

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 8, 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 and Leader of the House)
Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, (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. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Agriculture, Food & Consumer Affairs)
Mr. R. E. Brathwaite
Hon. Dr. D. G. Blackman, B.A., M.A., PhD., (Minister of Health and Community Services)

Prayers were read by Archdeacon F. A. Cayless.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Messrs. L. E. SANDIFORD, and W. O. FRANKLIN entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes for Tuesday, March 1, 1983.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to move that the Minutes for March 1, 1983, be taken as read.

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

PAPERS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I beg to move the following:—

The Estimates for 1983–1984.

The Road Traffic (Road Tax, Registration Fee and Permits) (Amendment) (No.2) Order, 1983.

On my own behalf, Sir, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Film Censorship (Fees and Travelling Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, 1983.

The Film Censorship (Charges) Regulations, 1983.

On behalf of the Minister of Labour, Social Security and Sports, I am commanded to lay the following:—

The Report of the Audit of the Accounts of the National Insurance Fund for the year ended 31st December, 1980.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to give notice of the following:

A Bill to amend the Land Tax Act.

A Bill to grant a sum of money out of the Consolidated Fund and to appropriate the same for the services of Barbados for the year ending 31st March, 1984.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question by the honourable Member for St. John, re Mobil Barbados Oil Refinery:

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ask of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:—

Is the Minister aware that the local Mobil Barbados Oil Refinery has been earning an excess profit of thirty five cents per gallon on refined products since the fall in the world prices of crude oil?

If the answer is in the affirmative will the Minister take immediate steps to ensure that this profit is passed on to motorists and other users of gasoline and diesel products?

Messrs. B. M. TAITT, M. A. KING and H. A. BLACKMAN entered the Chamber and took their seats.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, the following Bills were read a first time:—

Bill to amend the Land Tax Act.

Bill to grant a sum of money out of the Consolidated Fund and to appropriate the same for the services of Barbados for the year ending 31st March, 1984.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to give notice that the replies to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 29, 20, 23, 24 and 25 are now ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Sir, that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43, and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the day's sitting.

If it is at all possible during the sitting, I would like to give the House the assurance that whatever — there is no Private Members' Business, I can say that — is to be done during that time, I am quite prepared to assist Members, but I would like to get through with Government's business as soon as possible.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Order No. 4 was called — To move that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of a sum of money for the services of the 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.
12.30 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1982–83 No. 25

HEAD 16 — PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Head 16 — Prime Minister's Office was called.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, Head 16, Part I Current, is quite clear in the Addendum. It involves a sum of money which the Government is seeking once again for the purpose of meeting increases in the rate of travelling allowance. We have been coming in here over the past two to three sittings with supplementaries of this nature as we approach the end of the financial year, and these supplementaries are important so that these people can be paid the money from the Consolidated Fund to which they are entitled.

I beg to move that Head 16 — Prime Minister's Office — stand part of the Schedule.

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

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

HEAD 17 - DEFENCE AND SECURITY

Head 17 — Defence and Security — was called.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, the Addendum is almost similar, a shortfall resulting from increases in salaries and wages for people in Defence and Security. It is also required to meet increases in travelling for the Division of Defence and Security.

There is also the Immigration Service in the sum of \$9 210 for salaries, wages and travel. With these, it is the same story. There is also a question of supplies and materials, a commitment, which is in respect of \$5 000, from the last financial year.

I beg to move that Head 17 — Defence and Security, stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, there is just a small point I wish to make. I am sorry the Minister responsible for Immigration is not in his seat, but recently there has been an announcement, published in the newspapers, about the categorization of jobs in Barbados, and Mr. Chairman, while no one of goodwill would question the necessity and the desirability of having some known policy on the issuance of work permits, there was, according to the published information, an indication that some category of jobs would be allocated as first priority for Barbadians born in Barbados, citizens born in Barbados, as opposed, apparently, to others.

I do not understand why there was this statement about jobs allocation for citizens born in Barbados, because, as far as I know, we do not have two categories of citizens. It would seem to me that there is something fundamentally wrong with the philosophy that informed this particular opinion and/or decision as it has been published.

You will recall, Sir, that there was an Immigration Bill, which has gracefully been withdrawn for further consideration by the Government, and the major thrust of the contributions made when that was debated was to draw to the attention of the Minister certain lapses in the obvious thinking which that Bill purported to project. It is clear that there seems to be some fundamental mis-thinking in one of the departments, but certainly in the department responsible for Immigration, if they seek to separate or to make a distinction between citizens born in Barbados and citizens by naturalization or some other process.

There can only be one type of citizen. You either are a citizen or you are not. I choose to believe that it was an error of publication rather than a fact, but just in case it is, I would like to suggest to the Minister — I am glad to see that the Prime Minister is coming in because it is a matter which I believe...

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As I am saying, I am glad the Prime Minister is coming in, because I believe it is a point which he would be better able to grasp than perhaps some of his colleagues who are not familiar with these areas.

I think that you cannot have two kinds of citizens. You either become a citizen by the process of birth or you become a citizen by naturalisation, but as long as you become a citizen that is what you are, and, therefore, any suggestion that there can be jobs allocated for those persons born in Barbados is obviously fundamentally wrong.

Mr. Chairman, until we have changed our pattern of the allocation of citizenship, until we become like, say, the United Kingdom has just become, where they have two categories of persons born in the United Kingdom now — you can now be a citizen of the United Kingdom only if you can trace your antecedents of citizens of the United Kingdom, or certainly it would appear as if you have to have a certain racial stock in order to qualify in the United Kingdom — but as far as I can make out, we have not changed the basis on which citizenship is acquired in this country, and I am drawing to the attention of the Government that this publication, certainly as it appeared in the newspaper, suggests a misthinking, or a misdirection of the thinking.

If we are allocating jobs, as I said at the beginning, Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that anybody is going to question that. It may very well be that we are closing the stable door after the horse is out, but there are some other ponies in the stable, so we would still be able to accomplish something if we have a published policy about jobs.

Sir, I have no quarrel, and I do not believe that any right-thinking Barbadian would have any quarrel with a policy which seeks to clearly allocate the jobs which may be performed by people coming to this country. But that point is one which I do not understand. If in fact, as I said, it is so, it would be wrong in law, it would be wrong from a philosophical point of view, and it would be wrong from the point of view of the kind of system which we in Barbados would like to see. That is the only point I wish to make on this Head.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, the honourable Member for St. Michael West indirectly answered himself. He said the Government graciously withdrew the Immigration Bill last week, and after he said that, I thought that would have been the end of his speech. We withdrew the Immigration Bill because there is a new way of thinking. That is one point. The second point he made is that he was not quite sure if it was an error in the papers or not. Let me give him the assurance that it was an error. I think that probably would answer the honourable Member's question.

(A VOICE: What is an error?)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The statement published by GIS. When the new Immigration Bill comes down, I have no doubt that my colleague on the other side would have an opportunity to air his full feelings on the matter. He wondered if it was an error coming out from GIS. Yes, it was a mistake.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, we are not quite clear on this side as to the full import of what the

Minister has just said. I understood him to say that there was an error on the part of GIS, and I am taking it that he was referring to the statement by the GIS, which said that there is a difference between citizens born in Barbados and citizenship acquired by other processes, and that therefore there was an error in how the matter was set out by the GIS. Am I understanding you correctly?
12.40 p.m.

