per cent. I also say, Sir, that it is equally regrettable that the Valuations Department has cer-

tainly by error and not visiting lands deemed to be agricultural lands, applied a levy, the payment of which will fall due by the end of this financial year, and in order to benefit from the 10 percent deduction it will have to be paid in another few days, and for the majority of those people they will have to borrow that money at 15 percent. That is the point I am making, Sir.

There is a question now of an additional imposition not only in outlay but also in the amount of interest that they will have to pay on an overdraft, and it would seem to me that there has been an error, because the basis of the calculation, or the defining of those lands as agricultural lands did not take into consideration whether they were in cultivation before 1968 or after 1968, or whether they have been in continuous cultivation since that time, and it is an unfortunate imposition and represents yet another error by the Ministry of Finance, and on this occasion the Minister comes in here and says that he knows nothing about it.

I think it is a terrible indication either of gross negligence or ignorance on the part of the Minister of Finance to come and say that he does not know that the vast majority of people with lots over a certain level have been receiving levies in addition to the new valuations in accordance with Instruments passed within this House, but also levies which were contrary to the spirit of that legislation that was passed here. I do not wish to reflect on a vote of the House, I am talking about the administrative aspect of that particular bit of legislation that was passed in this Hon. House not too long ago. So apart from going up to nine per cent, many of them now have to find thousands of dollars.

I know of one plantation, Sir, where the owner has to find \$9,000, he has to pay interest, he has to get an ordinary overdraft, if he can get an overdraft, and yet at the same time they are saying they are trying to provide fiscal incentives for the agricultural sector in Barbados, and now the Minister of Finance comes in here and says he knows nothing about it. I can produce the tax bills later today showing the levy that has been charged on agricultural land that has been constantly in production, that has been constantly earning over and above what has been prescribed by this Hon. House in order to avoid the particular levy. I am asking him to make a public statement and say that it has been a mistake and that those farmers would not be subjected to additional financial hardships because of the negligence either of himself or the department under his responsibility. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a little learning is a dangerous thing. The Hon. Member is demonstrating that no learning at all is even more

dangerous. It is, surely, a very dangerous procedure to come into the House and make an attack on a department or on a Minister if you do not have all the facts in your possession, and you are basically talking about something that perhaps neither you nor other members of the general public do not understand.

There have been certain budgetary measures introduced, so far as I recall, during 1980 relating to two aspects, as I recall, of taxation of agricultural land. One of them is a levy on idle land. The levy on idle land is a levy to obtain some Government revenue out of the reprehensible policies followed by the former Government of allowing agricultural land to be cut up into two, four and six acre lots for speculative purposes. The Hon. Member for St. Michael South Central will be thoroughly familiar with these speculative purposes. I believe that on some date when I was not in here he had an exchange with hon. members on this side in respect of a consortium of which he was a member, that cut up land in St. George and sold it at profits of 400 per cent and upwards, so he would know all about the speculative purposes for which people cut up agricultural land.

Now, that levy on idle lands, since it is a matter of common observation; look at Frere Pilgrim, another estate with which hon. members opposite will be familiar, and its cutting up. Look at Sanford. I say hon. members opposite will be familiar with the cutting up of Sanford too. All these places can be observed to have been turned into middle class housing lots and have been lost to agriculture, so I imposed a levy on idle lands which is chargeable but which will be remitted after a Certificate of Cultivation is obtained from the Chief Agricultural Officer indicating that a certain value has been produced from that land during a particular year.

Now, I do not know if the Hon. Member is talking about that or if he has confused himself and in the process has had the nerve to attack somebody else for ignorance, by assuming that a different provision is to be covered by the idle land certificate of value production. There is a different provision which in effect provides for the taxation of agricultural land owned by non-Barbadians at a higher value than agricultural land owned by Barbadians. That was designed to get at the Cayman Island Companies set up by persons who sat down in this House of Assembly as members of the Democratic Labour Party, and bought out lands in Barbados using the Cayman Island Company front as a means of evading both exchange control and income of corporation tax. That is what the other provision was set up for, and you avoid that levy by getting a certificate that the land is beneficially owned by Barbadians.

Now, when I said I do not know what the Hon. Member is talking about I was too polite. What I really

was trying to convey, but his skull is too thick to understand it, is that he did not know what he was talking about. That is what I was trying to convey.
1.00 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point I was trying to get across to the hon. member.....

