

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 22nd February, 1983.

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

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Leader of the House)
Hon. H. B. St. John, Q.C., LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry)
Hon. H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. L. E. Sandiford, M.A. (Econ.)
Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, LL.B., (Minister of Education)
Hon. L. B. Brathwaite (Minister of Housing and Lands)
Mr. J. G. Odle, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. V. L. Johnson, M. A., (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. D. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social Security and Sport)
Mr. L. L. Sisnett
Mr. P. M. Greaves
Mr. R. E. Brathwaite
Hon. Dr. D. G. Blackman, (Minister of Health and Community Services)
Mr. M. A. King, LL.B.
Mr. W. O. Franklin, A.I.A.S., J.P.
Mr. A. Truss

Prayers were read by Archdeacon F. A. Cayless.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, January 25, 1983 and Tuesday, February 8, 1983.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of January 25, 1983 and February 8, 1983 be taken as read.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections or observation on the Minutes, let the Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am to announce that I have received Accounts and Statements for the month of December, 1982 as prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Your Honour, on behalf of the Prime Minister I am commanded to lay the following:—

Directions for the payment of allowances and expenses of person attending Conferences or another similar duty overseas on Government Business.

The Consumption Tax Order, 1983

Statements showing net Customs and Excise Receipts for the months ending August, September, and October, 1982.

On behalf of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry, I am commanded to lay:

The Hotels, Apartments and Guest Houses (Registration and Classification) Regulations, 1983.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year 1983.

MOTION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that His Honour the Speaker, the Member for St. Peter, be granted leave of absence for a period of six months, as from today's date, Sir.

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

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, reply to Parliamentary Question No. 27 is now ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Your Honour I beg to move, Sir, that Government Business be the instant Order of the day.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 6, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order No. 6.

Order No. 6 was called – To move the House into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of this Island.

On motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1982-83

No. 22 – \$271 082

HEAD 25 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution before the House is a very simple Resolution. It seeks to supplement the vote under a number of Heads, which becomes necessary as a result of certain increases during the current financial year, particularly in the area of travel and utilities.

I think the House is aware that there was a 31 per cent increase on this vote, and I do not think that it is the type of Resolution which will evoke serious discus-

sions, since these are matters which come before the House from time to time and since it is the duty of Parliament to vote sums in order to carry on essential services within the Government of Barbados.
12.30 p.m.

The question of utility services, supplies and materials and travel are matters which come about from time to time, and there is the question of increases in services.

I have just mentioned the question of travel, and very substantial increases were made in this direction. The Government has no control over utility services. Increases are made from time to time with respect to water, telephones and electricity, and Government has no control over them.

With those few remarks, I beg to move that Head 25 – Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs – stand part of the Schedule.

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

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

HEAD 38 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is also for travel and utilities, which you are well aware have to be paid, and we have no control over these. We are also seeking a supplementary in this area.

I beg to move that Head 38 – Ministry of Information and Culture – stand part of the Schedule.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it is not often that we get an opportunity in this Honourable Chamber to speak on matters relating to the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Now the manner in which this supplementary is brought before the House requires that one speaks almost in a general way, across the board, because these Heads are divided into subheads, and so, Mr. Chairman, I propose to use the first fifteen minutes dealing with the matter of information.

I must confess, Mr. Chairman, that I sometimes wonder if I live in the same community as the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for Information, because based on the statements which the Prime Minister has made concerning the dissemination of information and certain utterances which came from the Minister responsible for Information recently, and when one

compares these statements with what one observes, one has to wonder if we are operating in the same environment.

I wish to say that, categorically, I do not accept that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation is either a paragon of virtue or a worthy example of the quality of public information to which all other media in the community should aspire.

I believe that it is possible in a society like Barbados to have a relatively independent media, or set of media, which would perform certain functions in the community that would add to the development and indeed the modernisation of the community.

I do not believe that politicians have all the requisite knowledge about all subjects for all times, and I do not believe that politicians ought to be in a position to tell the media what they must print, what they must produce or what they must put before the public. I believe that politicians have a right, when they put forward their views, to expect that those views would be treated fairly and to expect that any commentary on those views would be motivated by rationality and by the circumstances surrounding the commentary in the society, as opposed to any consideration of the individual who had put forward the particular views.

I believe also, Sir, that a Government has a right, if not a duty, to explain its programmes as best it can, and in so doing, given the partisan nature and the adversary nature of the political system in which we live, I believe that a Government has the right to make itself appear in the best possible light. To that extent, if what it does is perceived as propaganda by others, it is the duty of the others to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff, the wood from the trees, the sheep from the goats.

But I do not believe it is any business of any Government to seek to misrepresent, either by intellectual sleight of hand or by strong arm tactics. I do not believe it is the business of any Government to seek to ram down the throats of any community the views which that Government holds, or should hold at any particular time. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, less I be accused of taking one position while sitting on this side of this Honourable House, and another position while sitting on that side of this Honourable House, let me say that my remarks apply to all Governments in Barbados at any time. And to the extent that my own Government can be found to have been guilty of misdemeanours in this regard, I feel the same way about them as I feel about the present regime.

The present regime came to power on a plank of "open Government." Open Government suggest

that, as a tenet of democracy, we would be party to open decisions openly arrived at. The suggestion of the phrase "open Government" is that the population would be exposed generally speaking to information concerning decisions which are made.

When the Prime Minister of this country, in the face of an onslaught on the integrity of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation as an institution, can come to this community and say to this community that that is an example worthy of emulation, either the Prime Minister is contemptuous of the community or he does not understand the role of the media in this society. Since I believe that he fully understands the role of the media in the society, then, Mr. Chairman, the position in which I place the Prime Minister becomes obvious.

The enlightened policy that is alleged to be followed at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, can be exemplified by the attitude during the last General Elections, when the Prime Minister himself flagrantly violated the principles on which it was agreed the broadcasts would be made. The Prime Minister, himself, took an additional nine minutes in the final broadcast, by and with the agreement of the people who were managing the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

12.40 p.m.

Furthermore, Sir, during that same political campaign, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, at the direction of the Minister responsible for Information, by and with his arrangements, edited copy of a broadcast which fitted within all the parameters of the rules which had been laid down, but which in the opinion of the then lady in charge of the news for television, did not comply with the rules.

At this stage, certain remarks made by Mr. TAITT were ordered to be expunged from the Record.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I have to bow to your ruling, and with the greatest respect, Sir, I am drawing to Your Honour's attention that I am speaking of information, which I have of my own knowledge. I am speaking of a person in the public capacity; I am speaking of a person who is performing a function, and under the Rules of this House, if the person is performing a function, I can refer to that function in their public capacity. However, Sir, I understand the circumstances, and I bow to your ruling, Sir.

I will go on to say that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation had a person up there who was close to the Minister, so close to the Minister that sometimes you could not tell them apart, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It is a fact

Mr. CHAIRMAN: But what does all of this has to do with

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It has to do with public information. I am seeking to demonstrate how the Ministry's policy with regard to public information

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member is leaning very heavily on the personal side of matters, which I do not at all countenance.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: With the greatest respect, Sir, I am laying the foundation by showing the facts. I am demonstrating the facts to make the point that public information in this country, contrary to what the Prime Minister would have the public believe, does not operate in a manner that is commensurate with what is desirable and what is requisite in a society of this size.

I am going on to make the point, Sir, that a certain level of partisanship, which has been imported into the operation of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, above and beyond that which existed before, has caused the whole question of public information to become a question of morality in this community, and for those reasons, Sir, it is necessary for me to refer to a number of the goings on at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

More recently, two young persons working at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, exercising what they believe to be their legitimate and constitutional right — to express their views in what was purported to be an in-house organ of the said corporation, that of the high quality fame — those two persons have found themselves at the bottom end of the wrath, because what they had to say accords with the truth, that they have been given directives by the Minister and by other people in authority as to what news, Sir, not views; what news they should and should not carry on the airwaves of the radio station and the television station that is purported to be owned by the people of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, the fact that three or four persons who hold degress have been employed at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation cannot, and will not, change the attitude which permeates the entire system.

You will note, Sir, that on more than one occasion, the Democratic Labour Party has sent material to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation after having been told by the then director; who is now the Director of Culture, that we must submit these things in writing. On more than one occasion, we have submitted things in writing to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, information about, for example, the holding of meetings. We have never been privileged to have them broadcast on

that radio station or that television station. But the honourable Member for St. Michael Central, the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, and the honourable Member for St. James North, from time to time, in their capacity as representatives of constituencies, we see information about them and where they are going to be speaking, and what information persons can look forward to hearing from their constituencies.

But it goes further, Sir. If one looks at broadcasts emanating from the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation which refer to matters concerning the Barbados Labour Party, you will see that the emblem of the Barbados Labour Party has started to be reproduced up in a corner as part of the visuals of CBC.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member says that it must not be very effective, because he has never seen it. It is an attempt, Sir, to use a very subtle methodology to implant in the minds of the people of Barbados that they are in good hands. The symbol, Sir, appears.

Sir, when the professionals at CBC have taken the trouble to record an entire message — and I speak with knowledge, Sir, this is not hearsay — what happens?

For example, the President of the Democratic Labour Party was asked to give a New Year's Message and the New Year's Message was recorded by a television crew. That Message never saw the light of day — excerpts from it were spoken by an announcer. And they then had the temerity, the Minister of Information, to cause to be printed in the newspapers that their practice of open Government had Mr. X speaking for the Democratic Labour Party in a message where it had never been done before, which was not true, Sir. The right honourable Member for St. Thomas, in his capacity as Leader of the Opposition, delivered a message on television during our time, but that is only a small symptom of the problem.
12.50 p.m.

The fact is that every time a journalist in Barbados writes an article which is considered unfavourable to the Government, he is personally assaulted and vilified by persons in the Barbados Labour Party of the very highest calibre. They are called up personally and they are abused in the worst way.

I will speak again, Sir, my time is running out. I am saying that it is hypocrisy for anyone to say on the one hand that the Press in Barbados is not doing its job, and on the other, every time the Press, any individual in the Press, criticises the Government or the Prime Minister,

that individual is vilified and cursed in the worst way personally by people from the very highest level.

I will speak again, Sir, and give the honourable Member for St. James a chance to utter his words.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. The honourable Member for St. James North.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I think one single word was very important in the entire speech made by the honourable Member for St. Michael West, the word "hypocrisy". That is the important word, because if ever there was a hypocritical speech made on the floor of this House in my 15 years in here, it was just made by the Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on a point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I hold no brief, Mr. Chairman, for CBC.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member is on a point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Oh, I did not know you had recognised him, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, may I draw to your attention that the honourable Member said words to the effect that if ever there was a hypocritical speech made in the House during his time here, it was the speech just made by the honourable Member. I submit that that is unparliamentary, Sir, according to May's, and I submit it for Your Honour's ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It was not a reference to the honourable Member.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I hold no brief, Mr. Chairman, for the news media in this country; neither the Beacon, CBC, the Democrat, Horizon, the Voice of Barbados, the Advocate nor the Nation, no brief; I would say this, that I do not believe that things at CBC, from what I have heard outside, and what I have heard inside, are as good as I would like them to be. But, Lord have mercy, those who work at CBC now, Sir, work in a paradise as compared to when that side was over here.

A classic example, Sir, is my colleague sitting here in Parliament. To get a job at CBC, my colleague here had to sign an application form to join the Democratic Labour Party — to get a job there! I would challenge any member at CBC today, if he is a member of the Barbados

Labour Party, if he ever had to sign an application form to join a political party to get a job.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am mad at you today. I am going to knock that blue jacket off you, you hear?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The honourable Member is misleading this House. The honourable Member is indicating that no one at CBC has to join the Barbados Labour Party, but they have to apply for work permits. That is how you hold them in train. If they do not behave themselves, the work permit goes through the eddoes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. No point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Work permit? You are a real ignorant man, you know. I recall, Mr. Chairman, the then Minister of Information, an Englishman by the name of Peter Morgan, sitting there in the corner where my colleague, the Member for St. Michael North East, is now sitting, like the boy on the burning deck, sitting there when his colleagues had run outside and left him in here alone. He had given a directive on file, not called up anybody, instructing CBC management that they were not to report anything at all by members of the Opposition; but I do not believe that two wrongs make a right.

What I am hearing in here this morning is that the Press can criticise Members of Parliament. The Press is free to write what they feel to write about people, but politicians like you and I are not free to criticise the Press. Whenever they are criticised, then you find you on that side coming in here saying you are defending the Press. There is nobody who has ever destroyed the character of the Press in this country like the Member for St. John. He chased Glynne Murray and Mr. E. L. Cozier out of his office one day at Government Headquarters. Harold Hoyte. Do you remember, Mr. Chairman, watching television and hearing the insults hurled at people like Mr. Hoyte and the very Glynne Murray, Mr. Cozier and Mr. Gale from the *Bajan*?

Talking about your having television coverage? I will tell you my honest truth now. I am vexed when I see you. I am angry when I see you on television, because you should not be on television. You used to dominate the television when you were in the Ministry of Trade, talking about your constituents, and how you were the Sidney Poitier of public life in this country. On that occasion the then Leader of the Opposition party, here sitting on my left, could not even go near CBC's doors.

You talk about freedom of the Press in this country? I think they are happy people, I believe they

are happy people. At Old Year's Night dances, the poor CBC staff is in the DLP headquarters taking pictures of the revellers in there. You never saw CBC crew at the Barbados Labour Party's dances.

Aside.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: At your conferences then, and you chased out Harold Hoyte. Do you remember Combermere School where you were having a conference? Innocent people from the Press, not only CBC, turned up at Combermere School, and you called police and body guards to put them out, and now this morning you are here talking about freedom of the Press and about CBC. You should be ashamed of yourself.

There are certain wickets you should not attack on, but I do not believe you are attacking the Minister of Information or Members on this side, you are attacking your own colleague from St. Michael South Central. He is on television a bit too much for you, and if you can get us to curb the CBC crew from putting him on, then you have a better chance. But we have already established an open Government policy. It could be Haynes, Taitt or Pape, we are going to give you a chance.
1.00 p.m.

Sometimes I tell my colleagues when I go to Cabinet, after a sitting on Tuesday, that I count almost five minutes when Haynes' picture was on television, with a Mr. Joseph reporting something he was saying. You know something? Sometimes I have to wonder if he is not going to come off, an occasionally you. But what is happening is that the Member for St. Michael South Central is outstretching you with his public relations job, and you are now trying to get us in here to curb that to assist you in getting publicity. We cannot do that for you. You are barking up the wrong tree. He is no longer in his place today, so you are taking a swipe at the Government. It is him, not us.

There is no doubt that I have seen, not only heard, where a Mr. Joseph wrote some article, a "Reporter's Nightmare", and I read a thing by a Mr. Milton Gibbs; I cannot recall exactly what it is all about. But if the management, the Board of Directors, of CBC feel that that is not in keeping with their policy, that an employee should be critical of their policy, they have a right to call him and reprimand him. This is my view. I am not saying that Mr. Joseph should not write. Personally, I like Mr. Joseph as somebody I see on television, believe me.

I hear this question raised repeatedly in here about foreigners on television and on radio. I have heard you all on that side saying that you cannot understand what they are saying. Do you mean they are to put them out? Suppose the American and English Governments sent back all the Barbadians? Are you really saying that no person

apart from a Barbadian should be employed at CBC or Voice of Barbados? On the VOB I hear what I consider an accent strange to that of a Barbadian, but I am not critical of it.

Your Government had the same Voice of Barbados, Rediffusion, on a month to month lease or contract concerning its licence. You had stifled the media in this country. You could not do anything with Rediffusion, you did not have that control, but you gave them a licence, which they had to renew every month. You held that licence over Barbados Rediffusion's head. Every month they had to apply for a licence!

We came into office, Mr. Chairman, and gave them freedom — not only throwing out the month to month licence, which they had over their head, but we allowed them to even have a second radio station in Barbados and we gave them the freedom to put on programmes like "Feedback" and "Community Line" to curse the Ministers and all of the parliamentarians. If they had done that during your term of office, you would have withdrawn the licences, and you are talking about freedom of the Press in this country.

The Press is free to write anything. Personally I do not care about the Press. The Press never gave me a seat nor they cannot take one from me. You have to be worried about the Press. You have to be worried about them. I do not care if the *Advocate*, the *Nation*, CBC or BBC exist. I recall during the Election of 1981, Sir, I was a knock out. They said who was going to beat me in 1976 and 1981. It was all right then, it suited your purpose.

But you like what you call "sensational things". That is why you have no paper today, and you have poor former Speaker Maxwell sitting down in a wheel chair. You did all of those bad things, destroy a man's career and his health, and he is now in a wheel chair through you. A big Democrat, you drove him from this Chair, made him bankrupt, drove him out of Barbados, and then he was eventually shot in New York and brought back here at the whims and mercies of the people!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Who put him in court?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You. By a lot of ridiculous, dirty

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Language.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: dog-ear sheet called "The Democrat" in which you had a big say on one occasion, and also my colleague there from St. Michael South. I know you are there waiting to prance up, but I have another 15 minutes here when you have finished your talking

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time, time.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: so do not think that you are in business. I know that little quiet thing down there is going to come forward, but I am going to back talk today, too, because you are part and parcel of the whole organisation, and at that time, I think Education and Information were tied to each other on one occasion.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time, time; your time has expired.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You talk about freedom of the Press! Look at what you can say to come out in the Press and on CBC, that this party here should be destroyed, removed, depressurised. No longer can we eat, drink, sleep or walk!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time, time. The honourable Member your time

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You have the gall to get up in here talking some nonsense about public meetings. But I hear your public meetings coming over all the time. Even in today's Press, in today's *Advocate*, there is something about you and a public meeting. You will look at the Abortion Bill

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG something that has already passed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, when I heard my friend, the honourable Member for St. Michael West, speaking, I thought he was speaking about a period prior to 1976, because certainly most of the criticisms which he has levelled against the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation were criticisms which were levelled against them prior to that period, and I believe with some justification at that time.

I think that anybody who has reviewed Barbados from 1976 to now objectively must admit that there is a greater freedom of discussion, information and political debate than existed prior to that time, and that the media has more latitude in treating political subjects and politicians than they did prior to 1976.

This is not to say that the media in Barbados has the same latitude as allowed the media in the United Kingdom or, indeed, in the United States. Whatever we may think of the capitalist form of Government, which is too often decried, one has to consider that democracy and the media's role in maintaining democracy, particularly in the parliamentary form which we practice here in

Barbados, has been outstanding in the United Kingdom, in the United States and in France.
1.10 p.m.

To a large extent, there are very few countries in the world which can rival the very high standard of journalism practised in those countries.