I would like to know if that particular release has actually been withdrawn or if there has been some correction. I have not seen it myself, but I am also very concerned about the distinction that has been made. I was just looking at something called Immigration Forms and Fees (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 1982, and people who apply for citizenship are required to pay substantial sums of money for the privilege of being citizens. We want to know exactly what is the thinking of the Government in making the distinctions between these two categories, whereby some jobs will be available to natural born citizens and other jobs will be closed off.

I think the debate could be ended if he would make it absolutely clear that the first statement that was made was erroneous on the part of the Government Information Service and that a correction, withdrawing that particular statement, would be made and that some future statement would be issued. If that is the position, I think we could end here on that particular point. If not, I think we would seek further explanations and clarifications from the Government.

We are well aware that there are certain jobs in the United States which perhaps are not open to persons who are citizens and who are born outside of the United States, but those are at the very top of the United States administration. You have to be a citizen, I believe, for seven years in order to be a member of the House of Representatives. There is some kind of condition put on, a citizen for seven years to be a Senator.

ASIDE

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Well, for nine years to be a Senator, whatever the figures are, and I believe fourteen years or so to be a President; something like that. But they place those kinds of conditions on the length of time that you are a citizen. Apart from that, if you are a citizen, you are eligible to hold a number of positions. So I hope there is some further clarification. If not, we will have to press the Government for some further clarification on this matter.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am obliged to the honourable Member for giving me this opportunity to add to the correction made by the Leader of the House, which I thought put the matter beyond doubt. The

Government Information Service was mistaken in thinking that any distinction is being drawn between citizens by birth, citizens by descent and citizens by registration. Unlike the United States, where, so far as I know, there is only one job that is confined to a natural born citizen, that is the job of President, there is intended to be no distinction in Barbados between citizens by birth and citizens by registration.

First of all, it is legally impossible to distinguish between them at the work place. That is beyond doubt. A citizen by descent, under our Constitution, lacks one attribute of other citizens, that is, he or she is unable to convey citizenship by descent to his or her children. That is a constitutional matter. It is necessary to break the chain of citizenship at some point, otherwise, persons who were born in Barbados – I believe the first child was born here in 1629 – could no doubt claim to be citizens because of an unbroken line since then.

So far as my memory affords, there is at present no difference between a citizen by registration and a citizen by birth, with the one exception that a citizen by registration who is guilty of treason or perhaps one or two other atrocious offences, punishable by and actually having undergone a term of imprisonment for a certain number of years, may be deprived of his citizenship. That is the only distinction that I know which relates to separating citizens by birth and citizens by registration.

The Government, however, is going to introduce legislation which will add very slightly to the distinction. It is legislation similar to that which exists in the United States, in that, effectively, there will be a test of sincerity of a citizen by registration, in that for a year – I don't know what Cabinet will agree – but there will be a period in which you will be required to live in Barbados immediately after the grant of citizenship. But once that period expires, and it will only be one or two years – I really cannot recall the instructions that Cabinet has given in every detail – he or she will be a citizen in all regards, as if he or she was a natural born citizen.

I much regret the error in the Government Information Service statement. I know it has caused some alarm among the great number of citizens by registration who exist in Barbados. As I look around at the officers and members of the House, I think I can see seven or eight persons who are affected, which is a significant proportion out of the sixteen or seventeen who are in the House at the moment. I really much regret, Mr. Chairman, that all of those persons should have suffered any element of alarm.

Our citizens by registration in all probability enjoy superior access to the work place. Certainly the evidence

would suggest that there is less unemployment among citizens by registration than there is among natural born citizens. I think that reflection will reveal to all that this is only a matter of inadvertence. It really is a most unfortunate matter, but it was a matter of complete inadvertence. It is not meant to be so.

Just for the record, it should be mentioned.....

Aside.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I hear Members saying they should publish a correction, I believe the Press will do its duty and give the statement of the Leader of the House and my statement full exposure.

For the record it is worth pointing out that no citizen by registration has ever been deprived of citizenship. There are one or two persons, a very, very small number indeed, I believe it is in single figures, who perhaps have had some difficulty getting citizenship because of considerations of public policy. But not even those considerations of public policy has ever been tested in the courts.

Perhaps it is worthwhile mentioning, Mr. Chairman, since it has all been raised, that the grant of citizenship, although stated to be in the total discretion of the Minister, the granting of citizenship for persons who have lived here for seven years, is not really regarded by the department concerned as a matter of capricious discretion. It is not normally refused to anyone who qualifies after seven years residence in Barbados, unless there are particular reasons relating to criminal or other anti-social activity known to the Immigration Department.
12.50 p.m.

I would really assure persons that citizenship is neither the subject of political partisanship nor the subject of any pressure of the Immigration Department — there is no need to put on any pressure, citizenship is granted virtually automatically to qualified persons — nor the subject of discrimination once it is being granted.

There are, I think, sixteen or seventeen thousand persons in Barbados who are citizens by registration. The number may even be larger, Sir, because I do not know how many have gone away and come back, or whatever, and I would like to reassure them all that the whole mistake was a mistake in writing and does not denote any Government policy; nor could any such Government policy exist, bearing in mind the provisions of our Constitution.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, we are grateful to the Prime Minister for the explanation that he has given and I am glad that the matter has been, or is being, withdrawn.

I am really wondering why it is that if an error had been made by the GIS due to some — I do not know if it was inadvertence inside of GIS or on the part of the instructions given to GIS, I do not know where the error would have originated — but, you know, it is a whole population which has been left in this measure of uncertainty. The publication was done now, it is almost a week, I believe. We will leave that particular point for the time being.

I am still wondering though if it is not a policy, or if the Government should not have a policy, that where plain errors, blatant errors, have been made by the Government, the Government should not seek to correct those errors as early as possible, and, in the case of newspapers, in the same medium.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir. I welcome the statement made by the honourable Member about errors made by Government. The electorate normally corrects those errors. I know that little side thing you have, you have a way of playing a little cheeky single. You are not dealing with any GIS statement now, your emphasis was on errors made by Government. I am going to stop you in your tracks. Leave that to the electorate to correct those errors when the occasion arises.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: You seem to be talking about something else. I wonder what you are talking about.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to deal with another matter relating to this item. The Addendum here relates to Sub-head 3, Item 3, where a supplementary provision is required for the Immigration Service as a result of an increase in salaries and wages.

I wonder if the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister, can make a statement in respect of the payment of the remainder of the arrears that may be due to the public officers of this country arising out of the salaries revision. I believe that some time last year they were paid only a proportion of what was due to them. We are coming to the end of the financial year and I am wondering if the Minister of Finance would wish to make a statement or clarify the position as far as that is concerned.

Specifically, if I may return to the immigration matter, I believe the Government has a policy, or announced a policy some time ago, that persons who are married to citizens of Barbados, or the husbands of Barbadian women, would be treated in the same way as the wives of Barbadian men.

(Rt. Hon J. M. G. M. ADAMS: That was not the policy).

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I seem to have understood that this was the policy of the Government. The Prime Minister is saying in a low voice that that is not the policy of the Government, but the point I am really raising is this. If we have a situation in which a.....

Asides.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am making a substantial point. This is not any delaying tactic, I am not delaying anything.