Mr. SPEAKER: On what does the Hon. Member rise?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation. I am elucidating what I said before, that the bills that are being sent out are imposing a levy not only on lands that were idle, but on lands that were in persistent agricultural use, known to be so and visibly so. That is what is taking place at the moment. The object of this.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Point taken.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Well the Hon. Member for St. George South, the Attorney General, has indicated that he has also received a tax bill, but in his case he admits that he does not understand what it is all about. I wish the Hon. Member for St. Michael South Central would also admit that he does not understand what it is all about. That is the point. Those who do not understand what it is all about must ask advice, not make accusations. The Hon. Attorney General knows perfectly well what I mean. The answer is, apply to the Chief Agricultural Officer for a certificate. I have just advised the Attorney General to do that, and I advise the Hon. Member for St. Michael South Central to do the same. To come in the House of Assembly, there is no case to make out, and if the case is presented with vehemence, with force, with accusations of ignorance, with demonstrations of ignorance..... I can really say no more. A provision is laid down. Hon. members opposite will know all about owning idle lands and their friends owning idle lands and getting tax bills. They will know all about that, and they should know that there is a procedure laid down to avoid it. They should have gone even before the tax bills came out to the Chief Agricultural Officer and got a Certificate of Value produced, a simple straightforward matter.

I cannot really deal with these misunderstood trivialities produced by the Hon. Member for St. Michael South Central as though they are deep profundities affecting the agricultural industry and shaking it to its core. Do you know the amounts that are being talked about? \$100. The Attorney General says his is over \$200. What can you do with that? Go to the Chief Agricultural Officer, get a certificate and it is remitted. It is a simple matter. (*Asides*) If the debt is never payable, you are not going to get a discount on paying it. The Hon. Member is saying it has to be done within three days, otherwise you lose your discount. If it is not payable at all, a dis-

count is not applicable. Has the hon. member thought of the foolishness that he has said in his speech here today? I cannot deal with this.

Hon. L. R. TULL rose.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Prime Minister has replied, so I cannot have any more speeches.

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

On motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 2 stand part.

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

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make one point in relation to the whole question of this levy. I myself, as the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister has pointed out, have received a tax bill with a levy on it, but I thought that although I understand the nature of the levy and how it is put on to the tax bill I still had to get up and make a point in relation to the statement made by the Prime Minister.

I would not like my son, a few years from now, when he is doing research, to read the debates in Hansard and to see that the Prime Minister made a statement in relation to the Attorney General that he was ignorant of the law, and the only reason I rise is to clear that up. I would want when he reads it to understand that the barb that the Prime Minister usually reserves for the Opposition that passed my way today was really not intended, I cannot believe it was intended in the way in which it came through. I perfectly well understand the nature of the levy. I do not myself agree with the way in which Rates and Taxes imposed it. I have agricultural land that has been under cultivation for more than a decade, so I well understand that it is there, and I do not particularly take the point that I am ignorant of it. I understand that and I believe it was necessary for me to read that into Hansard for posterity.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I rise now that you have overcome your physical disability.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Hon. Member is the only one aware of that disability.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I thought you had some difficulty in getting your neck around in this direction in order to observe members who are on their feet. The Prime Minister made a statement during the course of his speech in which he said that hon. members on the Democratic Labour Party side, when they were in Government, had companies in the Cayman Islands. I would like the Hon. member just to supply me with a list of names of those members so that I will make it public. I personally would make them public if he would supply them to me privately, and if within seven days I do not make those names public then I should invite the Prime Minister to make those names public. He should not get up and make these accusations. I am asking the Prime Minister to supply me with a list of those names, and I take it that he will comply in the spirit in which I have made the request.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister can get together on that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Now, Mr. Chairman, this section of course raises the whole question of the cost of financing of agriculture, which is very near and dear to you representing an agricultural constituency.
1.10 p.m.

To my certain knowledge, Mr. Chairman, a letter was written to the Minister of Finance in this country, he may not have read it, from one of his constituents in St. Thomas who owns a cane plantation and that plantation has been under cultivation for the past 40 or 50 years.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Hon. Member this is Clause 2 and

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am dealing with financing, the Clause with financing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And you are going right into a Second Reading speech.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, no.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please let us stick to Clause 2. I do not intend to give way on this.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the object of soft loans in the agricultural sector

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with details of this Bill in Clause 2.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We are dealing with the details and the details relate to the Central Bank, permission

being given to the Central Bank to determine the rate of interest and part and parcel of that decision would be an increase in the amount that those involved in agriculture would have to pay by way of financing.