I think it is a standard to which we in Barbados should aspire, and I would hope that Governments in the future, our Government and any succeeding Governments, will recognise that the media has a most important role to play in maintaining democracy, particularly as practised in the parliamentary form.

We have no guided press here as there is a guided press in other countries like Cuba, for instance, like Guyana, like Grenada, like the Soviet Union. And regardless of what criticisms we may level against the Press in Barbados, as to whether they are properly paid, as to whether or not they have as wide a grasp of the subjects that come in the public domain, we must recognise that there is no guided press in this country today.

It is a fact that politicians have from time to time vilified individual members of the Press. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Press and newsmen are second only to politicians in the vilification which has been levelled at them from public platforms. Politicians criticise each other in sometimes the most dastardly fashion, all in the interest, they say, of democracy. I suffered tremendously at the hands of many of them, not in electoral terms, since I do not believe that my constituents take these things very seriously, but it was felt at one stage that you only had to attack me on a public platform and I would be knocked out of the battle and of political life, and therefore I had the full brunt of personal attack.

Newsmen have suffered. I have heard the late Mitchie Hewitt vilified from the public platform. I have heard Jimmy Cozier attacked mercilessly from the public platform as well as other members of the Press in the past, people who have made a tremendous contribution. In fact, I believe the right honourable Member for St. John was well known to coin various phrases whenever he was going flat out against the Press if he disagreed with the view they took on any particular action that he had taken.

What I would like to say is that the time has come when politicians must resist the temptation to attack the Press willy-nilly, not that the Press must be any sacred cow, because there are times when the Press themselves do not match up to their full responsibility. I think whilst you can criticise their work, whilst you can criticise the standard which they reach, personal criticism should be barred, if not completely eradicated.

Now, Mr. Chairman, political broadcasting in this island is still a very sensitive subject. Politicians do not like to lose power; they are mortally afraid of losing power. I saw that happen here in our Government prior to 1961. I saw it developed in the Democratic Labour Party between 1961 and 1976, that every little criticism was considered as though it was a serious attack, even if it was justified, and I hope it will not happen to this party, that we will not become too sensitive that we cannot take criticisms in our stride and answer them. I believe that the Government Information Service, as well as the political parties, must use every opportunity to rebut and justify criticism and to give an alternative point of view.

What I would like to appeal for seriously is a higher standard of political discussion on the airwaves. I believe that the Barbados Labour Party has widened the area of debate. I do not want to reopen old wounds. The honourable Member has spoken of limitations on broadcasts of the Democratic Labour Party. I would think that an objective analysis would show today that the Democratic Labour Party is more exposed to the media, both the written word and the spoken word, than the Barbados Labour Party was allowed to be exposed in the period 1971 to 1976.

I would like, however, to correct a few statements in the honourable Member's speech which I think do not accord with the facts. The honourable Member spoke of the political broadcast which he said was altered, and he has given his version of it. My memory of it, Mr. Chairman, is that Condition 8 of the Broadcasting Rules stipulate that a political broadcast must not contain any faults or deceptive statements. Now it was under that rule that I believe the broadcast, to which the honourable Member referred, was edited, because he was purporting to quote or to adopt part of a report — I cannot remember who did the report — it was something to do with health — but I believe that the legal adviser to the corporation at the time felt, on reconsideration of the matter, that the honourable Member's statements of fact were not correct, and the honourable Member was asked to satisfy the legal advisor as to the truth of the facts which he had in that broadcast.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order: I believe that the honourable Member has all good intentions, but for the sake of the facts, the honourable Member for the City had indicated that they had found 25 000 jobs. The statement which I made refuted that and demonstrated it was a lie, that it could not possibly be true, was expunged from my speech, and the foolish man that says he was the legal adviser said the legal reason was that he did not like the way it sounded.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member has given his version of the matter. I would

not refer to the legal adviser or indeed any other employee of the corporation in pejorative or other terms. I do not believe that we have to debate in that manner.

The point is that when I did the political broadcasts on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party in the period prior to 1976, I also had to give way and to have deleted from the speech certain passages to which the then legal adviser, who is my friend, objected, although we genuinely differed as to either the accuracy or indeed the imputations of the particular passages concerned.

It is not a question here, as the honourable Member is saying, that the Minister had tapes and vetted those tapes. That is not so at all, and I cannot let the honourable Member get away with that merely because the Minister is not in the House. I recall the event very well.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order: I wish to state categorically, and repeat, that the lady in charge of the news department took the tapes home to the Minister's house and there they edited them. That is what I said and I stand by that.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member may repeat that a million times, but it is just not so, and I wish the honourable Member to make the statement in the presence of the Minister so that he can speak for himself. But from the information which was available to us as a Government, I am satisfied that it was not so at the time.

Now the honourable Member speaks to the fact that journalists are very badly treated by some political parties, and I have seen this happen with both political parties, and that is why I have made an appeal in here that it should stop.

The honourable Member would probably not like to look back to the first Annual Conference of the Democratic Labour Party after their defeat in 1976, when the journalists were physically thrown out of the meeting at Combermere School. The Democratic Labour Party has no history of being nice to journalists, except like now when they are down and are courting them and trying to flatter them. The honourable leader and the Chairman of the Democratic Labour Party for so long has been merciless on people like Mitchie Hewitt and Jimmy Cozier, calling them dunderheads and fools and that sort of thing. I have seen the Press being attacked in here during the constitutional debate in the worst manner. Where was the honourable Member then and his party? Why didn't he stand up for them?

I am not saying that my party ought to continue that at all, but I am saying that the political parties must begin to respect the journalists as professionals and do

not just flatter them when they want to. That is what I am saying. That is what has been happening, because the journalists in my view, have suffered worse during the period 1971-76 than they had done at any time before that. That is a fact. The honourable Member wants me to go back to incidents. I still have tapes of meetings of the Democratic Labour Party which I have kept — I will leave them in the Archives — to preserve the level of discussion and the vehemence of the attack on the profession in this country. So how all of a sudden the Democratic Labour Party has this tremendous concern?

Now, Sir, the honourable Member made another statement that is not actually correct in its entirety. Like the honourable Member for St. James North, I read the article that was written, I believe in a staff journal or in a house journal, as they call it, at CBC. The Board, as I understand, asked for an explanation. Now, people get sensitive. In fact, I think that if some people heard what Pope used to write in those days, I do not know what they would have done. Satire is a well recognised form of literary attack and debate. I think that sometimes we are too sensitive about these things. I understand that one gentleman offered to resign, and the Board, having asked for an explanation, did only the proper thing, and they refused the resignation.

1.20 p.m.

Now I think that we should get past the sensitivity that may make the journalist in a situation like that feel that he is being hounded. But at the same time, I want to appeal to the media to show similar responsibility. That is one of the problems that we have had, and there are a plethora of reasons for this.

It is a fact that the media in this country has been badly paid. The opportunities for scholarships have been very limited. Not enough has been done by the State to provide opportunities for training in journalism as we have provided opportunities for training in other fields. Even when we have our journalists properly trained, they come back and they do not seem to get the remuneration that they deserve. In my view, the proprietors have a responsibility to the profession out of which they are making money and to the people who are employed in that profession, and this applies to the public sector as well as it applies to the private sector.

I believe the Ministry of Education should pursue the policy of finding opportunities without necessarily bonding the people to come back and work for the Government or the public sector. I think that if we want to preserve democracy, we ourselves have to follow a policy that would strengthen those people who are working alongside of us in defence of democracy; and there is no doubt that in the last resort, a free Press is the bastion against dictatorial action.

I think we are fortunate that we have a reasonable Press in Barbados. They are lacking in expertise in some fields. Sometimes, in their enthusiasm, they ask the wrong questions. I heard on television the other night a question being asked of Assistant Superintendent Longe as to whether two escaped prisoners were together. There are certain areas in which I think we can genuinely assist the Press by providing opportunities for them.

I really like to commend to this House some of the objectives which were set out in the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto of 1976 and repeated in 1981, and I trust that the party will work on that. Permit CBC, for instance, to play a more objective educational, cultural and informative role. Television can be a power of good, Mr. Chairman, and it can also of course, be a power of bad, but I think we ought to use it properly. The manifesto said that we were going to encourage political discussions on radio and television and, with the concurrence of Parliament, to broadcast the proceedings of the Legislative. We have made a start. I do not believe that we have gone far enough; I think that we can go further, without having any fear that we are going to lose the Government for so doing.

This House for the first time, under the Barbados Labour Party, saw every Member being able to contribute to the main debates in the House during broadcasts by the public media. It never happened before. I sat there, where my good friend, the honourable Member for St. Michael South, is sitting, and queried the Government over here as to why the then shadow Minister of Finance should be the only person who would be allowed to speak on the public media in the debates and no one else, and there was deathly silence.

Let me end as I began. Politicians must get rid of the fear that they are going to lose power. We have to lose power; all of us lose power at some time — that is a sign of democracy, by the very nature of the two party system. We must recognise that we are in the business and people have a right to dissent and to throw us out. But we should not have the fear, because when we were in the Opposition, as the Opposition is now feeling, we needed that very media to get across our point of view. It took the Opposition to be now in Opposition before they recognised that.

I hope that the Barbados Labour Party Government will not allow the fear of being succeeded to drive them to the position that they are reversing to the standard we were in prior to 1976. I think that this party has too much of a record behind it, of social, radical, revolutionary action, and of good points and performance, to be frightened at all of either sector of being outclassed in debate or argument either on the public media or on the platform.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. John.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, shortly before I entered the Chamber, I understood that the honourable Member for Christ Church West, who has belatedly taken his seat, made a statement to the effect that I chased

Asides

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am sorry; I apologise to the honourable Member. I will deal with him later.

The honourable Member for St. James North claimed that I chased Mr. Jimmy Cozier, Mr. Glynne Murray and Mr. Gale out of my office. I should like to say that I have no recollection of those three gentlemen coming into my office together at any time. I am not suffering when I say that if I saw Mr. Glynne Murray inside here, I would not know him. I do not know what the gentleman looks like.

Asides

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Can we have some order, so that I can speak? If you want me to scream and holler like the Member for Christ Church West, I can scream and holler, too; but I was not brought up that way. If you are going to listen to me, I will be heard in silence. Is that my prerogative?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, it is. Order, order.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: If Mr. Glynne Murray walked in here I would not know him. I do not read him under the pseudonym of "Henry Christopher" or any other guise. I want to make it clear. I have no recollection, unless he came to a Press Conference — and he would then be anonymous. I do not know who he is. I do not care who he is. But anyone who can pervert the English language as he did in September 1975, I do not think he is doing justice to the educational system of this country.

As far as Mr. Gale, is concerned, Mr. Trevor Gale, he is my neighbour. I went to school with him and I know him well. The only occasions in which Mr. Gale would have come to my office would have been to discuss matters in relation to the Barbados Turf Club. Mr. Gale at no time was a reporter in his life, and there would be no occasion for Mr. Gale to come in with a subordinate, like Mr. Glynne Murray, or a free-lance opportunist

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I meant Mr. Ian Gale, not Tony Gale. I wonder if you know Ian Gale.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Ian Gale has never been chased out of my office. I also have no recollection of Mr. Ian Gale ever coming to my office.

As far as Mr. Cozier is concerned, Mr. Cozier can never, outside or inside of this Chamber, say that I ever chased him out of my office. He may have been to my office, but he certainly has never come in the presence of Mr. Murray or Mr. Gale. I want to get that clear.
1.30 p.m.

I do not think that we are doing justice to this debate for people to get up and tell lies for the sake of being effective. It is not a proper thing to do.

Now, I just want to say this, and I say this particularly to the Member for Christ Church West. When you refer to people by their colour, it is a demonstration of contempt for the masses of people in Barbados.

Certain remarks made by the Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN at this stage.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Having originally ordered that the words be expunged from the record, I will only now warn the honourable Member for St. John that his language in here must be language that is parliamentary.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: That was not my language. You may have misunderstood what I said. The Member for St. Thomas

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot say that. Please continue with your debate.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I will never use words like that, Sir.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir. Am I permitted to come in here and say that I hear that Father Blackett is a buller? Where are we going?

Asides

Shouts.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Where are we going with people like you in here?

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Know your place, man.)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You tell me to know my place

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. At this point I shall report to His Honour the Deputy Speaker.

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Please be seated. The Chair must comment.

I find it very much against and unlike the traditions of this Honourable Chamber, especially so when, as leaders of a country and members of this Assembly, we fail to consider our duties to the people whom we represent, and in particular the young people who look to us for leadership and guidance.

Now, I sincerely hope that this is the end of this spectacle today. I now ask the honourable Member for St. John to continue his speech, please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, on another occasion Mr. Don Norville, sitting at the Press desk, was approached by the Member for St. Thomas, who threatened to physically beat him because he had written something against him. All of us were here, all of us witnessed that exhibition.

Certain remarks made at this stage by Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW were ordered expunged from the record.

1.40 p.m.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am on a point of order. He must sit down. He should know better and set an example to people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has withdrawn the remarks and I ruled that they must be struck from the records.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Point taken, Sir, the point is well taken.

My first experience of the attitude of the Government in so far as the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation which is the subject of this debate, is concerned, was, I think the day or the Saturday after the election when they asked me to hold a Press Conference, thinking that I would run and hide. I held a Press Conference which lasted for one hour and about eighteen minutes. The Prime Minister, himself, went to CBC, made them play back the Press Conference, and cut it down to two minutes and forty-seven seconds. If that is not censorship, I do not know what it is. He was already holding the majority of seats in the Chamber, and I made no

criticism of the Government, I merely stated what the position of Barbados was and so on.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition is stating

Aside

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I have to defend this in the absence of the Prime Minister.

(Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Why is he not here?)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You went away for six months and nobody asked you anything, and you drew the people's money out of Miami.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Make your point of order. Your point of order, please. Make your point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: In the absence of the Prime Minister, Sir, it is not fair for the Leader of the Opposition to get up and say that he held a Press Conference for one hour and seven minutes and that the Prime Minister left where he was and went to CBC and edited it, Sir. I do not believe that, and you will have to get up and justify that with some form of documentary evidence. You have to bring documentary evidence to justify that. Do you mean that you can come in here and say anything at all?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You can come in here and say anything at all!

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: May I ask that further consideration

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please, order please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: May I ask that further consideration of this debate be postponed so that the Prime Minister can be present for me to repeat it? I do not think that there is any provision for that at the moment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the honourable Member

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I just want to tell you, Sir that your tie is showing "Salvador" and you had better adjust it Sir. I do not know whether it came from El Salvador or San Salvador, because Mr. Reagan might not want to know that you are wearing a San Salvador tie.

If I may now, Sir, return to what I was saying.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Your time is up too).

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You had 15 minutes of my speech. I have just started.

I understand, and honourable Members can deny it, that instruction is given to the new room at CBC that the Prime Minister's name must be mentioned every night on CBC for at least three minutes.

Laughter

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: By whom?)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He means the former Prime Minister; not the present, the former.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please take your seats.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: It is also a fact that, even when we are doing the World Scene; every night the words "Prime Minister, Tom Adams" have to be mentioned on the news at CBC by the people who are doing the news. I see the television news every night. Go and check the records of the news.

It is also a fact that compacts are being made between certain members of the legal profession and the CBC whereby any time any criticism is made of certain people, they do not go before the court, but they make agreements to pay out money, by ways of damages, on questionable occasions, and, therefore, the taxpayers of Barbados, directly or indirectly, have to underwrite these kinds of arrangements.

The gentleman, who is now in charge of Information, has not done an honest day's work in his whole life. I know that because he used to work with me.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You mean the Chairman of CBC?)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I did not say that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You know very well who I mean, and I do not think you like it either. You know and you do not like it either, but you have to keep quiet. I made a mistake.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You do not do any work.)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Nobody in the Civil Service or elsewhere, or any of my clients, could ever tell you that I do not do any work. You have to be joking. I have news for you. I work.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: All this interference all the time; Sir, I hope you will note that all of this is an encroachment on the legitimate time that I have to speak.

The policy of CBC in hiring overseas persons have been criticised in the Press and elsewhere. The answer that we have been given, by no less a luminary than the honourable Member for St. Thomas, is that CBC is a regional organisation and, therefore, its employment policy must be on a regional basis.

Now I am not making any slurs against any ethnic group in this society, but I heard CBC referred to as an "all-Indian radio" on a political platform one night last year. That is a fact. But when you can go and bring people to "all-India Radio" — I heard that on a political platform — when you go to Jamaica and bring in friends of the Minister and put them over Barbadians, who have been working there from 1962 and 1963, people must begin to question whether CBC is a Barbadian organisation or not.

Now as far as I know, Sir,.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir, the leader of the Opposition appointed Sir Lionel Luckhoo as High Commissioner in London, when they have Barbadians that could have filled the job. You did that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member will have a chance to speak.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You did that, and he was an Indian, too. He was a Guyanese Indian, too.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am going to remind you as you speak. Sir Lionel Luckhoo was appointed High Commissioner. I am going to keep you on your toes today.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, order please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The point that I am making here is a very simple one. I do not think that there is anything in the Constitution of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation which calls for any contribution from any Government outside of the Barbados Government. I am not aware that, at any time, any of the Boards of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation had stipulated that they had received any kind of contribution from the Windward or Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago or Jamaica, and therefore felt themselves constrained to go outside of Barbados in order to recruit people over the heads of qualified people who were in that organisation. That was a very simple point that I

was making, and I was very surprised to hear the honourable Member for St. Thomas reported as saying that it was a regional organisation.

It did not say "Barbados Broadcasting Corporation." The reasons it was dubbed "Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation" is that at the time when it was established, the negotiations for the Eastern Broadcasting Federation were on the way, and the Ministers had decided that Barbados was going to be the capital of that association.

1.50 p.m.

They had decided, not that we wanted them to decide, they had decided, and therefore, when the Cabinet decided to set up a broadcasting entity — it was radio at first and the radio station subsequently extended its facilities to television, something which they said we could not do — they decided let us give it a kind of regional aspect and call it C.B.C. To call it D.B.C. would be to cause confusion. There was no other motivation, but at no time was this anything that anybody helped us with any money for, other than the Barbados Parliament guaranteeing the loans for equipment and so on. So it was a very simple matter.

As far as the Press, generally, is concerned, and we are discussing C.B.C., politicians do criticise the Press and I think the Press have a legitimate right to be critical in their approach to governmental action.

Now for the whole time that I had the good fortune to preside over the deliberations of the Cabinet of Barbados, for 15 years, I honestly do not think that, apart from the Budget, I went on the air on four occasions.

Asides

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You can check the record.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On the occasion when I went on the air, it was usually a matter of national importance. I did not hold press conferences on the air except there was some issue which I felt the public would want to hear me on. As a matter of fact, everybody knows that I have an aversion to that kind of thing anyhow. Members of my party criticise me all the time, because they say, "you don't notice the Press". Well I say "They want noticing, but I don't want noticing." It is very simple. Everyone knows me already.