(Aside)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Why are you so impatient today?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair. Order, please.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I am hearing about gunpowder. Do you remember what happened with Guy Fawkes, Mr. Chairman? Gunpowder in the House of Assembly?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please let us get ahead with the matter that is before the Chamber.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I wonder if the Minister responsible for Immigration could tell us what this is, because I believe the situation may arise, and indeed it has arisen, where you may have a person who is married to a Barbadian woman, who may commit an offence against the law, and then that person is deported and finds it very difficult to get back into the country so that the family can be reunited. I am wondering if in cases like that, Mr. Chairman, the ordinary law of the land, which would apply to a Barbadian who has come foul of the law, and who cannot be deported, should not apply in that case.

I believe that our law enforcing agencies in this country should be able to contain situations like that, where some person who may be married to a Barbadian is found guilty under the law of a certain offence and is then deported. I am wondering if that is really giving equal treatment. I know it may cause some excruciating moments and disruption in family life and so on, and I am really appealing for a humane course in these particular matters.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I wonder if I could ask the honourable Member for his forbearance on a full immigration debate until we get a new Immigration Bill and a new Citizenship Bill. I would not like the last point which he puts to go entirely unnoticed, because the Government is giving it consideration, but I do not want to enter into all immigration matters when we are going

to get both an Immigration Bill and a Citizenship Bill later this year.
1.00 p.m.

The fact is that husbands of Barbadian women have a right to permanent residence in Barbados — not citizenship — and the right to permanent residence can be interrupted by certain types of misbehaviour.

Honourable Members, when last the Immigration Bill was here, made some very cogent and important comments on it. One of them related to the penalty to be attached to somebody who, as a permanent resident, or citizen, commits a drug offence. If honourable Members can glance at the Schedule to the Immigration Act, they would have seen that the Schedule is really quite draconian, because it says that nobody who has committed any offence relating to narcotics is to be permitted into Barbados. The only exceptions to that are visitors, and even the means of arriving at that exception is complicated.

We have taken up the honourable Members' comments and are dealing with these, because I cannot think that possession of a small quantity of marijuana, which is one of the barriers on entry into Barbados, can be compared with other barriers, which is being a habitual criminal, defined as somebody who has four convictions before the age of 30 and who has served a certain number of years in jail. There are two of the things which prevent someone from entering Barbados. Clearly, there is some need for rationality.

I cannot deal with all this this morning, but the fact is that the case to which I think the honourable Member for St. Michael South may be referring, of a husband of a Barbadian woman who cannot re-enter the country, is a case where he was reported by virtue of having committed a narcotics offence.

We cannot, under the present legislation, allow him back into Barbados as a permanent resident. This is the case of a man, who, when he was turned back, broke into the Air Traffic Control Tower at the airport? Yes? I cannot promise that, whatever the law is, his case will necessarily be reviewed in a positive direction, because this occupied me when I was Minister of Immigration, and it is still occupying the present Minister of Immigration now. There are some difficulties about that particular case, and I am sure that honourable Members would not want me to go into them. But I mention the law at present so that honourable Members will exercise some forbearance until the whole course of the law has been reviewed.

Mr. Chairman, in 1975 when I moved in the House, from the seat now occupied by the honourable Member for St. John, that the husbands of Barbadian women be allowed into Barbados, I was told that the country would

be flooded by men and they could not afford it. We have since changed the law and we have not been flooded by these men, nor indeed, Sir, is there any evidence that men come here and marry Barbadian women in order to stay in the island.

There are a few who come and marry Barbadian men, and we have had to try to defend ourselves against that, but we certainly have not had any flood of men coming into the Island, using the marriage bond as their passport. It remains a small problem, and the case referred to by the honourable Member for St. Michael South, although not unique, is part of an even smaller problem. I do not think that anybody can complain of the humanity of the Government in administering its restrictions.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, before you put the question, let me say that I welcome the Prime Minister's statement that there will be new Immigration and Citizenship Bills before the House.

I think we have had many stabs at amending both the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act, and it is probably time that we have not only a consolidation, but also a revision of the law, to reflect, if I may say so, some of the very useful policy changes which have been made.

The administration or the execution of an immigration policy is never an easy one, and it becomes extremely difficult in a country in which there is a reasonably, perhaps still by all standards, high level of unemployment. As unemployment increases, the national fervour to restrict people from outside coming into the country increases in intensity and people tend to become more nationalistic, to the exclusion, sometimes, of proper humane and humanitarian considerations.

It is never easy for a Minister in charge of Immigration, therefore, to balance the national feeling against the long term interest of the country, and indeed the subject of Immigration is one that attracts many unfounded rumours from time to time. Very often one hears allegations that are completely lacking in any substance.

I have found that the officers in the Immigration Department, from the Chief Immigration Officer right down, are extremely co-operative. They are always willing to offer assistance and advice, and they do go out of their way, if I may say so, not to trap people, but rather to advise them sensibly about how to come within the four corners of the Act. It is because of that that I would not like this opportunity to pass without saying that I am impressed, not only with the change in their uniform, but in the manner in which the immigration laws of this country are now being administered.

However, I am still concerned, about a few things, and one is the inequality which still exists in our Constitution. While I recognise that the Government does not have a two-thirds majority in order to make any changes to Chapter 2, the Fundamental Rights Provision of the Constitution, I think that this is an area of policy that the Opposition should willingly join in.

I think it is inequitable to see that the supreme law of Barbados, the Constitution of Barbados, still continues to discriminate against women in relation to citizenship rights. A married woman, for instance, cannot confer on her child citizenship. It still goes on if she is an unmarried woman, of course, citizenship follows the citizenship of the mother, but a married woman, as distinct, separate, and in contra-distinction to a married man, does not confer citizenship on her child.

1.10 p.m.

I believe that this is an insult to the personality of women. I think that a woman should be treated as no less equal than a man in this country, and I would hope that the Opposition would join with the Government in making any changes that are necessary to the Constitution.

I recognise that the Government could initiate these changes in the Immigration Bill, but if the changes contradict the Constitution, then the Constitution, as the supreme Act, will prevail, and, therefore, it is necessary to change the provisions of Chapter 2. I hope that the Opposition has now been convinced, having moved from the area of being the Government to the position of being the Opposition, of the strong case of women.

The Prime Minister is absolutely right when he reminds this Committee that there was a time when the present Opposition, as the Government of this country, had a very flat-footed approach to women's rights and the entitlement of women to be treated equally as men, and the arguments were most anti-diluvian, arguments that I have never witnessed anywhere at all. In fact, the right honourable Member for St. John used to justify this, as the Prime Minister says, the continuation of the existing position, on the basis that we would be overflowed with men from outside. Unfortunately, or fortunately, the Opposition now has new ideas, ideas that we have been promulgating in this House since 1975, but it has obviously taken them eight years to be convinced of the case for women's rights in this country.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael West can talk *sotto voce* about foolishness, but he obviously has not been

following his party's stance as articulated in this House by the right honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, if the honourable Member feels he has, each time he gets up, to relate to the right honourable Member for St. John, that is one thing, but, to go on the way he is going about the Opposition, is another. The honourable Member for St. Thomas said that we are going to have the immigration debate later this year, does the honourable Member want to start it today?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member obviously has no point of order. He cannot take his blows. Am I to understand that he does not agree with the Leader of the Opposition in the view that he articulated in 1975 on the issue of women's rights?