I simply want to bring to your further attention that apart from that increase that there is a further increase which would involve an overdraft facility of 15 percent or less and that is due to an error whereby

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is the Hon. Member Order, order, order please.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. In Third Reading of a Bill, Sir, the Hon. Member is confined within the context of the provisions of the particular Clause. We are in Committee and you can only deal with the details of the particular Clause. You are not entitled, in my submission, Sir, to deal with a Bill which has already been passed by the House of Assembly. It has nothing to do with this particular Bill.

The Hon. Member has said that he is drawing to the House's attention something about the provisions in relation to another Bill which has already been passed. He is not entitled to do that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point is very well taken.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I was talking about administrative errors and not to particulars of the Bill. There are two different things altogether. I will never reflect on any matter on which a decision has been taken in this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And I would wish to hear from the Hon. Member, a debate on the details of this Clause, deleting eight percent and allowing the Central Bank. . . .

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Right, Sir, escalating financing cost inherent in the transfer of the right to the Central Bank to establish the percentage and therefore increase the financing charge for the agricultural sector has been further exacerbated, Sir, by the particular error which I have averted to again and again and if the Other Side do not wish to allow a debate in the House . . . I am glad the Attorney General got up and told the truth about the matter on this occasion.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please, please. Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on page 2 it says "by deleting the words "eight percent per annum" and substituting the words "such rate as the Central Bank of Barbados may determine" ". Similarly in Clause (b) it says "the rate of interest determined by the Central Bank of Barbados".

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is the substance of it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that this amendment would be a better amendment if it said "such rate as the Minister may determine." You see, Sir, it seems to me

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Do not interrupt hon. members who are speaking please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It seems to me that the Central Bank's main concern in fixing the rate would be a financial concern. It seems to me that a prudent Minister's concern would be a policy concern taking into account all of the difficulties which will accrue to a small farmer especially in relation to this particular Clause.

When the rate is fixed at eight percent and did not move even though the rates for other sectors of the economy were moving, presumably these rates did not move because successive Ministers of Finance and/or Agriculture, determined and wanted to leave the rate low precisely to give the agriculturalist an advantage.

Where the Central Bank is concerned, we have seen a tendency towards heartlessness in regard to human condition as opposed to the impositions or the regulation of a particular requirement to meet the efficacy of financial understanding by the Central Bank.

It would seem, therefore, that to make this amendment — I take the point which the Minister made about having to bring the rate on par with other rates or within range of other rates, but it seems to me that merely to leave this for the Central Bank to determine is not necessarily the best policy bearing in mind the circumstances which I have heard and while I do not have any quarrel and I am not prepared to demonstrate any quarrel, I would like to draw to the Minister's attention the desirability of leaving this particular decision in the hands of the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Agriculture, as the case may be, here, it would be the Minister of Finance, as opposed to leaving it merely to the Central Bank to move the rates up and down as other rates move up and down.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am glad, Sir, that you are getting a little bit more flexible. All the people who have spoken here do not really understand or are not prepared to understand the whole history of agricultural credit in this country.

The Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank was established as a result of funds voted by the United Kingdom Parliament, I am coming to Section 2 very briefly so that we can understand Section 2, in order to assist the Sugar Industry in Barbados. In other countries the money was taken and distributed.

When we, sometime in this century in the 40s or early 50s setup the Agricultural Credit Bank for the small holders, in both cases, the rate of interest was fixed. The Section which we are now amending does not impose the rate of interest which is charged. The Section which we are amending merely states that it is a first charge and shall have preference. Any money left for the cultivation of crops and the payment of taxes and so on should be a first charge against the particular agricultural holding and the income received as a result of the sale of those first crops.

All of the people who have spoken on this Section are speaking as if we are imposing or giving the Minister, like the Hon. Member who just sat down, who is appealing to the Minister of Finance to change the rate from time to time. I am saying the worst thing we ever did in Barbados was not to fix the rate by Law and leave it in the Law, and to remove the discretion or to put the discretion even to the Central Bank or a Minister is going to be unfaithful to agriculture because the people will not know where there are from day-to-day. We would be at the whims and fancies either of the Central Bank or of the Minister the same way that people who have overdrafts and so on are at the whims and fancies of the bank managers in Bridgetown.