I reserve the right, let me put it this way, and I do not think any of us, on either side of the House, ought to

surrender the right or abdicate their responsibility to straighten out the Press from time to time. It does not mean that we have to abuse them in pejorative terms and refer to their colour, and refer to them in language of the canine species and that kind of thing. We should not do that to any human being. That is a matter of lack of breeding.

You know what I mean, Sir. You said that I have the facility with language. I think it is a great compliment you have paid me. I think that you should never lose your equilibrium because you are annoyed with a person, particularly if you are in politics. I treat them with a certain amount of amusement. They say things about me, but every time they say something I do not bring a libel case against them or a case for defamation. They get misguided, they get carried away sometimes, but so do the politicians get carried away. As a matter of fact, I should say this: I should like to see a much more critical Press, a much more analytical and critical Press, a much more impartial Press.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I did not hear what he said; maybe you can tell me what the joke is.

You ask the Press about our relations. I have never found it necessary to take 18 people from the Press with me — maybe I did not deal with the Press correctly — every time that I go to a dinner in Miami. I think that that is taking away people from their duties; but maybe some people have other duties to perform when they get up there, I do not know.

Mr. Chairman, there was one occasion when I took any member of the Press anywhere with me. Maybe that is why they do not like me. I went to Washington, it was the first time that any Prime Minister of the Caribbean had been to the White House, and I took a dear, good friend of mine, Mr. Paul Mandaville. We did not have to pay him any money. All they had to do was to pay his passage to Washington and he took the pictures for the whole of the Barbados Press and sent back down here. But when you have to take cameramen and secretaries and people to hold the light and all that kind of thing every time you travel, we should really look at the policy of C.B.C. in that respect.

Mr. Chairman, you are asking me if I can finish in ten minutes?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have one minute to go.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I wish, in my concluding minute, that I can at least be heard in silence, because I have a serious contribution to make.

What I am saying is that we have instituted the idea of having an independent broadcasting authority. All I want to say is that as long as any authority in Barbados is going to be appointed exclusively by the Government, you are going to continue to get criticism, but if you set up an independent authority, in which let us say, the union of journalists, — if they have one — they do not act so — when I say union of journalists it may be the Journalists' Association; anyhow, what I mean is some organisation substantially representing the employees of the Press — unless they are going to appoint a member, the Church, meaning the ecumenical church — not the Anglican people necessarily, because I am supposed to be an Anglican, I would be worried about their nomination — but the Ecumenical Council appoints one, say the Public Officers' Union appoints one, the trade union appoints one, the Chamber of Commerce appoints one and then the Government appoints two members, I think we would have a greater amount of confidence in that kind of authority.

There is no point in speaking about an impartial broadcasting authority if all the members who are going to be put there are fellows who can say, "I want a play, skipper". You know how it works, whether it is the Tourist Board or something like that, you have people who are your adherents. I mean this in respect of any Government; I am not speaking in these terms in respect of the present administration at all. Any Government which wants to have an authority looked upon as an independent forum, would have to have an appointment somewhere along those lines.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, it is a pity that it took the honourable Member all that period of time to recognise the importance

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is two o'clock. I will report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I will continue when we come back.

Mr. CHAIRMAN left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now 2 o'clock p.m. This sitting now stands suspended until 2.45 p.m. 2.00 p.m.

On Resumption:

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. Question No. 27.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Question No. 27 reads as follows:—

To ask the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning, Minister of Establishments: What are the rates payable to (a) Ministers and (b) Public Officers for (i) hotel accommodation, (ii) meals, (iii) subsistence, and (iv) any other purpose, in respect of travel abroad on government business?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, the Reply is as follows:—

The attention of the honourable Member is drawn to the paper laid in this House on behalf of the Prime Minister on February 22, 1983.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Minister making a mockery of procedures? There is no paper. I do not have any paper. Nothing has been circulated to me. How can my attention be drawn to something when nothing is circulated?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: No Sir, I am not making a mockery, Sir. The Member may be trying to make a mockery of the Chair using such remarks. No, Sir, not this Member.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am rising now on a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because something must be wrong with the procedures where an honourable Member asks a question

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Two honourable Members are on their feet.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am making a submission, Mr. Deputy Speaker for your clarification. I can rise on a point of order any time Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On a point of order?.....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes, on a point of order. My point of order is that it is a breach, I believe, of the procedures of this Honourable Chamber to answer a question by reference to a statement laid in Parliament when that statement itself, to which my attention has been drawn, is not in my possession. It has not been circulated to honourable Members, and I am submitting, Mr. Deputy Speaker that this must be a breach of procedures in this Honourable Chamber.

Asides

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

Asides

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we have a bit of silence? Would the honourable Member for St. Michael South — please. There is no Private Members' Business. Government Business is now resumed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, and to that it now reverts.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

The honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as I was saying before we suspended for lunch, it is a great pity that it took the honourable Member for St. John such a long period of time to understand the importance of the appointment of regulatory bodies on a bi-partisan basis in certain sensitive areas of Government. Indeed, many people will recall that this Government has repeatedly offered the Democratic Labour Party an opportunity to participate in the management of some of the subsidiary affairs of Government on a non-political basis — and the Democratic Labour Party has refused such participation. Perhaps, there is now a change of heart on the part of the honourable Member.

Sir, there can be no doubt that, in Barbados, as in many other countries, which were formally colonial countries and have recently or relatively recently emerged into independence, periodically there are strained relationships between the Press and the Government, the Press and the Judiciary, and the Press and other elements of the society, the Church and similar institutions. I believe, Sir, that the tradition of a free Press is one to which all of us subscribe. It is, however, a matter of great concern that, in its interpretation of freedom of the Press, many, who are in control of the Press in its broadest sense, do not have an appreciation of the corresponding responsibilities which are inherent in the doctrine of freedom of the Press.

I think that it is a matter of training, not only into the history of the battle that was fought to obtain freedom of the Press, but also in the appreciation of the fact that human beings are greatly influenced by what they read or by what they hear, and quite apart from the law of libel, sheer common decency demands that there are considerations which should be taken into account in presenting news or events, or in interpreting human conduct.

I am one of those, Sir, who, despite the fact that I have suffered more, or equally, with many at the hands of the Press in the course of 20 years of political life, really do not get too disturbed. Periodically, I must say, though, I do have a feeling of outrage when I see particularly bad cases of journalism taking place. Not only in the reports of this House or in the reports of events, but I am sure that every single honourable Member in this Chamber, at some time or the other, has had to experience this feeling of frustration, which can arise when similar situations occur.

I want to say, though, Sir, that, notwithstanding these facts, I would never be the one who will agree in any way other to monitoring the Press than via the law of libel and perhaps via a professional regulatory body similar to what doctors have, similar to what lawyers have, similar to what accountants have, or possibly a Press Council. I would only agree to the limitations on the freedom of the Press within such a context. I think though that we must recognise that it is the responsibility of the newspaper and broadcasting proprietors in this country to ensure that adequate training opportunities are made available so that people, who have to work within these organisations, are exposed to the disciplines of the particular profession.

Now the honourable Member from St. John used this occasion to fulminate and abuse a few people. You, yourself, Mr. Chairman, has dealt with one or two, but I just wish to say that it has been drawn to my attention, and I would have to say on the floor of the House, since the honourable Member attacked, rather cowardly in my opinion, the Minister of Information.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I would like to submit to you that it is out of order to use the word "cowardly" in relation to any honourable Member of this House, either on this side or on that side. It is one of those words, Sir, in May's Parliamentary Procedure, as far as I recall, which is deemed to be unparliamentary under any circumstances.
3.00 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. I say "cowardly" because of the fact that neither the honourable Minister of Information nor the Prime Minister is present today in order to rebut, justify or explain, or make any response to the allegations of the honourable Member.

Now, the Minister of Information does not sit in this place, but I wish to say in reply to the charge that the honourable Member made that, the lawyers had concocted and falsely agreed to settle a case, in respect of a statement made by the honourable Member, that the facts are as follows: that the honourable Member for St. John in the course of an interview stated that the police had shot Sylverton Small, that legal proceedings were taken or threatened against CBC, and that, in accordance with the usual custom, CBC referred the matter to their lawyers. Based upon the findings of the only judicial enquiry that was held into the case, in the lawyers' opinion there was absolutely no foundation for the charge to be made, and very wisely the corporation decided that it was better to accede to the lawyers' advice, make a settlement at an early stage in the case, with an appropriate apology, and let the matter end there.

Now, the honourable Member is entitled to be in here, because he came in here in the pre-lunch session and he made his charges. I admire the conduct of that lawyer, and it is in sharp contrast to the conduct of the honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Democratic Labour Party, in their advice to the former Speaker of the House, when no less a person than the same honourable Leader of the Opposition said in court that he could not advise the honourable Member to give an apology; the time was not right. In other words, the honourable Member and his party were willing to put the former Speaker, Mr. Maxwell, on the pillory. That is the kind of legal advice that many people find it very, very wise to ignore.

The truth of the matter is that he made a false charge and the lawyers quite wisely advised the corporation that it is better to rely on the judicial finding than on the words of the honourable Member; quite wise advice.

Now, Sir, a number of other charges were made in here. I really wish to say something. I think that Barbadians have got to accept and recognise this fact, that there will be, periodically in this society, people who were not born in Barbados who will hold some jobs in Barbados. It is the experience of mankind that there are migrations, and there are many many people in Barbados who, themselves, have migrated and have come back, or whose family has migrated. Barbadians are to be seen in jobs all over the Caribbean, in the United Kingdom, in the United States, in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand. So what is this now that we are hearing, that

because one or two people, who were not born in Barbados, who have been chosen because of their professional skill and experience to do a job in broadcasting, you cannot hire anybody in Barbados except they were born in Barbados?

What are we hearing? The last people in the world who should adopt a narrow nationalistic and chauvinistic attitude in respect of this situation are Barbadians, because they are all over the world. The fact that a person came from abroad does not necessarily mean that they are not competent to do the job. If you wish to attack individuals in their capacity and on their competence in the execution of their jobs, by all means do that. You can do that, but you cannot attack them purely on the basis that they cannot be competent because they were not born in Barbados or they were not trained in Barbados; nor can they be objective because they are not Barbadians.

We must progress beyond that, we are living in the last twenty years of the 20th century in which the communication industry has made the world almost one place from the point of view of communications. Our minds must be broadened to the extent that, at some time or the other, it is possible to envisage a situation in which the criterion for a job is competence and not necessarily nationality, and broadcasting happens to be one of those fields that, in many countries of the world, there is a liberality of attitude in relation to that, and journalism is another one.

I hope that this is the last of us hearing this nonsense. This is where perhaps enlightened journalism can help us, because I am sure that if care and trouble were taken to investigate the practices of the industry world-wide, one would readily recognise that it is one of the professions in which there has been a large degree of mobility, not only in Barbados but all over the world.

It is like the medical profession, like the engineering profession, like the legal profession. There is a lot of mobility in those professions. For a variety of reasons, people find themselves holding jobs in other countries, but the fact that they were not born in a country does not necessarily make them ineligible, or when they hold the jobs, their competence is not adjudged upon the basis of the mere fact that they were born in another country means that they lose their objectivity. That is a very important point.

Sir, all countries, as I said, go through this period in which there is this suspicion, and in small communities, even more. One of the simple reasons why people are more sensitive in small communities is because of the fact that it is felt that the power of the written word, or the spoken word, is very great, that people have

a liking for gossip and for the repetition of gossip. That is why people get supersensitive about it.

I feel, Sir, that this debate has taken a very regrettable turn and that the opportunity could have been taken during the debate to exhort the proprietors of newspapers to pay better salaries so that they can attract people who have gone through disciplined training, instead of raking and scraping and picking any and everything and mixing the old wine with the good wine. That is the position, Sir.

3.10 p.m.

I think that a challenge should be thrown out to places like the Community College for its failure to have a proper two-year course with Journalism or Communications or even Psychology as one of its subjects. A challenge should be made that you are not relevant if you do not have that because there is a need. And the kind of training you have in that area is not only useful to you when you work in a newspaper or at a broadcasting station, or places like that; it is useful to you when you work in public relations and advertising. This is the sort of thing we should be talking about.

We should be challenging CBC and the journalist profession as a whole for not having a proper disciplinary body that the public could make complaints to so that when there is an allegation or bias, an independent body could investigate it. That is what we should be talking about, creating institutions to ensure that the professional standards are raised. We should be constructive in trying to improve an admittedly bad situation.

So, Mr. Chairman, I welcome all attempts to improve the situation, despite the fact that I have suffered as much as, or worst than anyone — and I will suffer tomorrow, too, because they are not going to print what I say.

I sat in here and I participated in a debate on the acquisition of Mobil Oil, on one of the few occasions in which a Government member spent a long period of time in seconding a motion in order to put across facts which the mover of the motion did not put. Four people participated in the debate, and, Mr. Chairman, Sir, one Olutoye Waldron was in here from the beginning to the end, and he could still go on CBC and report the speeches of two honourable Members and leave out the speeches of the other two.

Sir, that is the sort of incompetence, bias, that we have to deal with, but it does not make me vex. It just illustrates, Sir, that we are living in a society where people either do not appreciate, are incapable of appreciating, or are just down right bias; that is all. That is the situation we have to deal with. We have to be tolerant

when we have to deal with these people, we have to pity them — not abuse that kind of person. You must pity them, because they are holding jobs for which they do not have the talent nor the competence.

This is a very tolerant society which tolerates that, but we are a developing society. When we become fully developed, we will appreciate that a big noise should not be made if such a person is dismissed because they do not have the skills which the job requires. These are things that we must recognise, that because of a shortage of certain talents, we have to be tolerant in our attitudes towards incompetence and to bias — and that is what we should be spending our time doing, trying to encourage improvement in these standards.

There are some who feel that the Rules of the House should be amended, and, in circumstances such as that, that the newspaper should be brought before the House, a trial held and the newspaper be fined. I do not advocate that, because we would be trying them all the time — the business of Parliament could not go on.

I do not advocate that, Sir. All I am saying is that we must recognise that we are operating within certain limitations, and all of us, when we get the opportunity, should encourage the proprietors of the newspapers and radio stations to understand that, periodically, they should have an independent check upon the competence of those to whom they entrust this great responsibility.

I have great pleasure, Sir, in supporting this Resolution.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make my contribution to this debate, and in doing so, I wish to state that some of the charges that are made against the Press could be equally made against the politicians. If you say that the Press is incompetent, we have incompetence in many places, including Parliament itself, and I do not believe that we should necessarily believe that as politicians we are more competent in our jobs than the Press may be in theirs. If we have to be tolerant, tolerance is something which may have to be applied on all sides.

We had an example in here not so long ago, Mr. Chairman, of the height of incompetence on the part of politicians, Ministers, in dealing with the business of Parliament, in answering a parliamentary question by reference to a statement that has been laid in the House — which has not yet been circulated; the height of incompetence, but yet those same politicians can get up

and accuse the Press of incompetence. They are the ironies that occur in politics. I need not say anything more on that particular ground. I do not think that it will escape notice.

What I do wish to say, Mr. Chairman, is that, in a debate such as this one, we have got to look, not so much back at the past and the historical setting, but at how we are going to improve things in this country. Because, make no mistake about it, the country is slipping head-long in almost all areas of national life, and it beholds each one of us, in our capacity as parliamentarians to try to do something to arrest that head-long slide, rather than assisting it further down the slide. And when we keep looking back and harping back to what the DLP Administration did to the Press, that does not do anything. I think that what the people of this country are concerned about are the measures and the steps which can be taken in order to improve the level of political participation in this country, as well as to include the level of the performance of the Press and other areas of national life.

Now, I cannot say, like the honourable Member for St. James North, that, as far as I am concerned, the Press, BBC, CBC, or whatever it may be, need not exist.
3.20 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of elucidation, I never said that it does not matter to me whether they exist. I did not say that, Sir.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I will take what the honourable Member said he did not say. He made a reference to the Press.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I said what they say about me does not matter, and that is a fact.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: What I am saying is that I am concerned about what the Press says about those who are in public office, including the person who holds the office of Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, because he holds an official position in this country, and I have to be concerned because I believe

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the Press has an important role to play in this country in informing the public of what goes on, of educating the public and of trying to deal with those values in our society which we must examine from time to time. The Press has no mean responsibility in this

country; it has a most important one, and therefore I must be concerned, and I think all of those who have the public interest of Barbados at heart must be concerned about what happens to both the print as well as the broadcast media in this country.

I just have a few observations to make. I believe that the Press must try as far as possible to be impartial in its presentations. I am not among those who say that the Press should not bring anything about any so-called rebel cricketers who went to South Africa. I am not part of that. And to praise CBC for not publishing information according to that, by indicating somehow or another that that section of the Press was somehow better than the other media, I do not necessarily agree with that, because I believe the Press has a duty to inform. It does not necessarily mean that the members of the Press agree with what is going on, but they have a duty to inform. So I am not going to praise one section of the Press because they did not carry out a function of importance. That is just my particular view on that particular score.

I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, that the Press should seek to be partial, and I am saying that it is my view that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation is very partial. I am drawing a specific example. I think a Mr. Walrond gives some very balanced presentations. It may be that the Press has a job to select, and, in fact, you and your party and your Prime Minister are encouraging them not to print everything that is put out — that is what they say about the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central — to examine it and use their judgment. So maybe in your case, the speech that you made, they used their judgment and decided it was not really worth the effort. I withdraw that because my colleague here also spoke, and he did not get mentioned either.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that when C.B.C. goes on Old Year's Night to a function organised by the Barbados Labour Party, to highlight, and can only find that one function to highlight, that is partiality to the height, and I can never support that. I am not saying that they should not report the Old Year's Night festivities and carryings on of the Barbados Labour Party. There is nothing wrong with that, because I believe political parties are important institutions in this country. But if you are trying to be impartial, you must also find the functions which are carried on by the other major political party in this country.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, I must interrupt the honourable Member. As far as I can remember, CBC highlights a number of activities, whether it is Old Year's Night, New Year's Night or Christmas Night. All that happened is that the particular political party may have got there and asked a question first. Or are you

implying that there was a directive from the Minister of Information? There was no such directive according to my knowledge, because they also go to other places and highlight those other places.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am not implying anything. I am saying that, to my certain and informed knowledge of Old Year's Night, the Barbados Labour Party's function at Marine House, where I believe it is consistently held, is broadcast by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: This is a good party.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes, don't stop this party.