The honourable Member's views were that he was not in favour of Barbadian women having the same rights as Barbadian men, of their husbands coming and living in this country or getting citizenship. Those were his views, and they were the views of the Democratic Labour Party. If you are telling me it was his views and not yours, then I understand.

The honourable Member can quarrel as much as he has done. The point is that the Opposition is now going through a metamorphosis, and you need a longer period in Opposition to be able to be convinced on principle, because I believe your change is skin deep, it is not deep enough on this question of women's rights.

That was the view articulated by the junior Minister, who was then, I think, Mrs. Eastmond; the view articulated by the honourable F. G. Smith, who was then Minister of Education, and it took a lot of argument in this House to convince,.....not to convince them, because they went into Opposition on the question of women's rights.

What I want to see now is a national policy, a bi-partisan policy, on the issue. I want the Opposition to get up and admit that they made an error. The honourable Member is not going to be willing to do that.

I do not know what were his views, because, obviously, he was not in the Cabinet. He is telling me that the views held by the then Prime Minister were not his views. I accepted them as the views of the Democratic Labour Party, maybe not the views of the honourable Member for St. Michael West.

But I am saying that I hope that the changes which will be made will also have to be made to the Constitu-

tion of Barbados, and they can only be made by a two-thirds majority, and I want to hear the clearest voice from the Opposition saying that they are going to support the changes to the citizen provisions to reflect the equality of views on the question of women's rights, so that the children of Barbadian women as well, no matter whether they are married or unmarried, would have the same rights that the children of Barbadian men have.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, this debate was going extremely well on a serious point that was raised, and the serious point was responded to. Now we have the champion of women, the self-appointed champion of women in Barbados, taking this debate and trying to demonstrate that he is the only person in this Honourable Chamber, if not in this whole country, who has the interest of women at heart.

(Asides.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now that speaks for itself, for anyone to suggest that I do not have the interest of women at heart is automatically ludicrous. They do not know the man or they do not know the women. The point is this, Sir: I do not believe that the honourable Member ought to take this opportunity, bearing in mind what his Prime Minister said concerning a debate, to try to suggest that somehow the Opposition is blocking some proposal which he has. He tries to suggest that, eight years ago, the right honourable Member for St. John had a certain view.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, the honourable Member obviously is misquoting and misunderstanding the point I have made. He is trying to push the debate into the area of my personal views. I was articulating the policy of the then Government, which is the now Opposition, as against the policy of the then Opposition, which is the now Government — not my own views. My own views are well known, and I do not have to be cited as any champion. I have made my views on that issue absolutely clear in this country.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the honourable gentleman then went on to indicate that, eight years ago, the right honourable Member for St. John had a certain view and now he is glad to see that he has changed the view. The honourable Member had a certain view when he was Attorney General, and within weeks of his ceasing to be Attorney General, he has changed that particular view. Courtesy and decency require that I do not point out the particular issue, but the honourable Member is no paragon of virtue when it comes to the capacity to change his mind. I do not wish, Sir, to get into that area in this debate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think we are ranging too far from the subject.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, with the greatest respect, I feel that when we have a debate and one Member ranges in a certain direction, that response to that direction is fair. But I will be guided by you.

I feel that on the question of the conferring of citizenship through a married woman, that is a point that progressive people will take, but it also is fraught with a number of fundamental doubts and questions in the minds of those persons whose jurisprudence emanate from the United Kingdom. It has to do with a system of thought and a system of acceptance as to how citizenship is conferred. Only those persons who have been exposed to, for example, the United States concepts and the United States thoughts on citizenship can accept gracefully the idea of a married woman passing on citizenship, precisely because of the concept of the woman being an appendage to the man, as a married woman, arising out of centuries of juridical thought on this issue.

If a person, anybody in Barbados, does not immediately jump to that particular position, especially if that person comes from a particular era in the history of Barbados, and especially if that person has been exposed to a certain jurisprudential thought, then it is not a criminal act for that person to hold those views. It is a view that would be held by more than 85 per cent of those persons with similar training in this country.

I do not share the view, Mr. Chairman, I make no apology for the fact that my exposure to international law was primarily in the United States and therefore I tend towards concepts of international law which are United States inspired, and these concepts automatically and easily accept what the honourable Member is suggesting, and therefore there is no need to wonder if he could get a two-thirds majority and try to give the impression that there is some serious bone of contention.

I regret that the honourable Member was not here on the night when the Immigration Bill was first introduced, because, on that night, the debate took on a colour which I believe that debates on such matters ought to take on. I do not believe that there is a Barbados Labour Party way and a Democratic Labour Party way on matters of citizenship. I believe that all citizens of Barbados ought to be able to participate. Indeed, I will make a suggestion that I made before to the Minister responsible for Immigration and the Government generally, that on this matter, when the Immigration Bill has reached a certain stage and the Government is sure about its thinking, it allows us on this side to have an early draft, so that we may have our views and communicate these views.

I can give the honourable Member the assurance that any Bill which comes to this Chamber, which seeks to advance the cause of citizenship and to do with any-

thing in that whole area as it relates to Barbados, will get bi-partisan support. We are not in the business of trying to score cheap points on issues that do not bear that kind of response, and I am disappointed that that honourable Member, of all persons, should be the one who would seek on this particular issue to raise the bi-partisan club.

The honourable Member is over there saying that I should talk myself out of something. Mr. Chairman, there isn't anything for me to talk myself out of. I am not the honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I cannot talk myself out of anything. I am not in the business of being talked out on that side or this side. So do not tell me that I will talk myself out of anything.
1.20 p.m.

The former Attorney General, who talked himself out of the Chambers Mr. Chairman, I think that I had better not go into that. I would stop at this point and let us resume where we were before the honourable member entered the debate.

The question that Head 17 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 42 – MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, the purpose of this supplementary resolution is to provide a sum of money to the Barbados Transport Board to permit them to complete the financial year, to the end of March 1983. As you will recall, Sir, a sum of money of \$10 million was voted in the Estimates, and was anticipated to have been sufficient to provide for the Transport Board to carry out all of its normal functions during the financial year, but, due to circumstances beyond the control of the forecasters, it has become necessary for us to seek this additional sum.

I should like to point out, Sir, that the Transport Board has operated throughout the years with Government subsidies because it is a service that is expected to be able to carry all of its expenses as a genuine commercial venture would be able to do. I have, however, from my own point of view, believed that \$14.5 million is a very sizeable subsidy, and we will be taking a very hard look at the operation of the Transport Board to see where economies can be taken.

To point to the future, I have already issued certain instructions to the Board, which I hope will have some significant impact on the revenue inflows for the current financial year. But with respect to this year, we can do nothing more than seek this additional subsidy.

As it now stands, the revenue collected by the Transport Board is barely adequate to pay the workers. All of the other services are expected to be supplied, have

to be supplied, through subsidies. The Board has grown up a great deal since its inception and we now have, as I understand it, approximately 218 buses or thereabouts servicing a multitude of routes throughout this island at any one time during the day, and Barbadians have come to expect an efficient, modern and reliable transport service, which we will continue to provide.