That is exactly the point of this amendment and what I am saying is that it was a bad day for Barbados when we repealed the Usury Act and people who borrowed money in agriculture should not be paying eight per cent today and a month later be told that they have to pay 15 per cent because of the supply side economics that is being infiltrated into this country by the people who are in the Central Bank.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This would have been a wonderful contribution to a Second Reading.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am dealing with Section 2, Sir. I have shown that the whole thrust of the debate here is misdirected because the amendment does not impose the right. The amendment deals with a Section. The amendment here in this Section deals with a Section. It only says that there is a charge.
1.20 p.m.

The damage has been done already. And who changes the rate? The rate should never be changed, it should be fixed by Statute. If you read, Sir, the Section that we are amending by this amending Section of the Agricultural Aids Act, Section 3 says that:

"All loans or advances"

et cetera

"made by any person for the purpose of cultivation the purchase of stock paying taxes; and meeting and paying all other expenses together with interest on

such loans not exceeding eight per cent shall become, subject to this Act, a charge in preference"

I am condensing it.

We are moving the words, "not exceeding eight per cent" and saying, "the amount that the Minister shall fix."

All the Act is saying is that it is a charge, and I think that it is bad — the right to impose a percentage should be fixed by Law, and I do not think that we should be tossed about on the sea of interest rates, just because of the administration in the United States of America. Banks in Barbados — the bad thing we did amalgamating the Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank with the National Bank and they want to amalgamate it with the Central Bank. All of those mistakes are being made.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, Second Reading.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You do not want me to talk. I will sit down.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I really rise in speaking on this Clause to say that I was glad to hear the Rt. Hon. Member speak, because in his speech, of course, he has put forward that no person on his Side has any clue about what they have said and the..... (ASIDE: Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On either Side.) On either Side. Unfortunately, the Rt. Hon. Member would have been alright if he had rest it there, but, he went on to say, it was a very bad day for Barbados when the Usury Act was repealed.

The Rt. Hon. Member himself introduced in Barbados, in 1970, an Act No. 47 of the year 1970, an Act to repeal the Usury Act. (ASIDE)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, what I am telling the Honourable Member is, that that was a bad day for Barbados when I repealed that. That is what I am saying. (LAUGHTER) I am not saying that he did that, because I had no idea that...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:....people who borrowed money would be falling among thieves because that repeal was meant for honest people.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That was not the only bad day for Barbados though, Sir. The other bad day for Barbados was that the Rt. Hon. Member who could have had the powers under the same Rate of Interest Act to have controlled rates of interest allowed — passed only a limited power, by way of Regulations, on certain commercial transactions, but did not deal with the other areas

for the control of rates of interest, like on book debts for instance, — (ASIDE: Rt Hon. E. W. BARROW: On what?) Book debts. — and therefore, an agricultural plantation taking fertiliser from a firm in town, if it ran over credit for 30 days would find itself paying one and a half percent per month annualised, and at terms compounded.

The Rt. Hon. Member never dealt with the Rate of Interest Act in a proper way, and indeed, between 1970 and 1981, although there were something like seven different Orders dealing with the Regulations under the Rate of Interest Act, the essential problems have never been approached or dealt with. I recall very much, when I was on the Other Side, raising this in a debate for the Rt. Hon. Member.

I agree with him there were certain features of the Usury Act which had a certain certainty about them, particularly, in relation to credit in agriculture, and perhaps, when the Hon. Minister brings down his new package of incentives, he will pay regard to the necessity in fixing, among those incentives, a regime which would give some ease to credit in agriculture properly, because I still seriously contend that any country which wishes to progress and to have economic growth, no matter how small must have a firm base in agriculture, otherwise its other efforts regardless to whether it be tourism or an effort in manufacturing will fail or will not be as effective as it ought to be. That is why, Mr. Chairman — I know you have a close interest in this subject — I am again welcoming the repentance coming from the Other Side.

When I hear the Hon. Member for St. Michael South Central trying to make a plea on behalf of farmers today, I want him to make an equally strong plea on settlement of the row in the sugar industry early, so that we could get the crop reaped. That is what I want to hear him on. I want not to hear him come in here saying.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir,.....

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is what I want to hear him saying.

Mr. B. M. TAITT:.....On a point of order. While what the Honourable Member is saying might be quite interesting for the press, Sir, the Hon. Member for Christ Church East Central rose on a point of order to draw attention to the Rules of Debate as they apply to Third Reading speeches, Sir, and I am drawing to Your Honour's attention that the Hon. Member may, in his exuberance, be extending himself beyond the confines of what is possible and probable and required in a Third Reading Speech.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for drawing that to my notice.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, the only point that I want to make — I do not want to remind the Hon. Member, the Hon. Member has sat down. He is trying to get back on his feet as against me, but he is less powerful as against me, as against his Rt. Hon. Leader, Sir.