I am saying that there is nothing wrong with that, but if you want to say that you are an impartial media, you also have, if it is an hour up there, if it is half an hour or if it is 15 minutes, to find something also to give balance, and find the other function by the other major political parties.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I was under the impression that they had also attended the Democratic Labour Party function. This was to the best of my knowledge. But if they never attended the function on Old Year's Night, it is because the Press is afraid of you. You manhandled them at Combermere and threw them out, so they are afraid of you. You may even damage the equipment. That is the problem. We are not hostile towards the Press, and I believe that is the reason, but I was under the impression that they carried yours.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: You can easily check that out again. I will pass on from that particular point.

I am also saying, Mr. Chairman, that I am referring to a matter raised by my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Michael West, when he referred to the logo that is used by the Barbados Labour Party when items are being telecast relating to the Barbados Labour Party. I am not saying, that there is anything wrong with using the logo when a news item comes on relating to the Barbados Labour Party or any of its organs. You see the logo — B.L.P. and the hand; you are safe in our hands, that is the impression that is being given. It may be a good logo. It was used, I believe, in the last elections, and I noticed it has re-appeared recently. There is nothing wrong with that. I am saying that I hope that when the Democratic Labour Party's announcements come on, and a logo is also available, that it will be used as well. I am saying that I would hope, in the interest of impartiality, that that is carried out as well, because what is good for the goose should also be good for the gander.

Make no mistake about it, in this country the difference between the two parties out there is not that

great. There are only about four percentage points — that is two years ago at the time of the elections — separating the public support that the two parties draw, so you have got to be very careful that we do not encourage in this country the kinds of partiality on the part of the media, or one section of the media, which may have a monopoly of telecasting.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to make the point that the members who work for the print and broadcast media are part of the institution of this country. They have a job to carry out. They receive information; they cannot carry all of the information; they have to be selective. It is not an easy job, and I am glad that the Deputy Prime Minister made the call for tolerance. He has to be tolerant with the Press and the Press has to be tolerant with him, so there is need for tolerance on all sides.

When he refers to the question of training, that is very important, and I believe that, if he inquires a little more, he will find out that steps have been taken in that particular regard with the interest of the media at heart. But if his Government would perhaps make the necessary funds available for the types of training programmes that he is talking about, I think he will find that they can be put on quite readily and quite easily, and we have the resources at hand where this can be done.

I would not like to give the impression that no training opportunities were not made available for journalist. In fact, I recall that when I was Minister of Education, National Development Scholarships were made available for persons who wished to qualify in journalism, and I believe some of them qualified. They may work abroad — I do not know; but scholarships were made available. But there are so many cut-backs now that maybe none are being awarded, or have been awarded recently in that particular area. I do not know.

I want to make this general point, that there is no point talking as though the Press is doing a very bad job in this country. If the Press are subjected to these frequent attacks when they are trying to do their job, the spirit of the members of the Press may be broken, and when we reach that stage, the downward slope, as far as our national and public affairs are concerned, may very well be steeper. The Press has a very important role to play, and let us not undermine it, let us not underestimate it, and we should be giving the members of the Press as much encouragement as possible. This is not to say that one may not be critical of some of the things that they do. I believe that they will be the first ones to recognise that criticism may be necessary from time to time.

But this particular area of responsibility that we have

Aside

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Not because they come from Jamaica. I am not cursing anybody, because I have a view of the Caribbean, because, for me, the Caribbean is an entity.

We must also take into account that the Information Department itself must play a greater role in feeding information to the Press.

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am hearing so much cross talk, Mr. Chairman, I am really worried.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up. You can come again. The honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I have listened all morning to the debate dealing with the Press, and the role of the Press, but I have not heard anybody yet identify in clear terms what is the role of the Press. As a matter of fact, all I seem to be hearing, Sir, is that the Press picks out things to report, reports incorrectly, that the Barbados Labour Party gives instructions about which articles to include and so on and so forth.

In my mind, Sir, the role of the Press is to keep the public informed about important events that are occurring in the society and around it. That information, if it is to be useful, Sir, and if it is to measure up to the high standards of the profession of journalism, should be objectively written, to the extent that the journalist can summon his professional integrity and exclude from his reportage his own peculiar and intrinsic subjective orientation to the particular news story that he is asked to report.

When a journalist goes to the Barbados Labour Party's Annual Conference and he happens not to hold the same political persuasion as the Barbados Labour Party, he nonetheless, Sir, has the responsibility as a professional journalist to subordinate his own peculiar political interest and report as fairly as he can what took place in that conference. When he feels that he must bring his own opinions to bear upon the news story that he is reporting, then he should be writing an editorial. But my observations, Sir, for the time that I have been observing the Press in Barbados, is that on too many occasions we find editorials written on the news pages, because journalists, either because of the lack of care in their reporting, or for some other reason, bias the stories which they are asking the people to accept at face value.

That is why journalism is such an important profession, because what goes down in the newspaper as a story is taken almost hook, line and sinker by the public at large. And when you ask them, they tell you, "I saw it in the Nation" or "I saw it in the Advocate." The fact that it is written there is enough evidence for them of the news worthiness or the truth of that particular story.

3.40 p.m.

Now, Sir, I have the *Nation* Newspaper here, and I would like to draw the attention of the public to the particular news story. I am not reading it, I am drawing attention to a newspaper article at the back of the *Nation* newspaper today. I am confident that anybody at all reading that newspaper would believe that the former Minister of Sport made some pronouncement about whether or not the rebel cricketers that went to South Africa should be allowed to play in Barbados. That is why when I issue Press Releases they are written, and issued through the Government Information Service, because I have suffered on many occasions.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: They cannot write either).

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: At least I see the copy before it goes out, and I know if I did not say something I can tell them I did not say it, so they have to change it.

I did not say that, and anybody who heard my broadcast would have heard me say that I congratulate the people who did not go, and I regret that the fellows who went, went.

Do you see here, "No play for rebels"? It is reported in the *Nation* today under that headline that some action taken by the National Sports Council was in support of recent statements made by the Minister responsible for Sport. That is the kind of problem that politicians face, and I not only refer to politicians because I happen to be one, the people in public office, day in and day out, suffer at the hands of journalists who go and put things in the newspaper. People see it, it goes to North America, it goes to Canada, it goes to Great Britain, and you will hear that Vic Johnson said that the rebels that went to South Africa should never play cricket again in Barbados.

If I had made a pronouncement, I would have said that they should not be allowed to play professional cricket, test cricket or represent Barbados again, and I will say that in here or outside. I would not bite my tongue about it. I have a position, and it is that no self-respecting black person has any right allowing himself to be called an honorary white man just for the opportunity of playing cricket in South Africa. I say that, I say it openly outside, I say it on the Floor of the

House of Assembly, that no self-respecting black man in 1983 has any business stooping to allow himself to be called a temporary white man just for the sake of playing cricket. That is my statement. I do not have to bite my tongue when I have a statement to make.

I have already said openly, and for all and sundry to hear, that when the people of St. Michael West Central are finished with me, they can send me home. It is as simple as that. I was not born with a seat, and when they tell me they have had enough of me, I will go home, but they will say that when my hair is very, very grey, because they know when they have a representative that is worth his salt, that does not bite his tongue, does not back down. I say what I mean, I say what I feel, and that is that, and I would like the Press to report only what I say, not what they thought I said, because when I talk, I talk fairly clearly.

Now, Sir, it is no point pretending that journalists are paragons of virtue. They have some wicked journalists and they have some wicked politicians. Witness the honourable Member for St. Michael West.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, is he allowed to say that?)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I withdraw that, Sir.

We have this situation in Barbados where we hear that politicians ought not to criticise the Press. If the Press wants criticising, they ought to be criticised; there is nothing sacred about the Press. When they get it in their minds, Herbie Arthur and a whole bunch of them get together and talk whatever they feel like. When you hear Herbie Arthur talking, nobody can believe that he is attempting to be impartial about any pronouncement that he makes. So when you hear those people putting things in the newspaper about people, are you expecting that any politician, who is a creature of the media in many ways.....

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Because the media can do a great deal of damage. I know as a positive fact that there are members in here that call the journalists up to their houses and feast them, give them food to eat, invite them to parties.

Certain remarks made by Hon. L. S. CRAIG were ordered to be expunged from the Record by the Chairman at this stage.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I do not know about who has the Press in their hip pocket, but I also know as a positive fact that there are men who sit at that Press Table who have received special favours from politicians in this House on that side, that they take

contributions, tickets to go to New York and that sort of business.

3.50 p.m.

This is not anything that I have heard somebody say. This is a positive fact. And where you have that situation with a man who comes into this House day after day to report proceedings that go on in here, no small wonder that, regardless of the rate of the speech coming from this side, some of the garbage said on that side is reported in thick columns across the newspaper, because the man reporting is in the pay of the man making the speech on that side. That is not something I hear, that is something I know for a fact.

(Aside - How do you know that?)

Never mind how I know that. Never mind how I know.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The interruptions, please. Order on both sides of the House.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is obvious, it should be clear, that it is not possible in today's age to take up a man, who had difficulty passing the O'Level English examination, grab him and tell him to go and report in the House of Assembly. Journalism is a profession and we in this country must have trained and competent journalists to report on the complex matters that come before this Assembly, and to report fairly and sensibly on matters that transpire on the outside for the information of the public. But when people cannot manage to get their sentences straight and when asked to report on matters relating to Economics and finance and hardly can deal with the English language, they are going to have difficulty.

I see a lot of temperatures rising because the Prime Minister criticised the Press. The Press want criticising. But I do not hear anybody making any play about the fact that he said that he is going to get into the situation where he will deal with the media, the newspaper companies, in Barbados to provide scholarships for journalists. I have not heard anybody talking about that - and that is precisely what needs to be done.

The journalists in Barbados need to be trained. I do not believe that in this island, among all of the people who report for the various media, they cannot be more than three trained journalists in this whole island, and there are some cub scouts going around taking themselves very seriously, assuming the position that they must be immune from criticism because they go out there and do nonsense.

Mr. Chairman, I will give you an example of what I am talking about. During the last election, I called one of the Newspaper Companies and commented on something that I saw transpiring. It did not look to me like a

fair situation developing, and I called up and I raised the matter. Mr. Chairman, a senior journalist reporting for one of the major newspaper companies in Barbados told me when I questioned about the way that the candidate for St. Michael West Central was represented in the newspaper, "I do not want to hide it from you, Wes Hall is our man." That is precisely what he told me, and that meant that whatever I saw in that newspaper did not relate to the objectives of the case; they were putting a particular case for Wes Hall — and I still beat him.

So, Mr. Chairman, I do not have to stand in awe at the Press. The Press has never gone out of its way to say anything favourable about me, and therefore, when they want criticising, I will criticise them with a full open mouth. When they do something that is note-worthy, I will be in a position to commend them, and there are some instances where worthwhile reporting has happened.

I am not interested in pulling down the Press; I am interested in making a case that all of us in here need to recognise the weaknesses in professional journalism and we need to put forward a case that would lead to the enhancement of the profession; those who are serious about journalism, and who do not possess all of the tools of the trade, should be given an opportunity for them to upgrade their skills.

In a small community like Barbados, Sir, we have to recognise that there are people who are going to be able to call up a newspaper reporter, get to him easily, and perhaps even persuade him to put a case in their favour. In small communities, that is what happens all the time, but I believe that we are not being properly served when we continue, day after day, to see a situation where we have to get up and curse the Press.

Do not believe, having said that, that the fact that the Press take stick in Barbados is peculiar to Barbados. I can remember that when Richard Nixon ran for post of Governor of California and lost, he blistered the Press and said they would not have Richard Nixon to kick around anymore. Richard Nixon went into a period of hibernation, having lost the battle to be Governor of California, and came back to be President of the United States for two terms, and then went back out in disgrace again. And I am sure that if he wanted to run again, he could come back and win again tomorrow, because the Press are now saying that Nixon was treated too harshly.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Well, I have difficulty telling the difference between what is propaganda and what is real.

The Government Information Services Sir, must be commended. I know that the whole purpose of this debate is to curse the Minister responsible for Information and Culture, but the Minister of Information and Culture is to be commended.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is why the Resolution was brought).

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: He got up to curse him, but I want to commend the Minister for the work that he has done at CBC, because I can remember the days when CBC was a hot bed of confusion, morning, noon, and night — confusion, all kinds of talk about sabotage and this thing and the next, and now CBC is beginning to settle down and behave as if somebody is attempting to bring a measure of seriousness to the profession of journalism at CBC. The same thing goes for the Ministry of Information with the GIS, because I can remember that GIS was only a Tuesday night programme that people used to turn off. The Government Information Service has attracted some very bright people.
4.00 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I am not saying who trained them. It has attracted some very bright people who are beginning to demonstrate that the profession of journalism is alive and vibrant up at the Government Information Service, and that is why I will use the GIS if I have anything to say to the Press, because I am tired of seeing articles like what is in the *Nation* there. I am not even Minister of Sport any longer, I am up at Transport and Works, but yet I can see my name figuring prominently in something I did not say.

Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to detain the House on this matter. I merely wish to close by saying that I am obviously in support of the Resolution that will go towards the Government Information Service, and I hope that as political parties, on both sides of this aisle, we can recognise that there are times when both of us are injured by the Press. I have seen too many examples not to know that on this side people and on that side people have been hurt, and I believe that a good portion of it comes from a lack of a professional approach on the part of some of the journalists, but a good portion also comes from the lack of sophistication in the handling of the tools of journalism, and I hope that we will all lend our voices to a plea that something be done so that journalists can be better prepared to carry out the profession which we have entrusted to their care.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before the honourable Member begins his address, we have exactly twenty minutes left to debate this Resolution. Continue.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I came to this Honourable House today more concerned with events to protect the interests of the people that are

taking place elsewhere, and determined to sit in silence until another matter came before the Chamber. Nevertheless, I have been reluctantly drawn into this debate by an attack on the Press, which, in my view amounts to nothing other than sanctimonious rascality. I say this, Sir, because those who seek now to launch bitter attacks on the Press are the same people who, over the years, either through ownership of part of the media or through the use of power, have sought to exploit the very weaknesses which they now may find not operating to their advantage as the Press starts to exercise some muscle in using its discretion in reporting and bringing to the forefront those matters that are festering in this society.

I therefore wish to stand on the Floor of this House and say that I personally dissociate myself completely from these assaults that have been made on the Press over the past three or four weeks, recognising the limitations of the Press in Barbados at all levels, at the level of the amount of money that would be available to any newspaper in a small society, with a limited circulation and with limited revenues from advertising to recruit persons who would be paid the kind of salaries that, say, the New York Times would be able to attract.

Having said that, Sir, I believe, since during my stay in public life, the Press in this country has improved considerably over the years and that their reporting now covers a much wider area of the activities which take place in Barbados, and indeed, I detect from time to time that these poor young men and women out there who work in the Press, who go out there to check on stories and bring in stories to their newspapers, who probably are paid small amounts of money, who are struggling like anybody else to make a living, by and large try to do an honest job.

From time to time, Sir, I or Members of this House may be involved in debates of technical, financial or economic matters. You might see a report appearing in the Press which does not represent the whole or represent fairly what you have said, but I do not contribute that to bad faith; and where I have been misreported invariably once you send a correction to the Press, I will say this for the Press in Barbados, they would publish the correction.

Sir, the Press, like the entire community, has recognised that they have been fed a diet of untruths by the Barbados Labour Party over a number of years, and now they begin to examine what is being put out by that political party, they come in for more scurrilous abuse from many members of the Barbados Labour Party. I dissociate myself completely from this attitude. I think it is wrong, and I will say that if the Press consisted of persons of a different social strata in Barbados, you

would not hear these attacks coming from the Barbados Labour Party. But because of the fact that a lot of our people have had access to education in Barbados, thanks to the opportunities generated by the Democratic Labour Party, they believe they can come in here and use their privileged position to launch an attack on the Press. I dissociate myself from that, Sir, and I will have nothing to do with it.

By and large, I must congratulate the Press of this country for the efforts that they are making to move into much wider areas in public life now, more so than before. I see in one newspaper, Sir, an attempt being made to examine certain matters relating to the economic and financial life of this country. I do not agree necessarily with the views put forward, but nevertheless, that is a new dimension. I also see a column which from time to time, deals with foreign affairs. That never used to be there. You may not agree with it, but it opens certain areas.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It does not matter who writes them. The point I am trying to make is that the Press in Barbados, by and large as far as I can see, are dealing with wider and wider areas of national life and beginning to move very much into the interpretation of international events for the people of Barbados. They are limitations of course, but let us not get in here and try to launch this kind of assault on the Press. It is not fair to the young pressmen to be trying to bully them in this way, and I would say that I find that by being courteous by being co-operative

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, I do not believe the honourable gentleman was in his seat during the debate. I wonder if he was a member of the party that grabbed the very Press and threw them out of Combermere School. Were you a member of the party then? Answer that, less you forget how courageous you are today, you old-time hypocrite.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. No point of order.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I believe that "hypocrite" is a word that is listed in May's Parliamentary Procedure as being unparliamentary. Anyhow, it does not matter, I will continue.

Sir, as an example, I hear all sorts of talk about the rebel cricketers in Barbados, but if you look at the position that a certain newspaper is taking in relation to the Carlisle Club in Bay Street, which the Government is allowing to develop in this country, a cancerous sore in Barbados' society. I congratulate the Press for trying to delve behind that and try to find out what is going on there, because that is likely to do tremendous damage to

all decent black and white people in Barbados, and to the country as a whole.
4.10 p.m.

I would say that that kind of journalism is new in this country.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG stands.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I do not want to hear you. Sit down, nobody wants to hear you in here.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seats. An honourable Member is on a point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am going to pull off all of your beard today. You remember Miss Carmen Bailey, who you harassed and jailed in this country? Were you a member of that Government then? And you talk of black and white now? Was she black or white? You remember Miss Carmen Bailey and a man called Robert Batchelor.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I repeat, I am congratulating the Press on the Floor of this House for identifying and meeting head-on a serious cancerous sore that is developing in this society, namely the activities at the Carlisle Club in Bay Street.

I go further, Sir and say this, that I support the principle of training, but I also recognise, and I agree with the editor of the *Advocate*, that training does not necessarily make a good journalist. Training is only one aspect of it, and I think there are other professional inputs that need to be there apart from basic academic education and so on.

I go further and say this, that the most frequent source of misinformation and disinformation in this country comes from the Government Information Service, because it is directly under the control of the Ministers, and I believe, Sir, that if the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation was allowed to operate as a professional organisation, free from ministerial interference, that we would have had a much more vibrant television station in this country.

I have said before, and I will say again, that I will support any move by any Government in this country that takes a positive step and says, "Look, there are limitations in the Press, but let us not interfere in their professional activity. Let us support concepts like a Press Council, which would be totally run by the profession itself, so that there will not be any interference, just as how there can be no political interference in the activities

of the Bar Council or the Medical Council in Barbados, let us support that kind of professional organisation for journalists and let us put funds behind it, so that it cannot only administer the profession, but it can also act as a stimulus for the further development of the profession."