But it is, I think, a little unfortunate that the Board still has not yet taken the kind of initiatives which I believe they could reasonably have taken, and I point, for example, to the way they go about purchasing tyres, the way they purchase batteries, etc. I have already issued instructions to the Transport Board that they must find a new means of purchasing these commodities so as to substantially reduce the amount of money we have to allocate for this particular function. Batteries and tyres can be bulk-purchased, and, if I understand the marketing function as I believe I do, then I am satisfied in my own mind that a substantial rebate can be realized when the Board sets out to purchase as a fleet operator should indeed be purchasing, rather than going around the counter as if it were operating one truck or one bus.

As you know, Sir, the service will be augmented by the addition — it is not a genuine addition — of 80 new buses, which have been made available to the Transport Board through the Transport Levy Fund, and these buses are going to be coming on stream on a periodic basis; I believe we are expecting to get four or so every week. I am not satisfied that the original terms of the contract are being satisfactorily met, I believe these buses are going on too slowly, but we have been getting a few during the course of a week, and hopefully in the very near future, all of these 80 buses will come on and we will be able to substantially reduce the amount of money that is expended on buses that for all intents and purposes are no longer serviceable, at least not serviceable economically.

I have heard that the Seddon models have a reputation for destroying tyres every three weeks. I find this very alarming, to say the very least and again I have issued instructions to the Board that they seek to determine whether or not it might not be possible to find a tyre, with a different ply rating, for these buses so that the wear which these Seddons inflict on normal tyres can be reduced. It is hoped that the introduction of a different tyre would counterbalance the peculiarity of the top-heaviness towards the front of these buses.

I expect, Sir, at least I have so directed, that fare boxes be introduced into the transport service not later than June 1, of this year. So it is reasonable to expect that by June 1 the first buses operating a fare box system in Barbados will be seen on our roads. These buses will con-

tinue to operate with the two-man crew which we have known for all of these years, because our purpose in establishing a fare box system is merely to have a greater efficiency with the handling of revenues and to make certain that the conductor on the bus will be available more in the line of performing a hostess function as opposed to revenue collection.

We expect that they would be able to dedicate their entire attention, as the No. 2 person in the bus crew, to providing the passengers who ride the buses with a higher level of courtesy. Indeed, they may be even able to add charm, Sir, because I think that, in observing the transport service throughout the years, I have noticed a callousness which is really inexcusable.

I have heard some conductors and bus drivers using the most base language to passengers. Indeed, Sir, my own mother had the misfortune of riding on a Transport Board bus and being very severely bused by the conductor of that bus. Obviously, if he had known that that was my mother, I believe he would have put on his better manners, but my contention is that any person riding the transport service in Barbados is entitled to the best possible treatment that that person can get. Our bus crews must go out of their way to be accommodating to the passengers who ride the bus service so that people will not feel as if they are intruders, but will feel that they are reasonably entitled to the use of this service, which their own taxes have made possible for the comfort of all of the people of Barbados who choose to move by public omnibus.

1.30 p.m.

These careless attitudes, which may have been allowed to be seen on our bus fleet from time to time, will discontinue, I am sure, because I am satisfied in my own mind as well that the bus drivers and the bus conductors will be prepared to co-operate and to help us to bring a higher level of service to the riding public.

I believe that one of the reasons why the private transport service is so much more competitive than the public transport service is because of the fact that they are largely owner-driven and because the entrepreneurs who ply for hire in competition with the public service vehicles, the motor buses, recognise that service, with a capital "S", is perhaps the most important variable in so far as the revenue inflow is concerned. I believe it is possible to run old buses in Barbados and still get a high level of ridership, providing that people know that when they get on those buses, people are going to treat them as if they are human, and this is one of the areas in which we fall down.

Part of the reason why the bus service in Barbados is costing the taxpayers so much money is because we are

trying to operate a very large fleet out of absolutely outmoded and unsuitable accommodations. I have directed the Transport Board to set out immediately towards the provision of suitable headquarters for the organisation. We believe that it will be possible for such service to become available within a reasonable period of time. As a matter of fact, land has been identified for that purpose, and if we can get together with all the parties concerned, I believe that we will be able to start very soon towards providing the infrastructure that will help us to operate the service without the kind of liabilities which we now run into.

We have a situation at the Board where now with a large fleet of new buses coming in, we have to provide a sizeable inventory of spare parts, but it is obvious to all concerned, and has been obvious for a long time now, that these spare parts cannot be adequately and safely kept under the present arrangements. So it will be necessary for us to move immediately in the direction which I have just identified in order to protect a very significant new increase in the assets of the Transport Board.

It will be necessary, Sir, for us to take a look at the present organisational structure of the Board, because I am aware that for a long time it has been struggling to maintain itself as a viable institution without the necessary managerial support services that are essential for the management of the very substantial assets of the Board, and it is unfortunate that the subsidies plus revenue have not been sufficient in the past to enable the Board to be able to provide all of the managerial support that it needed.

A very commendable amount of work has been put into the Board in, approximately, the last year and a half or so, and I would like to say that the initiatives that we are now taking are initiatives which we have identified as urgent. We are also aware of the fact that past Ministers of the Transport Board have made a very substantial contribution towards the running of the service.

The Transport Board had a deficit in the last financial year of \$15 million, and the estimated deficit for this year is \$14.5 million, and I believe that a great deal has genuinely been accomplished, because it took a fair amount of careful analysis for the management of the Transport Board to be able to identify that no Board can reasonably be expected to provide a level of service that we can be proud of when it does not have the rolling stock material with which to provide the service, and that has been one of the most depressing aspects about the Transport Board.

Under the past Administration a number of Seddon buses were inflicted upon the public of Barbados, buses

which were not suitable by any definition to the terrain of Barbados, and which, so far as analysis has allowed, were only brought here for the purpose of providing aid and comfort to the then agent for Seddon. The past Minister responsible for Transport and Works was able to identify the Mercedes Benz vehicle as a vehicle which can give us infinitely better service, and, in spite of the fact that we had a bad start with respect to the Mercedes Benz because of an inappropriate gear box — that problem has been rectified — from all accounts, those buses are working very efficiently, above and below the hills. As a matter of fact, the General Manager assured me that he took one from below the hills. I do not think the police were watching, because he had a very substantial overload and the buses in each case have been able to come out with very great comfort.

One of the problems with the terrain of Barbados is that the way we build our roads, no engineer who did not have the opportunity to see Barbados at first hand, would have been able to appreciate the kind of steepness that we have in our roads. In Germany, and in Europe generally, although they are very mountainous, the angle of ascent is substantially below that for, say, Horse Hill. Horse Hill comes straight through the summit, whereas if that road were built in Germany, they would have found the means of going around the angles in such a way as to reduce the gradients.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Send it to Germany then).
1.40 p.m.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: We did not have to send them to Germany. It has been solved by changing the gear ratios on the buses and they are now operating as they are expected to operate.

Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that I need say a great deal more on this point, except to promise that we will continue to look at the Transport Board so as to bring into Barbados a service of which the public can be proud. We believe that it is reasonable to expect that we should be able to reduce the level of subsidy required, providing that all things are moving with us, or are in our favour.

I firmly believe that with the initiatives which I have identified, and when all of the new buses are fully in service, and given the fact that a more efficient means of collection will be in place, it is reasonable to anticipate that the bus service in Barbados will be substantially improved, both from the operations point of view, in terms of the movement of traffic, and from the revenue intake point of view. I do not expect that we will have to confront such a substantial subsidy as we have had to contemplate during this financial year.