But, the point I am trying to make is that if Hon. Members are supporting this Clause, or criticising it, that where the support from the Hon. Member for St. Michael South Central is needed now, is not in taking up a stance to get a few votes which he thinks he will get, but a genuine interest in agriculture and having the strength to say that in Barbados today, agriculture needs a holding period because the sugar industry is going to lose \$60 million this year. And, I want to hear his voice counselling people to come to an early settlement in the wages dispute to get on with cutting the sugar crop and giving the sugar industry a place to go.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us not encourage debate on this.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is what I want to hear him on, Sir. Not all of the fulminations he comes in here on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what does the Hon. Member rise?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You can speak as often as you want to.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Speak to Clause 2.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On 15th December, 1980, the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados made a very informed speech calling for an early start to this year's crop.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Hon. Member is not addressing his remarks to Clause 2. You are out of Order.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, the later the crop starts, the more the interest you have to pay.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will not entertain debate in this direction. Please, take your seat. You are out of Order.

The question is.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have dealt with the point made by the Hon. Member for St. Michael West, by drawing to his attention the Provisions of Section 36 of the Central Bank of Barbados Act and what I would say is this that — well, the Central Bank has to ask the Minister before it fixes the rates — and I would deal also with the point made by the Rt. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, the burden of which I take to be variable rates by assuring him that there is no intention of fixing the rates in such a way that a man would not know what he has to pay. I think that that was what the Rt. Hon. Member for St. John was discussing, the variable rates on overdrafts.

We are not fixing the rate at any 14 per cent so that it can go up and go down. It will be a fixed rate for agriculture and it will be subject only to an increase when it ceases to be a loan under the Agricultural Aids Act, in other words, when it is not repaid.

The point about land, about the levy, Sir, is so obscured and so far removed from this Act that I am really most hesitant about replying to it any further. Enough to say that the Land Tax (Amendment) Act of this year states quite clearly — I have not got the Regulations to hand — but, it does state quite clearly that it is the Commissioner of Valuations whom you have to show — is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Valuations. If you do not show it, you cannot expect to get a rebate back.

The Hon. Attorney-General, I do assure him, that I was not implying any ignorance of the Law when I spoke earlier in the debate using him as an example. I really do not want to deal any more with land valuations and with great respect, it has to be irrelevant. There is no way it can be made relevant to this Act before the Hon. House. I mean, that is the honest truth, Sir. There is no way whatsoever.

1.30 p.m.

It has nothing to do with agricultural aids on a crop, with an annual crop, with an advance from the bank or anything. How a man gets money to pay his bills is nothing to do with the Agricultural Aids Act, absolutely nothing to do with it. The argument that a man needs money and he has to pay more interest under this Act applies to a person who has not been levied just as much as to somebody who has been levied. One can argue it applies to any plantation paying its ordinary land tax. It really is quite irrelevant, and it is a pity we do not have a rule on striking an irrelevant debate from the record, but the facts quite simply are that you have to satisfy the Commissioner of Valuations, and anybody who will read the Act who really is familiar with it, will be aware that no administrative error of any sort has been made. It may

be a matter of opinion whether land is still being used as agricultural land or not, but the onus is on the owner of the land to show that to the Commissioner of Valuations.

The best advice I would give the Hon. Member for St. Michael South Central to pass on to his friend is to get a good lawyer. I can see on the opposite benches one lawyer on the back bench laughing heartily at the unsoundness of the arguments of his colleague sitting in front, and perhaps the Hon. Member for Christ Church West Central will give some advice to his colleagues on the application of the Land Tax (Amendment) Act of 1981.

The relevant points were those made by the Hon. Members for St. John and St. Michael West, and I hope I have satisfied them that the Central Bank's discretion in this matter will be sternly and strictly limited so that people will know what the situation.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Hon. Member has given way. I wonder if in the light of his indicating that the rate will be fixed, it would be desirable, although it is not required, if the Minister could from time to time indicate, perhaps tell this Hon. House, what the rate for agricultural aids will be and perhaps publish it in the Official Gazette although it is not required, so that the rate would be known wide and far and there will be no problem.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The Hon. Member has made a very good point and I will make a note to indicate that whenever these interest fixing operations take place that they be gazetted. The Official Gazette is all too seldom used for what it really should be, Sir, an organ of Government information of an official nature, and just as we are publishing a whole host of things, a list of persons with work permits and so on, I do think that it is a very good idea that this sort of thing is gazetted so that the general public as well as the financial institutions will know what the rate will be. I am obliged to the Hon. Member.