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I agree with you. I do not disagree with you. I have been saying that for years. As a matter of fact, the first time I said that was in 1977, and I was attacked by the Press for making that statement at the time. About six years ago, before I was a Member of Parliament, I put forward that view, I recall, at a public meeting, at Quaker's Road, just below Government House, and the Press, itself, attacked me for putting forward the idea of a Press Council, which would be run by they themselves, but might attract support from organisations, but under the legislation that frees them from any interference by any governmental institution.

Thank you very much, Sir, but please let us leave the Press alone.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It is really remarkable that the attack on the Press relating to this Resolution was started by the honourable Member's colleagues. I am very glad to see that there is such a general agreement as to the virtues and vices of the Press, not only in Barbados, but worldwide. We also agree that in countries like Barbados, it is important that we have to have from more resources allocated to training by the proprietors of the Press, and we also have to have Government allocate more resources to training.

Now, Sir, as usual, the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, in his zeal to ride on any hobby-horse which he thinks will make him popular manages in the course of this debate to bring in the Carlisle Club. There can be no doubt about it, the Barbados Labour Party as long ago as 1957 passed laws preventing discrimination in Barbados. When the same people, who allegedly now run the Carlisle, ran a Club in Maxwell Coast Road called the Banana Boat, where was the honourable Member objecting on the ground of nuisance and objecting on the ground of discrimination? Where was the honourable Member? There is no discrimination, as far as I understand it now; there is class prejudice; there is a lot of class prejudice going around.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, that is a dead issue in Barbados today. The laws are on the books and, thank God, the Commissioner of Police, who nobody can

suggest that anybody prevents the Commissioner of Police from carrying out his duties, ...

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You had better not talk about appointment, Sir, because you will find that the Commissioner was appointed faster than many people. Look you forgot Pedro Welch? Have you forgotten how long Pedro Welch was acting as Labour Officer and Barrow said that he abolished the post

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: the honourable Member may be misleading this House. The *sotto voce* remark applies to any Government, all Governments. The fact that they did not wish to appoint the Commissioner is a fact. If he is able to prove that my Government did a similar thing, I equally condemn that, but they did not wish to appoint the present Commissioner of Police.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please. No point of order.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The laws are very clear, and I am well satisfied that the Commissioner of Police has ample powers, in the event of there being breach of the law, to have the breakers of the law before the respective court. The Liquor Licences Act in Barbados has stood the test of time. All those who think that the word "club" can be used for an opportunity and a device to carry on prejudiced institutions in Barbados, should understand that the police have full powers to determine whether it is a phoney club or a real club, and that the Liquor Licencing laws of Barbados state very clearly that if you have a club it must be run on a genuine non-discriminatory basis.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry but this is the end of the debate.

The question that Head 38 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
4.20 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1982-83 No. 23

A Resolution for the sum of \$217,887 was called.

Head 80 - Ministry of Information and Culture.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Head stand part.

I know that honourable Members will be very pleased to know that the Post Office site is now a hive of great activity once again. The situation with respect to the construction of the General Post Office is one which will develop in the near future into what one may well regard as the greatest legal battle to take place in Barbados. All I can say at this stage is that the Government has stated its position very carefully.

We are satisfied that the Government hired professional officers whose qualifications and record would suggest that they are competent. The contract was awarded, in accordance with the tenders procedure, to a company which was an international company, in accordance with the international procedures - the A. R. I. B. A. contract, I believe - the administration of the contract was carried out in accordance with the usual machinery, which Government has established where the contract is of a certain magnitude, namely, in addition to your architects and your consulting engineers you have a project management team and a resident engineer or architect. All of that was in force.

Honourable Members would recognise that not only here, but worldwide, whenever you had a bid which came in prior to 1979 and which was projected to be finished after 1980, not only in Barbados but in many other countries in the world, problems have arisen in respect of those contracts. I do not think that we are unique, or that this particular job is unique, in the fact that you have had difficulties in respect of this pre-1979 bid for a job to last post 1980.

Now, Sir, it would be most improper of me to anticipate the decisions of arbitrators who have been appointed in accordance with the contract. Arbitration proceedings are going along. I also wish to state very clearly that the Government has taken a policy decision, in respect of all those contracts where independent professional advisers are hired, that the Government will resolutely pursue all of the remedies available to it in the event of the independent professional advisers being found guilty of negligence. That is the position of this Government.

If you go out and you hire non-Government employees, you hire independent consultants, they are paid independent fees. If in the administration of their independent consultancy it is proven that the laws of negligence have been broken, this Government will rigorously pursue its claims and its remedies.

I am not in a position - I will not; I cannot, it would be most improper for me - to pontificate or to pronounce upon the merits or demerits of any claims of the Government, the architect or otherwise. I will not

pronounce on that, that matter is *sub judice* in the proper legal sense, because the arbitration notice has been served, the arbitrators have been appointed, and, under the Arbitration Act 1950 of the Laws of Barbados, the arbitrator has the powers of a High Court judge; so arbitration is going on.

I only want to assure honourable Members that the contractors brought a case to stop the arbitration on the ground that their contract was not validly determined. The Government resisted that, the Supreme Court of Barbados held that all issues were the subject of arbitration, and that is the position, so that round one in the courts has taken place.

The finishing of the contract is of importance. Again, I wish to state that when this contract was being done, I was personally present when the question arose at the Planning and Priorities Committee as to whether MTW was competent to do a job of this magnitude or not. I wish to state that we were advised then by MTW that it did not regard itself as being competent to do a job of the magnitude of the Post Office. They said then that it would have taken up too much of its resources in personnel equipment, they said then that it was a very large job and it involved piling.

4.30 p.m.

And this is not surprising, because jobs of that magnitude, notwithstanding the mouthings of the Leader of the Opposition, had long since been sent out to tender by the previous regime. That had long been done. As a matter of fact, the last time a major job was done by MTW must have been the old terminal building; not the new one, the old one at the airport. The National Insurance building certainly was not built by MTW.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No, the National Insurance Building was not. I think the Financial Building was probably the last. The National Insurance Building was done by Clarence Johnson — it was never sent out. I remember these things very clearly.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The Stow Primary? That is a half dead school.

So, Sir, it is fairly clear, that, for a long period of time, with jobs of a certain magnitude it was decided that it was better to put them up for competitive tenders. That is a fact. You see, the only major project of any significance, of a high visibility, that really took place during the course of the Democratic Labour Party was the National Insurance Building. Of all the 15 years, that is the only one you can look at and see something, so it is not surprising that MTW did not regard itself as competent.

We hope that the Post Office will be finished, and the Government is determined that it will be finished. We hope that good industrial relations will exist on the project. This is an area that I am very interesting in, the area of construction, for the simple reason that one of the first jobs I had ever had in my life was working in construction, so I am well aware of construction. I have done more arbitrations in relation to construction disputes than many people.

It is very unusual in large jobs in countries, particularly if they have to go over a longer period than a year, not to have some friction in the execution of the job. That is common. I remember in the 1950s, when they were building the Caribbee Hotel, which was a big building for Barbados in those days, that ended up in arbitration. When we were building the University, that ended up in arbitration. When they were building at the Court, that ended up in arbitration. At the airport, during our time when we were building, that ended up in arbitration. That arbitration is still going on over one segment of the contract.

Apparently, International Contractors, architects and engineers seem to feel that during the course of the construction of a building, there will almost certainly end up in arbitration. That is no big thing, it happens here and it happens all over the world; but as an employer, as the person who ultimately has to pay, what we are interested in, is the completion of the building.

I am very glad that, notwithstanding the gloom preached by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central; notwithstanding the gloom, notwithstanding his prognostications of disaster, the Cement Plant, Heywoods, the Post Office, the Spring Garden Road, St. Barnabas Road, Oistins, the polyclinics, all of them will be done in this financial year.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: This financial year Oistins will be done.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The Spring Garden Road, too; both sections. You do not enjoy the drive going down there? You really do not enjoy the drive? Look at that view. Are you not proud of being a Barbadian when you can drive down there?

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order please, this is not in a constituency.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The campaign has not started yet. You wait, we will deal with that.

Anyway, Sir, I will give the House the assurance that we are going to complete all these projects; if not all in this year, in the next Sir, and we will have the money to complete them.

Thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I really regret that the honourable Member, in his exuberance in the last five minutes, robbed us of the high point of the conclusion of a rather interesting and rational presentation on the difficulties which Governments, especially in developing countries, suffer on the question of international contracts. I think, therefore, that I have to deal with the last five minutes first, because it is very important.

The prognostications of disaster and doom were well placed, Sir. What he forgot to add in that burst of crescendo was that these projects that he is describing, saw the light of day, not yesterday, not day before, but all the way back in the 1970s.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: On a point of order. I think the honourable Member could at least explain why it is they were not brought to fruition in the 1970s.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Of course, they were. We had no problem. I thought that particular debate was over.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I thought so, too. Let us deal with the Post Office.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, we will deal with the Post Office, but you know how it is Sir, if you put two eddoes into one side of the scale, you have to let at least a potato come to the other side of the scale. You cannot let him do all.

Mr. Chairman, I will not be too long on this. The Spring Garden Road, I think we are all agreed.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am sorry, not the Spring Garden Road, the Post Office.

I do not think that the Post Office is something that the honourable Member would wish to take credit for, but I will deal with that in a minute. The other projects which he outlined, the Saric — 6, the South African situation, the Cement Plant and the St. Barnabas Road, these are things which I do not believe that the Barbados Labour Party is going to go to the population and say, "Look what we have done." That is what you were claiming credit for in the last election. You cannot

come back in the next election and be still working on the same projects, projects which we conceived.

The honourable Member for St. Michael North and the right honourable Member for St. John and I walked through that area, which is now described as Spring Garden, looking for

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member's father.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We did all of this before.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This is the whole point. To get up in here and talk about these things should be a moment of embarrassment. The only thing that Government can lay claim to is the Central Bank, which you will build for \$78 million when that time comes, and we want to make the point that when he says that the only thing that can be seen is the National Insurance Building, we admit that whenever the economic situation reached the point where we had to pay more attention to the people than to building, we paid more attention to the people.

4.40 p.m.

That is the difference between us and you. We see people as ends in themselves. We do not see people as a means to an end, as you do. We see people as ends in themselves, and, therefore, we would rather build houses than put up pretty buildings. We will not lie to the people and tell them that we are going to give them 1 000 houses a year — and then say that we included all the private housing. We will not do that sort of thing. We will not allow ourselves to be in a situation in which you find yourselves this year, in which you started less houses than you started when you were the Barbados Labour Party the first time.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, I submit that the honourable Member is not speaking to the Resolution.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is the point I am trying to get across to the honourable Member.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am responding to the honourable Member who introduced the Resolution. Whatever he spoke on, that is what I am speaking on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No. I will have to deal with that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not understand why he should be given a racehorse and I should be given a jack-ass to ride. He spoke on this Resolution and went

far and wide, and now my friend, the honourable Member for Christ Church West, fearful that I may tread on his toes, is drawing to Your Honour's attention that I am not speaking to the Resolution. Let me speak to the Resolution, the Post Office. Let us speak about the Resolution so that the honourable Member for St. James North would not be able to speak about houses.

On the Resolution concerning the Post Office, I believe that the explanation given by the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is acceptable on the face of it, and because the matter is now before the arbitrators, in the time honoured tradition of Parliament there are certain aspects of the matter to which we will not refer. We feel, however, that the inordinate length of time which it has taken between the time of the dispute and the return of activity has not been satisfactorily explained by the Government and, more particularly, by the Ministry that claims responsibility for the administration of this project. We feel that, in the case of a project where a decision has to be made to go to arbitration, it is incumbent, in terms of the cost of the project, in terms of the influence which the project will have on the economic situation in the country, that these are decisions which have to be made expeditiously, and we are charging that the delay, the dilly-dallying in the decision making in that regard, has led not only to an increase in the cost of the project, but to a lagging in the economic activity which should normally have flowed out of that particular project.

I want to go a step further. I want to say that I believe that in the same way in dealings with the Industrial Development Corporation it became necessary to impose a clause in arrangements which industrialists coming into Barbados have to make with the corporation and hence with the people of Barbados, where they have to make a written commitment to the principle of unionism, that it may become necessary where we are employing persons from outside of Barbados as contractors to have placed in the contract, notwithstanding the laws of Barbados as they now stand, that any evidence or racial discrimination on the site would be *prima facie* a breach of contract. I seem to recall that, constantly on that particular Post Office site, there was bickering and evidence of a different point of view in terms of how people should be regarded by the Barbadians who work on the site and those who came from elsewhere.

We have not had a full scale debate on the Cement Plant work — and I have no doubt that in due course we will have one — but it must fall very heavily on the breast of every Barbadian who reads that a foreign contractor can feel able to use guard dogs on a work site during the course of the day. I do not feel comfortable about it as a Barbadian, and I am certain that no honourable Member sitting on that side feels comfortable about it.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member for St. James North asked in a *sotto voce*. "What is wrong with that?" I will tell you what is wrong with that. When you have people with the name of De Graffe and other South African sounding names and Portuguese, that have the worst record in the world in human rights — the Portuguese that stand second only to the Boers — and when you have the Boer, and the Portuguese type working on a site in Barbados, you are required to pay extra special attention to what goes on on that site. It is incumbent on the Government of Barbados, where 90 percent of the people are black, to make absolutely certain not only that there is no racial discrimination on any site, but that there does not appear to be racial discrimination on any site.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Post Office site.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The situation that we hear about every day on sites, like this Post Office site and the one in St. Lucy, can give us no cause for comfort. The honourable Member for St. Lucy, I am sure, does not share some of the casual attitudes which are being displayed by some of his colleagues, who might raise the question as to what is wrong with having guard dogs. It seems to me that it is only a matter of time before we have them at the General Post Office.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But nobody ever accused me of giving them rabies if I bite them. The honourable Member for St. James North is not going to interfere with me.

The point I am making is that we are going to have to include, as part of the terms and conditions of our bringing these persons, something in the contracts to deal with those, who have become accustomed to working in places that are perhaps less developed, let me say, than in Barbados, those places where contractors are hired equally for their capacity to follow the drawings and do the work as for their capacity to get along with the natives, or, conversely, to deal with the natives.

The evidence is strong, it is a lot, and it is clear, that a number of constructing firms that operate on the international scene have reeked havoc in many of the African countries, where they have gone to complete such projects as the Post Office and the cement works, and it is a matter of grave concern to me and to my political party, and I believe to the vast majority of people of Barbados, that constantly, foreign people — and I do not include Caribbean people when I talk about foreign people here — with racial prejudices as part of their make-up are coming to our countries, they are getting work permits comfortably and easily — for example, the people

at Saric — 6 have been able to get large numbers of work permits in very easy times, but I am not going to deal with that today — they have been able to come into our country and have been able to ill-treat our workers and to pay scant respect even to our officials.

I have reason to believe that the project manager on the site in St. Lucy has been ill-treated by

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am using it as an example of what happened on the Post Office site, Mr. Chairman. I am entitled to demonstrate that what happens on the Post Office site, which you will recall was the scene and the site of a number of disputes similar to the ones which are going on in St. Lucy.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West has to wait until he becomes the Speaker to direct affairs in here. He cannot do it from the back. I believe in your capacity to do that, Sir.

I am saying that the people who have been working on that site have been treating the project manager with scant respect. They have not been treating him in a manner that we would expect our project managers to be treated in these matters.

I consider it, for example, an insult to the people of Barbados that the Chief Immigration Officer has to go on the site of any works in Barbados. The Chief Immigration Officer has no right having to journey up to St. Lucy to investigate a case of racial discrimination — and that has happened in this country, where a manager, from a Portuguese or South African extract, says to another of his colleagues that the company vehicle is not to carry any blacks at any time in this Barbados. That is a fact.
4.50 p.m.

The honourable Member is saying that the Union has a responsibility. I am saying that the honourable Member's responsibility supersedes the Union's responsibility. I am saying that the honourable Member and his colleague hold the Government in trust for the rest of us, and I am saying that they have a higher responsibility than any union; and if in their opinion the union is not fulfilling its role, they have a duty to step in in these areas.

I am very pleased to see that the whole Cabinet decided to take a trip up there, but I hope that the Cabinet did not fall into the fallacy of assuming that when they arrived on the scene, they would find the conditions the same as when they are not on the scene. These people are past masters in the art of trickery, and they have tricked blacks before; and if we are not careful, they would trick black people again.

They are those in this country who believe that every time you open your mouth and you use the word 'black' or 'white', you are a racist. If, Mr. Chairman, defence of black "negrotude" or whatever you call it, in Barbados makes me a racist, then that is the position I hold. But I will make no apology for the fact that I will never rest comfortably, in or out of public life, to see anybody come from anywhere outside of Barbados and ill-treat black Barbadians, or, for that matter, white Barbadians, on a site like the Post Office site, or any other site.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Enough on the General Post Office. Your time.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I have a few things to say on the Spring Garden Project, when the time comes in the next Head.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, under this Resolution a great deal of debate has gone on about the conditions of work at the Post Office site and at the Saric-6 site, and I believe that, in as much as I was Minister responsible for Labour at the time when most of the incidents to which honourable Members referred would have taken place, I owe it to the House to at least let honourable Members know that the Ministry of Labour has not been negligent, or sleeping, during the course of these alleged occurrences.

If honourable Members had access to the files that deal with the subject relating to the investigation of work sites, the Post Office site or otherwise, they would have been aware that I directed the Labour Department, in the strongest possible terms, to go down there and investigate the allegations that were constantly being heard. As a matter of fact, Sir, when the Labour Department officials came back with the report, I further castigated them for what I regarded as a very lame account of some of the things that were alleged to have been transpiring.

I think, Sir, we need not get emotional on this issue. On the question of racial attitudes, there is enough evidence to indicate that some of the people on the work site, the expatriates on the work site, have been careless with their language in some cases. But I believe that the Ministry of Labour, acting to the extent of our capacity at the time, let it be fully understood that the Government of Barbados was not going to be in a position to tolerate any situation that developed, which could be tantamount to disregard to the, let me call it, ethnicity, Sir, of our people.

I think Sir, that we have to fully bear in mind that when you are dealing with people who are not fluent in language, sometimes things happen which, because of the difficulty in communications, get misconstrued.

I can remember an incident, Sir, which took place at one of these construction sites, in particular Saric-6, where an allegation was made about a gentleman from Austria, I believe he came from that country, kicking one of the workers. I directed the factory inspectorate to go on the site and get a full account of what transpired, and when we investigated it, the facts that emerged did not in any way at all correlate with the emotional kinds of things that people were hearing.