Before I sit down, Sir, I would like to deal with the matter of bus schedules. I have had the opportunity to travel fairly extensively and I have ridden buses in most of the major cities of the United States, in Germany and in Britain, and I still am not convinced that it is possible to find a more comprehensible kind of bus service in those countries than you can find in Barbados.

It may seem strange, and it may not fall comfortably on ears of people who do not have a bus passing in front of their door, but that is precisely the point I am making, Sir, that in none of the countries that I have just identified, which have a multitude of resources available to them, can one expect that a bus will pass on one's street, let alone in front of one's door.

In Barbados, given the way our population centers have grown up, some places pose particular problems for the operation of a bus service, and given the fact, Sir, that a number of people live in inaccessible areas, or in difficult areas from a terrain point of view, it is only reasonable, if unfortunate, that it will not be possible in every case to put a bus in every neighbourhood, as much as we would like to do this. What we will attempt to do is to put a bus as close to every man as we can reasonably get it, and that is by plotting a line of "best fit", if you are doing statistics. A line of best fit will be our approach to the provision of service by the Transport fleet.

For many years, before I became Minister responsible for Transport, indeed before I even became a Minister, I have been advocating that what the Transport Board needed was a differential service. By that I meant that, instead of the practice of only supplying the Transport Board with big, clumsy motor omnibuses — I believe I made this speech as early as in 1976, or very early in 1977 — what we needed was a service that was designed in such a fashion as to meet the various needs of a segmented public, and a segmented public can be seen as a public that lives in inaccessible areas or difficult areas, that live in long distance areas, that ride buses only at certain times of the day and so on and so forth.

In Barbados, what we were doing was providing motor omnibuses and trying to operate them in places which were not designed for motor omnibuses to operate in, and I can remember particularly pointing to the fact that a great deal of road damage was being done in Grazettes, Clevedale, and these areas and with subsidiary roads which were designed for light passenger traffic. But here we were operating 48 passenger buses through these very difficult areas. We were having a large volume of accidents, etc., etc.

I urged the Transport Board at that time that what it needed was a fleet of buses designed for the terrain in which they had to operate, big buses for long distance

hauling, what would have been and are now described as mini buses to operate in areas where the mini buses have now been so successfully introduced by the private sector. But those pleas fell on deaf ears at that time.

To the credit of the past Minister responsible for Transport and Works, he has introduced another type of bus to Barbados, and I refer now particularly to what might be described as a first in the Transport Board, and this is the mini bus. The Transport Board will now be operating our big regular buses, but, in addition to that, it has for the first time in its history introduced a bus that might be described as a mini bus. These buses will be able to operate more effectively in tight areas in St. Michael where turn around time is crucial and provide a service which cannot now be easily provided by the big buses that we have.

One of the reasons why people in Grazettes, the Pine, and areas like that, and Howells and the Ivy, do not ride the buses of the Transport Board is because the buses spend too much time trying to manoeuvre around the difficult roads which form part of their route and take a long time in getting back to the terminus. The small buses have a quick response time and are able to be up and down before the big buses of the Transport Board complete one part of their circuit and....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Yes, Sir. That will be something that will go a long way towards helping to provide a new dimension in the Transport service.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 42 stand-part.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, in seconding the motion, I want to say that I support the proposal for this supplementary of \$4.5 million. I believe, however, that the figure masks much that has transpired during the past year, since I last came here for a Supplementary Resolution seeking \$5 million for the Transport Board about this time last year.

At that time I indicated that there would be a two-pronged approach on the problem with a view to a reduction in the deficit while improving the quality of services; from the cost side there would be an attack which would include more effective purchasing, a tightening of security and other general economies within the operation of the Transport Board, and the attack on the revenue side would be a view to maximising fare collection on our bus routes.

1.50 p.m.

The revenue side attack requires the removal from the fleet of all of the Seddon vehicles to which the

honourable Minister of Transport who just sat down alluded. Some 100 of these buses constitute a horrendous drain upon the resources of the Transport Board. At the time I spoke, there was just a little over \$2 million in the Transport Levy Fund, which was the source identified for the capitalisation of the Transport Board, and it was recognised that all 100 Seddons would have to be replaced at the earliest opportunity in order to effect immediate reductions on the cost of tyres, spare parts and the like.

During that period we have been able to order 80 buses. I understand that only two of them have gone on the road so far, but there was an enormous amount of bureaucratic delay in securing the purchases of these buses, which I do not want to go into now. The fact of the matter is that the efficiency of the Transport Board operates upon the goodwill of many other Ministries and departments, and where that goodwill is not forthcoming in adequate measure, then they can create problems. However, the majority of chassis are here, and I believe the general public of Barbados will soon be enjoying a ride on a new kind of bus, a bus built with different kinds of specifications, a bus which takes into consideration the particular topographical problems that driving in Barbados poses.

I do not want to dwell too much upon the revenue aspects of the problem because I believe there has been a significant improvement in handling the difficult problem of making the Transport Board's operations cost effective. I said that the figure of \$14.5 million masked the reality of the success of the cost effective programme. When the final Estimates of the Transport Board were approved in February of last year, the Transport Board projected a deficit of \$17.2 million. We received in our budget a subsidy of \$10 million, because it was hoped that we would have acquired the new buses in short order and, with the new buses replacing the Seddons, then the cost of spare parts and other operational costs would drop rapidly. When it was recognised that the new buses would not be on stream in their entirety during the current financial year, other serious cost cutting measures were instituted, and this brought the deficit down to \$12.5 million. The additional \$2 million which makes \$14.5 million come from the fact that there were budgetary imposts, which the framers of the budget last year could not have foreseen, which added another \$1.5 million in costs.

Last year we asked for \$5.4 million in supplementaries; we were granted \$5 million and this meant a roll over of over \$400 000. Consequently, there were costs of \$2 million, which explains the \$14.5 million amassed, a fundamental success in cost management that the Transport Board has effected during the current financial year. I see bafflement on the face of the honourable Member for St. Michael South. I will repeat it. There was a projected deficit of \$17.2 million when the final budget of the Transport Board was submitted

last year at this time. The Ministry of Transport was granted \$10 million on the assumption that there would be enough buses in the fleet on the road by October of last year to replace the Seddons, which the Democratic Labour Party criminally foisted upon the people of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: They should be locked up. Millions of taxpayers' dollars that could have gone to dealing with the multifarious social problems of poor people in this country, have gone down the drain of these vehicles, with which we are still saddled until this very day.

Mr. Chairman, when it was recognised that these buses would not come on stream, cost cutting measures were instituted which brought the deficit down to \$12.5 million, but tax imposts, instituted after the transport budget was made, to the tune of \$1.5 million, plus the roll over of over \$4 million, resulted in an additional \$2 million, which brought the deficit to \$14.5 million. That is why I say that a figure of \$14.5 million masked the fact that nearly \$4 million were saved by the cost cutting measures that were instituted by the Transport Board during last year.

This was done, Mr. Chairman, with essentially the same fleet. The only additional buses introduced, Mr. Chairman, were the 22 Mercedes for which my colleague, the honourable Minister of Transport and Works, credited me. I did not buy them; they were bought before I came into the Ministry, the 22 Mercedes which, due to technical difficulties, were not put on the road until some time in July or August. So these cost cutting measures were successfully executed with basically the same decrepit fleet of buses.