I beg to move therefore that the clause stand part.

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 Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 2, Sir.

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

THE PATENTS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1981

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. We are making a request from this side that consideration of these particular Bills be deferred. Most of us received them very late on Saturday afternoon. They are very long Bills and very important and we have not been able to give consideration to them, the type of consideration that they would be deserving of, and we on this side are asking that they be postponed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I had no doubt this matter would have arisen and I should have discussed this with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition earlier this morning, because I know of some of the difficulties which members on this side of the House had getting their papers. This was the fault of the Printery again not being able to get them out before 8 o'clock on Friday night. I was assured by the despatch that they were all delivered by noon on Saturday. I am quite sure that some members may have left their offices and did not return until Monday morning, but if they are delivered to the address which you have asked that they be delivered at by Saturday midday, I would reckon that between Saturday midday, Sunday and Monday night there would have been time enough for you to sit down and really discuss the related matters in the Bill.

I see the Member for St. Philip South indicating that they are very big. He would not be in that debate anyhow. Do not care how bad it is, he would not be in this one. It is unfortunate, Sir, that I may have to accede to the request of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I wonder if he would rather let us do them this evening, provided you have enough time to look at them today.

I think at this time I might as well move that Question Time be now taken and after Question Time I will have no alternative but to adjourn the House, Sir.
1.40 p.m.

If it is the wish of the House, I would move that Question Time be now taken if there is agreement on both sides. I now seek leave to have this done.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, before that consideration, the hon. member had indicated something about doing these Bills this evening. The problem is not one of discussing them among colleagues. The problem is

that these Bills require some measure of examination and research in a place where the information is available. These are not Bills that can be read at home if one is seriously interested in them. One has to look at these Bills in conjunction with information that is available, as the Hon. Minister in whose name the Bills stand appreciates. We are therefore asking in the interest of better Bills or a better contribution to the debate on the Bills to accede to the request not in terms of this evening, but in terms of allowing sufficient time to examine them properly in the right environment.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I have indicated that I am going to adjourn the House. I do not know the need for the Hon. Member's comment.

If it be the wish of the House, I beg to move that Question Time be now taken, if there can be agreement on both sides of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no objection, I learn it is the wish of this Hon. House that Question Time be taken at this moment.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. Parliamentary Question No. 6 stands in the name of the hon. member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the appropriate Minister: Is the Minister aware that there is an urgent need for toilet and bath facilities for the fishermen at Pile Bay, Black Rock, St. Michael? Will the Minister indicate what plans he has for providing such facilities?

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 6 is as follows:

"In pursuance of its stated programme to expand and modernise the facilities for fishermen in Barbados, the Government is undertaking a policy of upgrading and improving facilities at fish landing centres around the island. Pile Bay is one of the centres where such modernisation will take place. Toilet and bath facilities and a light will be provided at the earliest opportunity."

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Supplementary. I am not sure if the Hon. Minister is aware that in the same vicinity there is existing a toilet and bath facility that was designed for use by the Mental Hospital Farm. It has been drawn to my attention that the facility remains locked. I wonder if the Minister is able to indicate whether steps will be taken in the meantime to make that facility available to persons using the area.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a proper supplementary.

We must have some order.

Parliamentary Question No. 7 also stands in the name of the Hon. Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the appropriate Minister: Is the Minister aware that there are no lights in the Fish Market at Pile Bay, Black Rock, St. Michael? Will the Minister indicate what plans he has for installing such lights?

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 7 is as follows:

"The Hon. Member's attention is drawn to the reply given earlier today to Parliamentary Question No. 6."

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, may I raise a question in relation to questions. Now, Mr. Speaker, last week you will recall that you ordered that a reply to a question be laid. That was a question asked by the Hon. Member for St. Michael West and that question was laid. I am raising a question if I can raise it now. The point is

that up to this particular time we have not had a copy of that reply. It was not circulated among the papers and so we do not have that particular reply. I think it is customary and I am drawing to your attention that when answers to questions are laid, they are circulated immediately with the papers for the subsequent meeting, and that has not happened in this particular case, and I am drawing it to Your Honour's attention. I do not know if there has been some slip in the procedures there.

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

THE ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, that brings us to the end of today's sitting, brief as it has been.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 1st December, 1981, at 12 o'clock noon.

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

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