All accounts indicated that the gentleman, who was alleged to have been abused, was given an assignment to taut the bolts that hold up the steel superstructures and they were several stories up. Of course, you would understand, Sir, that there are engineering specifications which require that these bolts be taut to specific points, they have to be tightened to a particular engineering specification. The machine which was being used to do this is an automatic tauting machine; it has three settings on it. The workman was given instructions about which particular taut position to employ. But, because it was more comfortable to use the machine at a different setting he changed the setting as soon as the supervisor was no longer present, and he was caught on two separate occasions tightening up those bolts at that particular altitude, with all the implications that that would have on the strength of the building over time at the wrong specification. And having been warned on more than one occasion, this supervisor walked away and went to the office and brought back a letter and handed it to him. He thought it was a letter of dismissal, and he kicked the supervisor in his ribs, and ran him down from the fourth floor to the basement floor with a piece of pipe. The man found refuge in a car that was waiting at the base of the stairs.

Now, these, are not the details that come out to the public, but when we investigated it, these were the facts of the case as our inspectors were able to ascertain. But nonetheless, it is a very intriguing and exciting story to hear, that a white man kicked a black man on a particular site.

But, Sir, if the public is interested in knowing how conditions are at Saric - 6 all they need to do is take note of the inputs from the Barbados Workers Union. The Barbados Workers Union has always been fairly close to that situation, and in as much as you have not heard any screaming from the union, it is fairly safe to conclude that much of what is heard about the work site is not anything of any essence. Otherwise, the union would obviously take a strong position on it, and you can trust, I am sure that if any of these things are discovered, the various Ministers that occupy the portfolios of Labour and Immigration, and men on both sides, are sensitive enough to this question of race to stand up and make a clear and unequivocal statement about what is acceptable

and unacceptable conduct in Barbados, particularly in the context of race.

5.00 p.m.

I do not think any of us are so obsequious and so condescending so far as the white race is concerned as to put our tails between our legs and slink away. I believe most of us, if not all of us, are capable of taking a very strong stand whenever the question of race emerges in this society. I, for one, have no intentions at any time of compromising on racial issues.

I lived through the civil rights disturbances in the United States, so I believe I am a little bit more sensitive and radical in these areas than perhaps some of the Members in this Chamber, because I know what racial discrimination is all about, and that is why I take such a strong and uncompromising stand on the question of South Africa. I have seen black people kicked around in streets, I have seen black men castrated in the United States because they happened to be black and looked out of the corner of their eyes at a white woman. All that transpired in my time in the United States, so I do not bring any soft feelings to this question of race.

I do not think it is useful for us to work up ourselves over these matters. I believe it is safe enough to say that the work sites in Barbados are plagued sometimes with tension, but the tensions are not of such a nature as to warrant politicians getting themselves out of sorts without first ascertaining what the genuine facts of the situation happen to be.

Now, Sir, on the question of guard dogs, I know again that is an emotional issue, but there is a sentry service being offered in Barbados which includes the use of canines, and if a work site employs a security service that also includes a guard dog, I do not know that that is in itself reason for us to get upset. If the guard dogs are used, like Bull Connors used to use his guard dogs in the United States, to bite black people, that is another matter. But if guard dogs are used to patrol work sites where security personnel have to be walking around there at night by themselves I see nothing wrong with that.

A man got his throat cut up at Roberts Manufacturing last week, a security guard, and all he had was a piece of stick in his hand. Perhaps if he had a guard dog with him on that duty he would have been still alive today. If I were a security guard and I had the option to have my trusted canine by my side or to go out there with a piece of rose wood in my hand, I would carry along my trusted canine.

You have to question what is the purpose of the dog, and I do not believe that the honourable Members on that side are actually saying that this Government

would sit down and countenance a bad situation where an expatriate board of engineers came here and bought security dogs to bite the workers. I do not believe that that is a serious assertion from that side, I do not really believe that.

Aside

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: It is not only illegal. Even if there were no Statute, even if there were no law on the books, I do not think that anybody is saying, or seriously believing, that we over here are capable of allowing that to happen. As a matter of fact, I do not even believe that the Members on that side are capable of allowing something like that to happen.

So we have to be careful when we are talking about these matters that we do not inflame the passions of the public unduly. Because people are not able to ascertain these things for themselves and they have to rely almost exclusively on what they hear through the media, or words from the mouths of people whom they trust or in whom they have confidence, we have a responsibility when debating these matters to make sure that the level of debate is always of a standard that would inform without necessarily inflaming. There is a time when we need to inform and to inflame, and I believe when that time comes, the Barbados Labour Party Government is perfectly capable of putting that combination together.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I am very glad that the honourable Minister has spoken on the question of racial overtones on Government contracts and has cleared the air of some of the rumours which have been circulating. It is obvious that that sort of allegation is apt to stir up emotions rather than objective analysis. It is the sort of subject on which, if you speak on it rather flippantly, people will no doubt give you plaudits, because I think we are going through a period in international affairs today, in the world as a whole, where the issue of race and colour is still an electrifying one. It will take us some time before people recognise that the colour of a man's skin is irrelevant as to his worth.

What I want to say on the Post Office, however, is that I think the Government is right to press on with this project. The reasons for the delay are many. There are some, however, that I think one has to be conscious of and to watch in the future.

I want to begin really with the statement that it has become perhaps a little too prevalent for some contractors to under bid on a job, to produce the lowest tender, and, sometimes, for the awarding authorities to think that it is in the best interest of the project or of the country to award the tender to this person. That is not always correct. I believe that this contract is perhaps one such example where the tender was initially probably too low, and as

a result, when the problems set in, the contractors found themselves in a situation from which they would wish to recoup their losses.

We must remember, too, that this contract was awarded at the time when there was a construction boom in Barbados. It is one of the points which is, to some extent, to the credit of the Government, and yet we can see that, because there was this construction boom, the labour shortage would have affected an overrun in the cost of the project. There is no doubt that during this period prior to the determination, there would have been problems in recruiting skilled workmen. In fact, between 1978 and 1980, this country went through a stage where the cost of labour rose considerably very quickly on the project, and we found ourselves without skilled workmen, and although we regret the overruns that would have occurred, I think that the Government should emphasise the point that this shortage of skilled labour resulted from the fact that the economy was moving, and we were able to reduce unemployment considerably.

One of the other causes for the delay on the project and the problems which occurred there was the cement shortage.

Aside

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: It is said there was no cement shortage, but there have been times when we were not getting — I think, Mr. Chairman, you can look and see, and you know that — when the boats were not all coming on time. Of course, this job was a job in which the cement was not only coming from Cuba, but also from Columbia, because of the nature of the final precast, the sort of form you wanted. And if a contractor agrees that he is going to give a certain standard and he agrees that he has to have consistency as it is a cement finish, then he must organise his position so that he can get that cement over the whole period of time — and on that job, both cement from Cuba and Colombia was being used.

5.10 p.m.

One of the allegations is that the Colombian supply was not as consistent as it ought to have been, and, in fact, when the Colombian supply was in, it was not always used on this project, it was also being used on the Polytechnic Project, and, therefore, the contractors would have found themselves in a position where at times they may have Cuban cement, but not the Colombian cement, for the particular area on which they were working at the time.

There were also other reasons for delay caused by the weather. We went through a period of some inclemency of the weather. I think that, under Section 23 of the contract, inclement weather of an unreasonable type is good ground for an extension, and those would have been the sort of problems there.

I do not recall any of the problems on the site in relation to labour having anything to do with the colour of peoples' skin. From my memory of it, the problem there on labour was always a question of adequate wages for the worker, but it had nothing at all to do with racial prejudice. I am not one to condone racism in any form, but I do not think it is fair to these particular contractors to characterise the problem which occurred there in the labour field as relating at all to anything to do with racism. Certainly you can castigate these contractors on any other thing, but not on that score – and I am not the person who would want to be defending anybody who is guilty of racism in any form at all.

I have always understood, Mr. Chairman, that Government contracts of this nature are subject to the labour contract clauses and, therefore, there must be certain standards observed in relation to the level of wages, even if the persons are not unionised, and they must conform to the other laws of Barbados in relation to their conduct on the job, like showing racial prejudice to people on the job.

I cannot recall whether the specific contract document in this case had in that particular clause, but I am sure that the tender document which would form part of the overall contract document, laid down as a condition of the award of this contract and tendering that the persons must comply with the clauses and regulations. Certainly, when I was in the Ministry of the Attorney General, every officer, who dealt with a contract in which the Government was entering, ensured that there was that position.

So my friend, the honourable Member for St. Michael West, can be assured that there is already enough legislation on the Statute Book to deal with that situation and that the Government would be justified in going to arbitration, or even terminating a contract, if the material part of the contract arrangements is not being honoured by the contractor at the time; and whilst we cannot allege this in relation to this particular contract, yet I am sure that all Government contracts, as a matter of policy, both in relation to the last Government and in this Government, contained such clauses and regulations.

Whether there are policed is a different matter. That Mr. Chairman might involve us in a long discussion about whether there is adequate staff provided to the Ministry of Labour for policing these particular laws, but, certainly, the defects, if any, do not exist in the provisions in the contractual documents. And just as the former

Minister of Labour wanted to clear his desk, let me say that this contract came up whilst I was Attorney-General, and I am satisfied that there was adequate protection in there to deal with any of the eventualities which have been outlined. Not the contract of the Cement Plant, I cannot remember seeing that final contract, but certainly this one has the provisions in it.

Mr. Chairman, all countries which depend on outside labour and expertise are subjected to some degree of pressure. Happily, the Post Office is being built with our own money and from our own resources, and there is no matching foreign fund to look after the foreign exchange aspect of it. When we are using money from international organisations and foreign sources, the pressure is even much greater, because, invariably, the national of one of the donor countries or one of the persons who is a member of the international organisation, has been awarded a contract.

I think the former Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, will tell you that we have had the position where on these sorts of contracts, the key person, the contractor, has run not only to the ambassador, but to a congressman, and have the gumption to summon my ambassador, the Ambassador at Washington, to discuss the matter with a Congressman and to threaten that, otherwise, they would black-ball Barbados in the international organisation.

Mr. Chairman, we have had the threat that even the legal advisors of some of the contractors believe that they have the right to come and talk to the Prime Minister about a problem that has occurred on a contract of this nature, and although we are a small country, we have to tell these people where to get off. There is no way that those lawyers could go to the smallest state in the United States, Rhode Island, for instance, and see the Attorney-General, far less talk to the Governor, but yet they have the gumption, which unfortunately, seems to have been encouraged in the past, to believe that they have the right to see a Minister of Government.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Will my friends assure me that this has never been encouraged. They suffered from the same thing then.

But they have the gumption to want to raise this on the international level. I had to say to one contractor and to his congressman that if they take up the matter and raise it at the White House and at Congress on Capital Hill, I will make sure that we raise it in the United Nations as well, and at all of the proper places, and that I would make sure that they would be black-balled out of every international contract that was ever awarded to them.

My friend, the honourable Member for St. Michael South, and the honourable Member for St. Michael North have assured me that their Administration suffered from the same problem. It is a problem that I do not believe that the country at large recognises, the pressures that they want to put on small states such as ours. We have established an arbitration procedure in the contract. At times we have even agreed to arbitrate with somebody who is not even a Caribbean person, and, despite that, the pressure has continued.

What I want to say to the Government is that the cost of arbitration is becoming too expensive. No longer can we find that arbitration is as swift, or as cheap a process as the courts of Barbados and somehow we are going to have in these contracts to tell people that we have a judiciary that is second to none throughout the world. There is no reason why the dispute should not be subjected to the normal law courts procedure, where they have a right to appeal right up to the Privy Council. Too many of them bind us into arbitration, then they want to choose the arbitrator, who knows nothing of local conditions in the Caribbean, and we find ourselves saddled with high cost, and high bills of arbitration as well.

That is another aspect of it that we must watch in the future, and I believe that the Governments in the Caribbean must use their joint muscle with the international lending agencies and bilateral organisations to tell them that, on a contract such as this, there is no reason why they should not be subjected to the normal laws of the country, including the courts of the country.

I hope that I will not see any of the problems that I had to be countering and arguing against when I was A.G. In fact, Mr. Chairman, at one stage we were re-drafting the contracts to assert the real independence of Barbados, in economic and other terms, in relation to these matters. Because once you are small and you are in with an international contractor, the whole muscle of his Government is going to be used against you, including the threat of cutting off aid, including the threat of black-balling you in the World Bank or the IDB or something of the sort, and we have to tell some of the ambassadors that they are here to represent their country, but they have no right, although they can represent their nationals, to be pointing down at us on matters and trying to tell Ministers things, subjecting them to pressure.

In these circumstances, I never used to see them, Mr. Chairman, and I am sure I know the then Minister of Health, now the Minister of Education, has a very hot tongue, and it was not easy to get near her. At least I might try to put it in some diplomatic language, but she called a spade a spade in no uncertain language, and she said she would cuss them, and sometimes that is exactly what you have to do on such contracts.

The honourable Member asked about the delay that occurred between termination and resumption of work. Obviously, there would have been a period during which the consultants would have to reassess the work which had been done. I believe in this instance the Government insisted that they should go out to tender. That took time. The Government obviously do not want to be attacked on the basis that they were giving some friend some contract, or the easy rumours that every Barbadian likes to say about a man in politics, particularly if you are a Minister, that you are taking graft or you are having some rake back. So they did the decent thing and went out to tender. That would take time, Mr. Chairman, and they did that on this particular contract.

I do not believe that the time is unreasonable, given the circumstances which have occurred. I hope that in the anticipated 18 months for this contract, the contractors will perform within the time, particularly now that the cost of construction has begun to fall, even although not as great as I would like to see. There is no doubt that, with a recession in the world, contractors are all bidding, sometimes dangerously low, and sometimes without any real profit, barely the cost, in order to keep their work force going, and I hope that this contractor will therefore perform in time and in accordance with the contract which has been awarded to him.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if lawyers' fees are coming down in these times of recession.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak on this matter very briefly, and I would like to say first of all, it is not said very often, that this country has an excellent postal service as far as I am concerned, and that we should from time to time recognise that it performs excellently under sometimes adverse conditions, particularly those postmen and postwomen out there — who deliver the mail, whether it rains or not.

I would also like to say that it was right, I believe, that this project should be commenced and that it should continue. We would all wish to see it completed in the shortest possible time. However we look at it, we cannot conceal the fact, nor can we wish it away, that it was part of the overall project for the regeneration of the landscape of this country, the environment of the greater Bridgetown area in particular, and also for the improvement of the facilities within Parliament, that this particular project was commenced.

I remember the particular meeting of the Cabinet itself, I believe it was at Culloiden Farm, in which we had a presentation of the projects for this particular construction project. We deeply regret that it has taken this long period of time for it to get even near to completion, and

we sincerely hope that it can be completed without too much further delay.

Of course the Government itself cannot escape some blame for bunching all of its construction projects together and thereby helping to push up not only the cost of construction, but also, in terms of the friction that developed within the labour force, that is no doubt due to certain political manoeuvrings on the part of the Government. I believe even the Government itself recognises this now, and that was part of the problem.

Mr. Chairman, I think that all of those things are recognised. When they were said at the time, the Government, in its exuberance, paid very little attention to the criticisms; but when those criticisms proved to be very accurate, we are now in this position that we are having all of these problems, not only in terms of the escalation of the cost for the projects, but also in terms of the labour problems that have resulted, and I believe all members of the Government will now admit that this is a matter which has caused concern to the people of this country.

It has certainly caused concern to the Opposition, and all these labour problems are taking place on construction sites. If it was one site, we would see what exactly is going on, but when on site after site you are having these major disruptions and these major problems in labour, we have got to examine exactly what is going on. There were problems down there on that Post Office site. There were problems on the fisheries project in Oistins.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Why you don't come up there and buy a grog?)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: You may know more about buying a grog from the rum shop. That may be your politics up there.

There are problems at the Heywoods site and there are problems on the Arawak project down there, so much so that I believe you will now take these problems seriously.

It took the International Monetary Fund to come and tell you that you must do something about these labour problems. I believe all members of the Government, who know about it, will admit that the International Monetary Fund has expressed considerable concern about the problems in this particular area and have admonished and urged the Government of Barbados to take proper steps.

(I am right, isn't it so? or, you are Minister of Transport, you are not labour anymore.....) The Inter-

national Monetary Fund has drawn the attention of the Government.....

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, the honourable Member is making comments about what the International Monetary Fund has reported to have said. I will draw his attention to the Ministry of Labour's White Paper on industrial relations and that would enlighten him about what the IMF said, what the Ministry of Labour did and what the Ministry of Labour does. He could educate himself a great deal if he read that paper.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Which paper?

Mr. V. L. JOHNSON: He must find out.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Just like the answer to my parliamentary question this morning, a kind of non-existent thing! Where is this White Paper on labour relations? It is not known to any Member of Parliament.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Post Office.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am saying that this is a very important and substantial point, because the Government itself has been told that it must take the initiative to try to re-establish a climate of mutual understanding between itself, management and labour, and we have been making that point from time to time. Now that the IMF have told you that, maybe you will take the matter seriously.

I am not certain what is happening in this country. There are so many things happening, so many rumours, so many things going wrong in all places — and we only hearing about these reports. I am now hearing about a "White Paper" on labour. I do not know. It is only when the problems come tumbling down that the Government apparently tumbles over itself to do something about it. We would like to know. There is this question of labour relations, which is directly relating to the problem we are dealing with, and we can try to sweep these things under the carpet, but we can only do that at our own peril.
5.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I merely wish to pay a tribute to the postal workers of this country, and to draw attention to the fact that we hope that Government will pay particular attention to the area of labour relations.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am glad that the person who started this debate, the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, brought up

the point about the Government's determination to make sure that any outside professionals that have been contracted to do the job, do their job properly, and do not allow any negligence to incur extra cost to Government projects.

It is well known in contracts like these that the two areas where contractors are always in a position to bargain for additional fees for any contract is in the area of extras and in the area of changes in specifications. In the case of the Post Office, the Post Office turned out to be a very tricky site from a foundation point of view, and therefore, it meant that the specifications for the foundation were changed on numerous occasions and that the projected cost for the substructure of this building was a lot higher than originally bargained for. That brings one to the point, whether or not the time is not right when Government, in awarding tenders for big structural projects like these, should not divide the tender into two portions, the tender for the substructure and the tender for the remainder of the building.

Now it is very easy, and most scientifically accurate, for quantities to be taken off for the superstructure and finishes of a building than from the substructure, and the only time that you incur additional cost in the superstructure and finishes is if there is a change in the specifications by the architects or the engineers as they go along. Therefore, it means that the professional people should also have their drawings and their specifications to the stage where their contract workers cannot lay blame saying that they are waiting for detailed specifications for any part of the construction and, therefore, have a right to put in costs for an extra.