I believe that one has to congratulate management for this enormous feat. The General Manager in particular worked indefatigably day and night to ensure that the situation developed. Mr. Chairman, he worked in extremely trying and difficult circumstances, surrounded by intrigue, abuse, innuendo and direct lies; even harassment and he stuck.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: These are not gentle asides, these are interruptions. We must not have it.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: He stuck to his task, and I would be failing in my duty if I did not on the floor of this House, and in the record of Hansard, congratulate him for an outstanding achievement at the Transport Board.

2.00 p.m.

When it is considered that for almost two months he worked without a Board, you will understand the difficulties which no other general manager in this history of the Transport Board had to overcome. And in spite of it all, his record has been outstandingly successful, a record of which he did not have the benefit of a new fleet, a record in which he was subjected to harassment — through it all, it is a story of outstanding success, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, it is fashionable for people to berate the Transport Board's staff as being uncouth in manners and the like. I believe the Transport Board workers are no different from most workers in this country and, indeed, their behaviour reflects an attitudinal problem that is prevalent in Barbados.

The average Transport Board worker has to deal with an average of 800 persons a day, and is untrained to do this. How many of us can stand seeing more than ten people a day? And some of the politicians whose responsibility it is to see people run from them, and these same politicians would want to excoriate over there, would want to excoriate the conductors and drivers for losing their tempers.

My own belief is this, Mr. Chairman, that there is a problem with people who use the buses and there is a problem with the workers. We believe that both groups have to understand the particular problems of each other, and when this happens, when there is mutual respect, then we will be able to get a courteous and efficient service in Barbados.

Again in defence of the workers of the Transport Board, I have to illustrate how they buckled down and worked assiduously to enable the General Manager to effect the reductions in cost that have been effected. Those new Mercedes buses went on the road early in August, to date no driver has hit any of those buses. One of them was hit, when it was parked, by an intoxicated motorist, but no driver has hit or misused any of those buses, and that is because an intensive human relations programme was instituted which sought to sensitize the staff at the Transport Board to their responsibilities.

The crude policies of firing people whenever they step out of line were abandoned, and substituted for it was a programme of intensified training, which has brought significant results, because insurance premiums for those buses have been reduced by half. We paid \$1.5 million for insuring those buses last year and this year we have been charged just over \$700 000 for insuring those buses. That is a significant achievement on the part of the Transport Board staff.

Coming into office as Minister, I was faced with a Transport Board overburdened with people. It was

opened to me to pursue a course of crass commercialism and inhumanely send home people who were not responsible for finding themselves in those jobs. I, as a person who believes that crude commercialism cannot be the be all and end all of policy making, but that it must be integrated with a proper social and humanistic concern for the individuals who are involved, set my face resolutely against sending home anyone. We felt that the reductions could be made orderly, and indeed the reductions in staff were made orderly. In 1980, there were 1783 working on the Transport Board. At the end of 1981, there were 1727, and at the end of 1982, there were 1721, and during the entire year to date, there was a net turnover of one person, one worker.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: This is a programme dealing with the problem of overstaffing in a humane, civilized and sophisticated way rather than a brutish troglodytic approach to the problem of overstaffing.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the workers of the Transport Board responded, and responded positively, once they were aware of the programme, once they were aware of the particular difficulties of the Board. And I gave you but one example, one concrete example, which resulted in a reduction of cost, a consequence of a fact that insurers no longer have the same trepidations about insuring the rolling stock of the Transport Board.

I shall speak again, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It will be your privilege.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: It is now ten after 2 Sir. I beg to move that you do now report progress to His Honour, the Deputy Speaker and ask for leave to sit again.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I am quite sure that you are aware of the fact that when you are on your feet that Members must sit. I hope members of the public will recognize that whenever His Honour, the Deputy Speaker is on his feet or enters the Chamber, they should also be seated. I think at least that respect is due to Your Honour. I shall draw this matter to the attention of those persons concerned, since the public is not aware of these things.

2.10 p.m.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: It is now ten after 2.00, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 3 o'clock.

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

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

2.11 p.m.

On resumption:—

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee of Supply. Head 42. Does any other honourable Member wish to make a contribution?

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, it is almost exactly a year to the day when the last major debate perhaps on transport took place in this Honourable House, when the then Minister of Transport and Works, the honourable Member for St. Michael East, had made almost, as it were, a plea for forbearance of criticism of the Transport Board after articulating a series of policies which he had planned and intended for the Transport Board. He said to give him a year to work, and if after a year things were not made right, then all criticisms would be justified and he would stand, I think the word was, excoriated in this House.

Mr. Chairman, that year has now come. The criticisms of the Transport Board have not been many in the year; the year of indulgence was given. But today we hear the new Minister of Transport and Works perhaps giving us some indication as to why the previous Minister for Transport and Works is no longer the Minister for Transport and Works, because certainly the policies of the Board have failed. There is no new position now than existed last year at this same time. The same complaints and criticisms we heard last year from other honourable Members on that side are now being uttered again by the present Minister of Transport and Works. One would wonder perhaps if the present Minister of Transport and Works had not read the comments on the Transport Board made by the previous Minister of Transport and Works, especially in that last debate, which took place in March last year.

So what do we have? The whole tenor of the last Minister's thrust was to ensure that certain problems,

as he perceived them, relating to the Transport Board would have been cured within that year, and what do we have now? Last year the House had to provide subsidies for the Transport Board. This year subsidies are again required, perhaps half million dollars less than what was required last year at this same time.

The Minister for Transport and Works said that circumstances have taken place which have made it necessary to come to the House for these subsidies. We do not have a detailed breakdown of what has transpired. What is the problem which now requires the Minister of Transport and Works to come for subsidies again in this year, towards the end of this financial year, when we were led to believe by the former Minister of Transport and Works that all would be well by this time?

The former Minister of Transport and Works, I think, sought to explain away his own position, because, in my view, he was subject to serious criticism by the present Minister of Transport and Works. In fact, the present Minister of Transport and Works was saying that he was such a dismal failure that the present Minister of Transport and Works now has to come and tidy up the business. That is what the present Minister of Transport and Works is saying.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You must not put words in the mouth of the Minister.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. The honourable Member obviously must have been asleep when I was speaking, because if he was awake, he would have been able to follow the tenor of my speech. On no occasion did I launch any full scale attack on the past Minister of Transport and Works.

I believe that when I want to launch an attack on anybody I am perfectly capable of finding the words, the occasion and the venom or whatever, but it is really unfair for the honourable Member to characterise my speech as having been an assault on anybody.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes. I, myself, think that the honourable Member is in some way attempting to put words in the mouth of the honourable Member.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, with due respect, I cannot be putting words in the mouth of the Minister for Transport and Works. I think any objective analysis of the speech made by the Minister for Transport and Works would indicate that there has been some criticism of the previous Minister of Transport and Works, because the position is that today the Minister of Transport and Works is saying he has to issue these new instructions

in relation to the purchasing of cars and batteries. These were points which the previous Minister of Transport and Works had articulated in his comments and statements on transport, and the present Minister of Transport and Works is saying, "What has gone on in the past is all rubbish, I now have to institute new procedures."

Mr. Chairman, what is wrong with that? He is saying that he now has to institute procedures in relation to the purchasing of batteries and cars in bulk, and the only conclusion we can rightfully draw from that is that this was not being done before, and, therefore, in that particular instance, the Minister of Transport and Works before had to be a failure. That is so abundantly clear.