As far as the substructure is concerned, I think a serious look will have to be taken at the way tenders are awarded for construction. Sir, in some of these big jobs the foundation proves to be very tricky unless it is one of the better sites in Barbados, and this certainly was one with the very tricky foundation, and the extras claimed by the contractor can well be in the area of the additional work in the foundation.

So in the future, Government should begin to have a look at awarding of contracts under the two heads, where the substructure would be given on a separate contract than the superstructure, this would allow for a better determination of projected cost of building, and your project team should have a better control over the substructure and the determination of cost at that stage.

Thank you.

The question that Head 80 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 84 – MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS

SUBHEAD 5 – SPRING GARDEN PROJECT

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that this project is one that we can all say is being completed with reasonable satisfaction. The slight delay that has arisen arose chiefly because of land acquisition problems and movement of properties.

I think it is true to say that, despite what the law says, and we have gone over this on many occasions, when we talk about the basis for compensation, it is all agreed that there is dissatisfaction with the law which sets out the basis for compensation at the existing use. Honourable Members will appreciate that despite this being the law, despite the fact that the law says that after the Section 5 notice, you can go to the court and remove anyone in possession of the land, and that their rights are shifted on to a money payment, it is impracticable in most cases for any government to do that.

We had difficulties in one section of the Spring Garden Road, the section by the corner, but I am happy to say that those difficulties have been resolved. I am not telling you that all difficulties of the land acquisition on these two roads have been resolved to the fullest satisfaction of everybody, but I know that they have been resolved to such an extent that they are not impeding the finish of the road. I understand the last piece of the round-about, the one integrated into the road going to the University, has now been paved.

So Spring Garden is basically and practically complete in accordance with the legal doctrine of practical completion. I think that the time overrun on that is about three or four months and that is a small time in relation to this type of contract.

In relation to St. Barnabas, we did have more problems with acquisitions there. But I think anybody who has gone and seen what has been done at St. Barnabas, seen how the houses have been moved and how they have been improved, will be satisfied that a genuine effort was made, despite the need to hustle and give exclusive possession, to accommodate the land owners.

However, this was done at a price. Whenever a land owner hold out on the Government in a project and the Government does not go to the court and get possession, the community has to pay the price of the delay. There is no question about that. All of us in here know that it is not an easy matter to reach an agreement with an owner as to his views on the price of the land. Everybody has had that example, so in explaining the slight delay, because these projects are relatively little delayed in relation to projects of this nature, I think land acquisition can be attributable to most of it.

5.40 p.m.

The other one, of course at the St. Barnabas Road, is that there was a traffic light which was originally designed, and it was felt, in view of the fact that that road is going to form part of a much larger road coming from the airport and connecting between Warrens and Haggatt Hall — and that is being designed now — that rather than having a traffic light junction at the Haggatt Hall end, to do a slight modification and have a roundabout with a much larger area. That incurred some time, but I think that is one delay for the better.

Now, Sir, in all of these construction projects, I think tribute should be paid to the fact that, as far as building roads is concerned, Barbados has three contractors who have been competing against international bids, under international rules, and we have been able to satisfy international organisations that we have the competence here in Barbados to carry out the building of roads of this magnitude. I think that is something we should be proud of.

One of the significant things about all the problems we have had in construction is that very few of those problems have been with the Barbadian contractors. That is a very significant thing, and I think we should say it, that despite all of this talk about the problems at Arawak Cement Company, few people have taken time off to note that there are probably seven contractors on the site down there and there are only problems with one. Did you ever hear of a problem with the contractor building the port? Did you ever hear of a problem with the contractor building the road? Did you ever hear of a problem with the contractor building the steel building? No, you do not hear of those problems, you hear about one problem.

Now, it is quite fashionable to say, as the Democratic Labour Party loves to say, you should not bunch your projects. There is no politician I know, and I have been in politics over 20 years, who would not like all the things done in his constituency at the same time and as fast as possible. Every politician wants to do as much as possible and as fast as possible. No politician likes to hear of the delay in the start of a construction job, so that when this Government came into power it was not a question of delaying, it was a question of proceeding at maximum speed.

But before you can proceed there must be money. You must be in a position to proceed with your plans, your contract documents. You must be in a position to proceed with your land acquisition, so I reject this charge of bunching. I categorically reject the charge of bunching, because a large number of the projects that we have done are projects which proceeded in accordance with a time table over which we had little control.

When we first went in, you had left the country bankrupt, so we did not have any money to start. We had to proceed to realign.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is not true).

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: What is not true? That is a matter for you, that is past history.

Secondly, those projects that we have with the international organisations.....

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You left the country bankrupt. You had 25 percent unemployment when we got in, you had no money in the Treasury, you had none of those things.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order please.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It took us time to get the economy going, and we spent the balance of 1976 and 1977, and up to the middle of 1978, to get it in high gear.

I categorically reject this charge of bunching, and we must argue it out, and I am not going to allow the honourable Members to make the allegation without my answering it. How can you tell me that I have been bunching projects when you had 15 years to build the Cement Plant? Why didn't you build it? You tell me why it is, in your leisurely period of 15 years, you did not build it. Tell me that. Why didn't you start it? Didn't you have the money? When did you enter into the agreement with the Trinidad Government to do it? Answer me those pertinent questions.

(A VOICE: What about the Central Bank building?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It will be built before the 15 years are out. Why didn't you build the Spring Garden Road? I reject this charge of bunching. Why didn't you build it? You say you walked down there and you surveyed it, why didn't you buy the land from Maggie Goodridge? Why didn't you make an agreement with Maggie Goodridge for the land? Tell me these things, answer me these questions. Why didn't you build the road in St. Barnabas? Why didn't you move the houses in St. Barnabas? Why didn't you build the polyclinic? Why didn't you build the polytechnic?

Mr. Chairman, I reject this charge of bunching, because in their leisurely period of 15 years — and I will tell you why they did not do it — they did not have the courage to believe the underlying structure of the economy could be boosted to the extent to afford the

financing of the magnitude of the projects which we have done. That is the position. It was a lack of will.

I am going to deal with the honourable Member for St. Michael West. He says that the Government is only thinking of buildings, they think of people. What do you put in buildings? Don't people occupy buildings? Don't people have to work to construct buildings? You see, the fundamental distinction between them and us is this, we believe that this economy is operating on a much higher plateau of economic activity in the last six years than they ever conceived that it was possible in Barbados to operate.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: The people are worse off).

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is a matter of opinion. I know that unemployment now is much lower than under your time. I know the price of fish now is much lower than under your time. I know the price of sweet potatoes and the price of chicken backs is lower. I know that they work for more money now and more of them are working.

You have never had two projects going at the same time, both of the magnitude, and complexity from the point of view of numbers of people employed, as the Cement Plant and Heywoods at the same time. You tell me when you had that. You never had that, so do not try fooling yourself and deluding the people. The people outside are not deluded, they are amazed! The only thing is, I can point to the fact of what I achieved, you can point only to what you thought of and did not achieve. We will see. I know that I can drive from Fontabelle down to the entrance to the university now along a smooth highway, your nylon roads. I know that I can see the whole of the sea, I know all of that.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I say this quite seriously, Sir, because we all show what we can now. Just think of it. Look at that seven year period, because it is 1976 to 1983. Six and seven are thirteen. It is not even seven years. All right, six and a half years. Just think of it. Look at the landscape of Barbados. I know it is a difficult thing, because so many things have happened that your brain can be cluttered up in the meantime, but look at what has happen in that six year period. Contrast it to all of that 15 years, twice as long, and see what you will see. Put them in a scale and weigh them. Look at the primary schools, look at the polyclinics, look at the polytechnics, look at the roads. Look at the Cement Plant, look at Heywoods, look at Oistins, look at all of these things and weigh them.

5.50 p.m.

Honourable Members must not go into this comparative approach, it is the wrong approach. I know that honourable Members feel good now.

The world is in an economic depression; there is no doubt about that. Barbados got caught, but I can tell you this — we still have enough flexibility, thank God, that we can still proceed, and we will be proceeding not that the pace, I concede this — I will make one concession to the honourable Members on the other side — we cannot proceed at the pace which we would like to proceed at, or at our accustomed pace — our accustomed pace is twice as fast as your pace — the international recession will not permit us to do that, but I just want to reject, Sir, and lay to rest forever any attempts by the honourable Members on the other side to say that we deliberately bunched projects for political purposes.

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

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a small contribution to this Resolution. I detected a sign of relief from the Minister because the Government are getting through with this project, because I am sure that we have had a lot to say in respect of this project, but there is one small point I want to make, and I think it is very important.

We have been trying to control the number of traffic accidents on the highway generally, and I believe up to now we have had seven fatal accidents, two of which include young children. The path of this particular highway cuts into a residential area and a very prominent building area. This area is known particularly by nearly all the residents of Barbados as a safe area for bathing because the beach is very low.

With this kind of expansion, you are going to find that traffic will inevitably increase, and there are going to be a large number of people not using much of the senses that are required on such a highway — it is new and probably exciting in a way. It appears to me that, in laying out that highway in its final stages, and particularly from the markings, there seems to be no special layout for pedestrians to cross from one side of the street to the other. I noticed that all the other markings are being done, but this seem to be absent.

I believe that it could be, not a lack of foresight, but an oversight on the Ministry's, or the contractors' part, and I think, Sir, that in the interest of the community, as well as those small children who use the beach, pedestrian crossings be marked.

I am not too sure when they are going to give us the promised beach facilities — I understand that they

are willing to do so, but I do not know if this will be part of that development — but I do not think that I could emphasise more strongly that there is need for the kind of pedestrian crossing that would prohibit any of the fatal accidents that are likely to occur if nothing is done.

I hope that the Minister will take that comment and act upon it, and make sure that the safety aspect of that particular road, in crossing from one side to the other to get to the beach, would be made available.

Thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to my colleague for raising that matter. I believe that the present Minister of Transport and Works has some familiarity with highway driving and highway travel and I think he will appreciate that there are amenities which have to be placed on highways if we are not to have fatal accidents arising out of very simple causes.

The question of how persons drive on a highway of that nature is one which must exercise, and I hope will exercise, the authorities, the Ministry and the relevant authorities, and I believe that the media in Barbados, the Government Information Service and the Police could be put to good use by way of a public training programme in the way that a road such as the Spring Garden Road, and to some extent the St. Barnabas Road, ought to be used.

The question of moving from one lane to another at high speed, the question of assuming that a car coming from one or the other direction is travelling at a speed less than in fact the speed at which it is travelling, resulting in a person coming from a minor road entering onto the highway too soon, only to discover too late that the oncoming vehicle is travelling at a much greater speed than he anticipated from a visual sighting; these are matters to which a number of drivers in Barbados would be unfamiliar, and I believe that the sooner we get into that kind of education for our drivers, the better it will be. I have already, using my past experience travelling on these kind of roads, noticed certain irregularities beginning to occur on that highway.

The second thing, Mr. Chairman, is the use of the highway, or the byways of the highway, by pedestrians and persons who are merely sight-seeing. I have noticed that there are people walking on the highway at nights in very dark clothing and, or, bareback, and, again, it is extremely difficult when the tarmac is dark and the road is not fully lit, in the manner in which highways are usually lit, to pick out persons at the side of the road.

I believe that, in this connection, the sooner that the lights can be attached, those lights at the beginning

of the entrance onto the highway, the better. At points along the way there ought to be additional lighting to avoid optical illusion which occurs if indeed one moves from light into darkness and vice versa. These are some housekeeping matters which have to be taken care of early; otherwise, we will have fatalities on that road long before we would like to see any.

6.00 p.m.

I think, Mr. Chairman, it would be ungracious not to recognise that, for all Barbados, the Spring Garden Highway is an acquisition of which all of us can be proud. I believe that both political parties, when all the shouting has died down, can share in the approbation, if there should be approbation, for this particular highway.

I would like to turn to the St. Barnabas Highway and suggest that whereas the Spring Garden Highway has some elements that would evoke genuine praise, the same cannot be said, so far, for the St. Barnabas highway. Started, apparently, with one plan, it seems to have been truncated into a different plan, for whereas at the beginning one anticipated a two-lane highway, it now seems as if we are in fact going to be getting a single lane highway, and the promise in the original St. Barnabas Highway has given way to something not very far removed from what we were accustomed to. I do not know what was the cause of this, but I have no doubt that it has resulted in some additional cost to the project, because of the change which had to occur in the plan.

I recall, to switch back to the round-about at the bottom of Free Hill, when I indicated that the rest of the highway was going faster than the plan for the round-about, I was taken to task by some honourable Members on the other side, but I think it has now occurred to both sides that the round-about at Free Hill came some considerable time after the total plan was supposed to have been approved.

I now wish to deal with some of the amorphous utterances by the honourable Deputy Prime Minister, who sought to suggest that Members on this side had accused their side of bunching, as he put it. I first wish to point out that there is a definitive statement by the officials from the World Bank, in the World Bank Report which accounts for a substantial amount of the economic difficulty currently in Barbados, by stating that the Government's decision to bunch a number of projects just prior to the elections must be responsible for some of the difficulties which we have now. They used the year 1980. The Central Bank of Barbados.....

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You say, "Don't mind them". The honourable Member is now saying to me, "Don't

mind them," but I recall him holding up a Central Bank Report in this Honourable Chamber and saying this is the Bible and it is in this Bible, the gospel according to this Bible, that they said that the bunching of projects resulted in the malaise in the economic system which we were experiencing.

The International Monetary Fund has recognised the same problem, but I do not myself wish to use the International Monetary Fund as any paragon of economic virtue in their pronouncements on developing countries' economies, because it is my contention that the experts in the International Monetary Fund are themselves devoid of the necessary expertise to understand the working of small open economies such as ours in Barbados, and, as a result, they expect that such economies should fit into the mould or the paradigm which they have established in Washington from time immemorial, and into which they fit all countries — big, medium and small.

It cannot be gainsaid by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister, or all the King's horses or all of the King's men, that economic problems in Barbados today can be laid substantially at the feet of the planners of the Barbados Labour Party. It cannot be gainsaid that they did attempt in 1980 to bunch the projects in such a way as to give the impression that a great amount of economic activity was going on, coupled with a sustained propaganda programme, including fake advertisements for masons and carpenters and the like, advertisements which suggested that the boom was so large that the people in Barbados would soon have to give way to foreigners coming in to assist in the projects — there were so many programmes. It was a short time after the elections, after the said honourable Member had said to all and sundry, "you never had it so good" that the truth came home to the people of this country.

These are incontrovertible facts which have been accepted by everybody but, which occasionally, the honourable Member and less frequently, the Prime Minister will seek to vitiate by the usual expressions of, "Look what we have done!" He said that we should never attempt to do comparative analysis. He says that when we do comparative analysis we will be found wanting, because he is able to rattle off, in rhythmic fashion, all of the projects they have done.

Mr. Chairman, the thing about that that amazes me is the fallacious capacity, which the honourable Member has demonstrated, to gain on the ins and the outs. When we discussed the state of the economy when the Democratic Labour Party first took over in this country, the honourable Member was the first to tell us that they started the Deep Water Harbour, they started the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, they started the National Insurance Scheme — they started all these schemes — and therefore the credit for them should go to the Barbados Labour Party, and then he comes and says to us that they

finished the Spring Garden Road, they finished the St. Barnabas Road, they finished.....

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: On a point of order, the honourable Member has misquoted me. Not "finished"; we drove the first stake in the ground to line out the road and to build the whole thing. Not finished — started and finished it!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well now I thought he had conceded.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has two minutes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I must confess that I have a little difficulty. It is either that I speak so fluently that I do not realise how the time flies, or it seems to me when I compare my input with that of my colleague, the honourable Member from over there, his clock seems to operate differently from mine, but, Sir, if I have two minutes — he always says I can come back, but you know I never get back

He started to talk about crisis, a matter which I believe that in his wildest dreams the honourable Member would not venture into. I never thought he would talk about crisis, but let me remind him that the planning, which led to what he described as the boom in 1977 and 1978, occurred in 1976 and 1975. Let me remind him that when he came into power in 1976, the economy of this country had an inflation rate of 2.8 per cent. Let him understand that the planning which went into the projects, which the honourable Member here will confirm, which were put into train in 1977 and 1978, was done in the Planning Committee during the time of the Democratic Labour Party. I do not have to go too far to remind the honourable Member that every single one of the projects that he has described, including the Oistins project, for which I negotiated the money from the EDF as a result of joining LOME, were done during the time of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Chairman, it is not a question of which of us will take the credit. It is a question of which proportion of the credit will accrue to each of us, because the honourable Member has the tendencies of a Shylock; he would want to take all and give me nothing; but I will share it with you. The 15 per cent which you are entitled to, you can have, and we will be generous and give you a little more. You, too, can share in the credit.

When the time comes for the opening of the Spring Garden road officially, the gallant and honourable Member for St. Michael West Central will no doubt preside over it, but it is the honourable Member for St. Michael East who has been able in each Ministry he goes to, notwithstanding the carrying of the Community Services with him, to grab hold of whatever he finds and deal with them.

Take the Ministry of Health, for example. The polyclinics were closed because the Minister told us they just could not be done. Now we hear that the honourable Member, who is being pilloried by his colleagues from time to time, has gone to the Ministry of Health — and the next thing you know, the polyclinics will open. Now one of them is competent and the other is incompetent. It is as simple as that.

My friend, the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central..... Don't hit you? All right, I will spare you on this occasion, but I do not wish you to join with the Deputy Prime Minister in this statement and histrionic approach to debating these issues, because the history is there. Check the files and you will see, from the moment of conception — and you know that the right-to-lifers say that the thing becomes alive from the moment of conception — these projects, using that analogy, were always alive; they were conceived by the Democratic Labour Party and, therefore, no attempt to abort them will allow you to say that they are not full and complete beings. These projects are Democratic Labour Party projects because they were fathered by the Democratic Labour Party. If you happen to be foster parent *pro tem* and you behave well, we will let you look after them and we will help you nurture them until we come back again to take our position as the rightful fathers of those projects.

But you know what? We have some new projects, which we are going to start as soon as we come back to power. We are not going to tell you about those projects because we know you have run out of ideas, you have not got a clue about where to turn next, we know the country is in peril.
6.10 p.m.

The final statement I want to make is this. I said that we are concerned about people as opposed to buildings. The honourable Member came up with a strange comment, that you put people in buildings. Well, you put people in Glendairy, you put people in the almshouses. The honourable Member is taking them out. He understands our philosophy; he really belongs over here, Sir. But the people in this country, during the time of 15 long years, are themselves testimony that they never had growth and development like that, and in the six years you have been in power, you have not only stunted their physical growth, you have blunted their psychological anticipations, you have blunted their aspirations, you have left them leaderless, they are in a state of powerless decay and they have a problem — they do not know whether they are coming or going, and, like the children of Israel, they are waiting to be led into the Promise Land once again. The Democratic Labour Party is willing, ready and able; as soon as you ring the bell, we will take you to the Promise Land.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, on this matter, as I said earlier, both sides can take pleasure in the opening of the Spring Garden Road. But I want to take this opportunity to turn the Minister's attention to one or two other things. I have been told that there is a vigorous road planning programme going on for Barbados, and I know that there are some consultants here planning a series of roads. I am wondering if part and parcel of the consultancy is the co-ordination of the activities of these utility services.

Now this is a very big problem in Barbados, in that whenever you sit down, it is just a matter of time before Water Works, or the Telephone Company, or the Natural Gas, or Light & Power take hold of the Spring Garden Road and start to work on it. Time is ripe for the Ministry of Communications & Works to have an active programme, or part of their office, co-ordinating the activities of those utility companies. Whatever development plan goes on....

(Aside)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I am just trying to find out what is happening. Whatever is happening, I am not satisfied that it is happening very well.

I will give you an idea of what I am talking about, Mr. Chairman. I have noticed recently that there is intolerance by the Barbados Light & Power to a lot of things. Say, for argument's sake, that they are doing some maintenance jobs that are not urgent. They would start the jobs at 7.30 in the morning, at the peak of traffic, and you will find that there are two and three lines of cars stretching for miles up the road.

The other morning I came down Government Hill and the traffic was backed up all the way past Chapel Gap, at 8.30 in the morning, tying up hundreds upon hundreds of man hours of productive time — because Light & Power could not wait until 8.30 to start a routine maintenance job, and there was a big truck in the road blocking up everything.

About four weeks ago, Light & Power turned off the current in the Wildey area for an entire day, meaning that places like International Playtex could not work that day. None of the industrial places could work that day. And when I enquired, it was because they decided that they were not going to pay three hours overtime to work crew the afternoon before, that they disrupted the whole productive sector of that area by turning off the current. They did that just to save three hours overtime.

If you take the economics of the situation, Mr. Chairman, it is unreasonable for Light & Power to be looking to save a few hundred dollars and expense this community with thousands upon thousands of dollars of non-productivity because of lack of energy. This is a serious matter. You need to look at the whole utility company approach, and they must realise that they must conform to the situation in Barbados and not look at their activity from an expense point of view alone, but in terms of the overall economy of Barbados; what we are losing because of their discrepancy in carrying out jobs at certain times.

I am inviting the new Minister to have a very serious look and further co-ordinate, if he is presently co-ordinating it, and have a look at their long term development programme to make sure there is some type of cohesion between the long term development programme of these people and the road construction programme as being planned now by the Ministry of Communications and Works.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Minister may wind up please.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have listened with some attention to the speeches of the various Members of the House relating to this particular Resolution, which has to do with a supplementary for the Ministry of Transport and Works in order to pay the consultants relative to the Spring Garden and St. Barnabas Highways.

You have already heard some of the reasons why this supplementary is necessary. Part of the reasons, as mentioned by the Deputy Prime Minister, has to do with the relocation process and the amount of time that that exercise took. A part of the need for the supplementary has to do with the redesign of the programme. As you remember, Sir, in the original stages the plans called for traffic lights to be located at the university intersection on the Spring Garden Road and at the Chapel Gap intersection on the St. Barnabas Road. But the change of design called for roundabouts, because it is generally felt now that in contemporary road engineering roundabouts are more efficient means of handling traffic flows through an intersection than the conventional traffic light, given the fact that traffic lights have the tendency to function when the current is on and not to function when the current is off, which in itself creates a good deal of problems at major busy intersections. So those redesign changes were partly responsible for the supplementary.

I heard the honourable Member, who represents St. Michael West, allude to the fact that the St. Barnabas Road was delayed because of a design change which had to do with the number of lanes for that highway. Well, Sir, he is a man noted for being wrong, and he is wrong again, because in this particular case, the St. Barnabas Highway never called for dual carriage-ways. The only design change that has affected the St. Barnabas Road,

as I indicated earlier, is the roundabout at Chapel Gap intersection, so I do not know where he gets that information from.

6.20 p.m.

We have had problems with utility companies, and I would like to say now that I have given instructions to the officers at the Ministry of Transport and Works that the Light and Power Company, the Barbados Telephone Company and the other utility companies must not be given permission to dig up the roads at will. As a matter of fact, it is going to be much stronger than that. The utility companies had a practice of just going and starting excavation work without even bothering to notify the Chief Technical Officer in the past. The Laws of Barbados require that, before any road is dug up, the Chief Technical Officer, who has the authority under the Act, is the person who must give permission for that road to be excavated, and the fee for the restoration of the roadway has to be paid before excavation can start. This has not been the general practice.

Aside.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The honourable Member for St. Michael West is trying to make mischief.

I believe the first time that the Act was enforced was when my predecessor was at Transport and Works. But the utility companies have a tendency to pout whenever that section of the Regulations is enforced, because they like to do as they please, and the problems that we are having, for example, along Highway No. 1, is indicative of the Telephone Company taking longer over that section of road than they should take. They had started that excavation and they were stopped, the fee was paid, and they are now taking long with the restoration.

I read the newspapers today and I notice that the Ministry of Transport and Works is being blamed for failure to inspect the restoration process, and they are saying that that is why the roadway is not yet paved.

In actual fact, Sir, the Telephone Company of Barbados has come along after the Ministry of Transport and Works has barber greened the road; in other words, after the road has been restored, the Telephone Company has come back and excavated it, because they discovered that they had problems after the road had been resurfaced.

I am not likely to be sitting down at the Ministry of Transport and Works and having this kicked around like a football. When the Ministry of Transport and Works is wrong, I will help the public say they are wrong, but I will not be in a mood to permit anybody to turn the Ministry of Transport and Works into a political football, or any kind of football, for that matter.

I believe it is unfair to the Ministry of Transport and Works to suggest that the problems along Highway 1 have anything to do with them. It is the utility companies who do not feel in a mood to co-ordinate their programme with the paving programme of the Ministry. I have spoken to the Waterworks Department — only yesterday we had a long session together — and I am satisfied that the Waterworks Department and the Ministry of Works itself will co-ordinate their programmes, so whenever road improvements are to take place, the Waterworks Department comes in, lays in a water main.

I have instructed them to put dead lines across the road, if that is necessary, plug them, so that householders who do not connect immediately will be able to connect when they so desire without having to cut the road, because it is a colossal waste of Government resources to barber green a road surface and then within weeks we have a bunch of little rows, like step ladder rungs, going across that road, permitting water to seep through these cuts and generally deteriorating the road surface.

I can expect that, for the future, a very significant improvement in the roads will be noticeable, because there will be co-ordination between the Waterworks Department and the Ministry of Works. We will have to talk now with the utility company, the Natural Gas people, to make sure that what has happened in Oxnards, as an example, does not happen when we have gone to tremendous expense to prepare road surfaces for the people of Barbados.

On this matter of digging up roads, I have instructed the Ministry of Works that they must not give permission to the Waterworks Department, or to the Telephone Company, or to the Electric Company, to break the road surface if they fail to co-ordinate their programme with us. In other words, when we barber green a surface, it will remain barber greened; and permission will not be granted for the utility companies to go behind us and destroy the road surfaces which we have prepared.

The Member for St. Michael North West talked about the dangers inherent in improving the Spring Garden Highway, or that putting the new Spring Garden Highway where it is along Brandons beach is dangerous because Brandons beach is a very busy and popular beach. He should know that Brandons beach used to represent a very substantial part of the constituency of St. Michael West, which gave me the honour to be a Member of this Chamber in the first place, and I would have thought that

he would have been sensitive enough to know that I would have insisted that proper provisions be made for the people in that area. Lights controlling the movement of pedestrians across the Brandons area and the Brighton area will be installed to make sure that there is no danger to pedestrian traffic going across that highway.

The Member for St. Philip North mentioned the starting of work at peak hours, and that has to do, Sir, with the business I just mentioned earlier, and one of the other things I have asked the Ministry of Transport and Works to do is to find out from the various people who are doing the improvement works on the roads whether it is not possible for them to do some of their work, or the bulk of it, in the evening, because I just cannot see how it can be reasonable for Highway 1, as only one example, to be dug up during the major part of the rush hour in the mornings and the afternoons, when traffic is so badly inconvenienced. So we will be looking at the possibility of directing that work be carried on during the hours when the highway is not at its busiest.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Transport and Works has suffered for a long time now because of a lack of the kind of resources which I believe are essential in order for a Ministry to function as efficiently as the public would expect it to function. It is regrettable that, even today, major positions in the Ministry of Transport and Works are not filled. The Ministry of Transport and Works has one Road Engineer. It does not have a Chief Technical Officer appointed, and most of the officers who come to the Ministry of Transport and Works operate only for a short period of time — and then they move on. 6.30 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Spring Garden.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I am making a plea, and I will obviously be making representations to the Minister of Finance, for these major positions to be filled, so that the Ministry of Transport and Works can go on to carry out the role which they are expected to carry out. I am not happy.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, once upon a time, all of the major road works in Barbados were undertaken, and I understand it, with great expertise by the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: All of the public buildings were constructed by the Ministry of Transport and Works. I would like to see the Ministry revert to its original role

of undertaking some of these projects for which it has gained distinction over the years, and, Sir, while I am there, I will be putting all of the energy and muscle at my disposal to make sure that we become the illustrious Ministry which we used to be in the early days of the Highways and Transport Works.

The question that Head 84 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division

On motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER the passing of two money Resolutions in Committee, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, the Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Item No. 7, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item No. 7.

EXEMPT INSURANCE ACT, 1983

Order No. 7 was called – To move the first reading of a Bill to enable companies to carry on exempt insurance business from within Barbados.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in moving the second reading of this Bill, you will recall that one of the planks of the Government's ideas for economic development and employment generation in Barbados is the creation of a financial centre in Barbados.

In 1977, we amended the International Business Companies Act to encourage international business companies registered in Barbados to create greater employment by buying services in Barbados. We subsequently amended the Income Tax Act in Barbados to ensure that international business companies, whether there be investment companies or trading companies, are subject to taxation at a rate roughly of two and a half per cent. We also provided, by the Off-shore Banking Act, for the creation of off-shore banks in Barbados, and last year we passed the New Shipping Bill to provide for the registering in Barbados of international shipping companies. This Bill therefore completes the last major measure which the Government contemplates will be necessary to create the fiscal environment for this job.

I wish to say, Sir, that we had done very well, particularly since the amendment of the International Business Companies Act in 1977, with the international business company. In 1980, approximately 25 such companies were registered; in 1981, I believe there were 32 such companies;

last year there were well over 50 such companies, and so far this year well over 30 have registered.

In short, I believe that it is true to say that, in the last three to four years, over 120 international business companies have been registered. There have diverse in the activities. One of which I am exceptionally proud has recently been registered, that is an international business company which will be a contractor for data processing services using satellites as methods of communication and computer terminals. That is the type of international business company which we feel Barbados should go after.

I wish to make it clear that there are some who are critical of the Government in that we have refused to relax the very rigid standards that we have enshrined in our legislation, particularly in relation to off-shore banking, in order to preserve the integrity in Barbados.

I do not believe the other side believed us, when we introduced the Off-shore Banking Act, because they quite legitimately drew our attention to the fact that many countries that had introduced such legislation have found themselves, wittingly or unwittingly, in an unfavourable light in respected international financial journals because of the attempts by some to utilise their jurisdictions for devious financial transactions.

I well recall that. I also recall that the Government was adamant that it was going to create tight regulations within its regime, and that it would proclaim to the world that we were interested only in attracting those types of international business companies and offshore banks which could stand the greatest degree of scrutiny. I am very proud of our record, and I feel sure that, provided we continue to resist any attempts to try and increase our numbers unduly, similarly we have nothing to fear with insurance companies.

6.40 p.m.

Captive insurance companies are insurance companies which, in a country other than where the risk is, undertakes the risk. That is all it means. You form a company in Barbados to insure risks, not in Barbados, but you insure risks worldwide and you manage it from here.

This is a very attractive proposition, and Bermuda, the Caymans, New Hebrides and many other countries do have this, and it is done because a number of large companies prefer to form a captive insurance company, with a re-insurance treaty, rather than go through the existing insurance companies or brokers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that it is true to say that a survey and an assessment of the international business companies, the offshore banking, will indicate that some reasonable employment numbers are being

generated. As I say, the projected employment of the data processing, and that is only a beginning, is somewhere in the vicinity in one company of 200. I am not telling you that we have created 3 000 jobs in this area. What I am saying is, that both from the point of view of employment generation and from the point of view, and this is equally important, of exposing our people to this modern updated technology, to this modern financial management, we are well on the way towards adding another diversification to the economic base in Barbados.

I feel, Sir, that there is only one other area that I should mention, and that is the promotion of these companies. We believe, now that we have looked at it, that the time has come for us to form an inter-governmental or inter-ministerial committee to examine new promotional mechanisms particularly for this sector.

The IDC has done a wonderful job in promoting international business companies, particularly those that are related to the provision of services, such as data processing services and which are complementary to industrial companies. The Central Bank, itself, has assumed the responsibility for the promotion of offshore banking, and the port assumes some responsibility for shipping.

We are going to tie these institutions together. My own view is that a strengthened industrial promotion office within the IDC is the best method of taking advantage of their expertise in this area. That is my own view, and I think that very many people are coming around to that view. Now that we have all the legislation ready, and all the legislation will be enforced, I think that we can move ahead.

Now as to the clauses of the Bill, any explanation that honourable Members wish, I will deal with in Committee, but I wish also to say that this legislation, in accordance with our practice in this area, has been subjected to the most minute analysis, not only by the Government, but by the private sector institutions. I wish to say that the banking profession, the accounting profession and the legal profession in Barbados have derived great benefit from being exposed by the Government to new areas of legislation which brings them up to date with comparable legislation in many countries in the world who earn a living in this way, and that is including the city of London and, now, the State of New York.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: There is a technical matter here, Sir. I understand that there is some doubt as to whether these Bills were read a first time. I know that notice was given.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: These Bills were circulated under the special provision by the Leader of the House asking that they be done in all their stages, but we have not had the first reading in its official form. You would have to regularise that by asking that the Bill be read a first time and that the Bill be pursued with within the five day period.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am sorry, Sir, but I was under the impression that that had been done. In that case, I beg to move that the Bill be read a first time, and that the provisions of the rules, whereby Bills which are read a first time can be proceeded with within the five day period, be invoked. I wish to give the Opposition the assurance that should they so desire, I will only deal with the Second Reading of the Bill today so that they will have an opportunity, if they wish, to deal with the Committee stage at a later date.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the honourable Member will move the first reading.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a first time.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member should refer to Standing Order No. 42(5), by which he can ask leave to proceed with the Bill forthwith.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order No. 42(5), I beg to move that the Bill be proceeded with on the understanding that I will not proceed with the Committee stage of this Bill today, or with the Second Reading other than my own Second Reading speech, if the other side wishes it to be done in that manner.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

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

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I wish, Sir, to adopt what I said in what was really, technically, my first reading of the Bill as the gist of my speech in the Second Reading, and I beg to move that further consideration of this matter be postponed until next week.

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

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

6.50 p.m.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the honourable Member move first reading of the other matter on the Order Paper.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that a Bill to provide for the establishment of a Cultural Foundation for Barbados be read a first time.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until March 1, 1983 at 12.00 noon.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until March 1, 1983 at 12 noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
6.55 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Confirmation of the Minutes of Tuesday,
January 25, and February 8, 1983. 2810

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER 2810

The Accounts and Statements as prepared by
the Accountant General for December 1982.

PAPERS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG 2810

Directions for the payment of allowances and
expenses of persons attending Conferences or
on other similar duty overseas on Government
business.

The Consumption Tax Order, 1983.

Statements showing Net Customs and Excise
Receipts for months ended August, September
and October, 1982.

The Hotels, Apartments and Guests Houses
(Registration and Classification) Regulations,
1982.

Dr. Hon. D. G. BLACKMAN 2810

The Annual Report of the Community Legal
Services Commissions for the year 1982.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG 2854

A Bill to provide for the establishment of a
Cultural Foundation for Barbados

MOTION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. L. S. Craig re six months leave for His
Honour the Speaker. 2811

ORAL REPLIES

Hon. L. S. Craig re reply to Question No. 27. . . . 2811

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1982-83 No. 22 . . 2811

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
AND CULTURE. 2811

Mr. Taitt, 2811, 2817, 2834; Mr. Craig, 2811,
2814, 2827, 2828, 2832; Mr. Forde, 2816,
2817; Mr. Barrow, 2819; Mr. St. John, 2824,
2825, 2833; Mr. Sandiford, 2826, 2828; Mr.
Johnson, 2829; Dr. Haynes, 2824, 2831.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1982-83 No. 23 . . 2834

HEAD 80 - MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
AND CULTURE. 2834

Mr. St. John, 2834; Mr. Taitt, 2836; Mr.
Johnson, 2838, 2843; Mr. Forde, 2840; Mr.
Sandiford, 2842; Mr. Franklin, 2843.

HEAD 84 - MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
AND WORKS. 2844

Mr. St. John, 2844; Mr. Weekes, 2846; Mr.
Taitt, 2847; Mr. Franklin, 2849; Mr. Johnson,
2850.

EXEMPT INSURANCE ACT 1983 2852

Mr. St. John, 2852.

(Bill read a first time and further consideration
postponed).

QUESTION TIME

QUESTION No. 27 (asked by Mr. L. E.
SANDIFORD) of the Prime Minister (Rt. Hon.
J. M. G. M. Adams) re rates payable to Govern-
ment officials for amenities when travelling
abroad. 2823
Mr. Sandiford, 2823; Mr. Craig, 2823.

SUSPENSION. 2823

ADJOURNMENT 2854

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BARROW, Rt. Hon. E. W. (St. John)
BOLDEN, His Honour C. L. (St. Joseph)
CRAIG, Hon. L. S. (St. James North)
FORDE, Hon. H. deB. (Christ Church West)
FRANKLIN, W. O. (St. Philip North)
HAYNES, R. C. (St. Michael South Central)
JOHNSON, Hon. V. L. (St. Michael West Central)
ODLE, J. G. (St. George North)
St. JOHN, Hon. H. B. (Christ Church East Central)
SANDIFORD, L. E. (St. Michael South)
TAITT, B. M. (St. Michael West)
WEEKES, L. A. (St. Michael North West).