There have been other instances as well, Mr. Chairman. This is the new Minister of Transport and Works, "due to circumstances beyond the control of forecasters it was necessary to seek this subsidy again." The previous Minister of Transport and Works in his statement has sought to put the blame elsewhere, and I think this is a legitimate analysis of his statement. He is saying that the Ministry was frustrated by the Ministry of Finance and Planning, he could not get the money. He could not get the money to do the projects for the Transport Board which he required to be done. I quote this to show that I am not misrepresenting the honourable Member's speech.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I never used the words "Ministry of Finance" in my speech.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Very true. Your point is taken.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, I accept that the honourable Member for St. Michael East did not use the term "Minister of Finance", but if an honourable Member in speaking says that there were new imposts of \$1.4 million after the Budget, which created problems for the Board, there was no money to improve the rolling stock, now where is the money going to come from? The budgetary imposts can only come from one direction, so if you are criticising the levy of budgetary imposts after the last Budget, you are criticising the Ministry of Finance and saying that the Minister of Finance has made impositions which have made it difficult for the Transport Board to meet its problems.

Let us face it, that is the problem. That is the problem with all Ministers of Transport, and if the present Minister of Transport thinks he is going to find himself in any better position, he is sadly mistaken. There are going to be budgetary constraints and there are going to be serious problems.

But seriously, Mr. Chairman, what we have to consider is that since the last debate on this matter over a year ago, there have been substantial levies which have

been raised by the Transport Levy. There must be substantial sums in the Transport Levy now. What is the position with the funds collected by the Transport levy in financing the operations of the Transport Board?

I know I am going to be told that it is designed to finance capital expenditure. Of course, but what is the position in relation to the recurrent revenue being collected by the Transport Board? What is the total position in relation to the funds of the Transport Board? We are told that all they are earning now is just enough to pay wages. What is the total position? Is the Transport Board in that much of a predicament that all its operations can do now is to produce enough funds to pay wages only?

I think the time has come, Mr. Chairman, where we need a full statement from the Minister of Transport and Works as to what is the present position of the Transport Board, bearing in mind its position last year in March, bearing in mind the promises which have been made by the last Minister of Transport as to what was going to be done to update the fleet, to modernise the system and make a turn around in the operations of the Transport Board. I think the present Minister of Transport and Works owes it to this Honourable House to make a full statement as to the existing position of the Transport Board. Tell us what improvements, if any, there have been since the last occasion, how many new buses have been bought, for instance? What is the position as far as facilitating the public is concerned in getting the availability of transport when they need it?

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, from my own analysis, that we are in no better position today in transport than we were one year ago, and that is why I say that the previous Minister of Transport and Works must be regarded as a failure, because we are in no better position.

(Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Support it by facts).
3.15 p.m.

Mr. M. A. KING: Support it by fact? The fact is that nothing has improved in transport.

You are talking about buying a few new Mercedes buses. Mr. Chairman, I have previously spoken about what I consider to be the unnecessary excursions by Ministers to buy buses overseas, and the recent purchase of Mercedes buses, which could not come up the hills, which began overheating when the corrective problems designed to make them climb the hills were addressed, shows up the nonsense about non-technical people going to deal with the purchase and recommending the purchase of buses for use on our roads.

If persons are going to buy buses, if persons are going to participate in the purchase of equipment for buses, the persons you need to advise seriously, and the persons who should go on the trips, should be the technical people who could have a full overview of what the problems are in Barbados, what the needs are, and what the buses which are purchased can do in this community. So it has to be nonsense for anyone to go to Germany, buy Mercedes buses, bring them to Barbados, only to discover, after they are put on the roads, that they cannot climb the hills in this country. Something has to be very wrong with the administration....

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The 22 buses that he is referring to were not purchased after any trip by anybody to Germany. I believe they were purchased by people after a trip to Martinique, and I want to emphasise that nobody, when I was Minister of Transport, has ever gone to Martinique to purchase buses.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, irrespective of who went, the fact is that in this Administration's time, the Ministry of Transport and Works has been responsible for the purchase of Mercedes buses which were inappropriate to be used on Barbados roads. That is a fact. The present Minister has said that.....

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Ministry of Communications and Works, not the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Mr. M. A. KING: The honourable Member is splitting hairs. The Ministry, whichever it is, which was responsible for the Transport Board — would that cover it? — whichever Ministry was responsible for the Transport Board participated in, or was responsible for the purchase of buses which are inappropriate for use on Barbados roads.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: For all time?

Mr. M. A. KING: I am sorry.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Inappropriate for use in Barbados, is that for all time?

Mr. M. A. KING: Well, I do not know, Mr. Chairman.

The present Minister of Transport and Works has made the point that certain alterations have been made to the gearbox and as a result the buses can now climb the hills with a full load, but, Mr. Chairman, I understand that, even with the structural alterations to the gearbox, the buses are still overheating. They are overheating when they run long distances and when they come from down under the hills, and I believe that there may be a policy — the Minister should tell us this — whether it is not a policy that the Mercedes buses which

they have bought, the 22 that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke about, will not be kept on the flat routes.

I heard on a certain radio programme a Member for St. Philip saying that the buses cannot come to St. Philip. You cannot even see the buses coming to St. Philip. So the Minister should tell us this, whether it is not a directive from his Ministry that those new buses are confined largely to the St. Michael areas and the areas of the country which are flat.

The former Minister of Transport and Works has made the point about how the General Manager had to work without a Board for some two months, and he complimented him on his being able to do that. I believe, also, that it may be accurate that it was an occasion in which the Manager, if there is no Board, had to function under the direct supervision of someone, and maybe the Minister of Transport and Works might have been in a position to give his own personal direction and initiative to what was going on at the Transport Board. So that could conceivably be a convenient arrangement, and perhaps in some ways better if the Manager could function without a Board at that time.

But then he goes on to make the point that the General Manager was subjected to a lot of harassment. Harassment by whom? The Minister should tell us these things. Certainly he could not be subjected to any harassment from anyone over this side, because our criticisms of the Transport Board have been very limited since the last occasion when we debated the matter here, and we have no jurisdiction or authority over the Manager at the Transport Board.

I think that the former Minister of Transport and Works owes it to this Honourable House to tell us the kind of harassment that exists in the Transport Board, because if the officials of statutory corporations are being harassed in the performance of their duties, obviously they cannot function, and obviously the activities of the Board must be in serious prejudice. So where issues of this kind and where problems of this kind exist, it is in the interest of the public — and this is no partisan plea — that these matters should be sorted out and properly ventilated, and that the villains, if there are villains, should be identified and should be made to know what the problems are they have created and that they should not create those problems in future.

Mr. Chairman is my time out already?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Fifteen minutes. Time. The honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a few remarks on this Resolution

which is before this House, and with specific reference to the parish of St. Philip. I would not say the constituency of St. Philip South, I prefer to say the parish of St. Philip, because this is a problem which confronts the entire parish.

Mr. Chairman, there is a problem confronting the citizens of St. Philip, especially those who use the Route 12 bus, and I am saying that during weekdays, between, say, about half past twelve and just after 3 p.m., there is a problem in getting buses. My information is that many complaints have been made about this and the answer that is usually given is that, between that time, the buses that should be plying the route at that time are being used to send to schools to transport school children to other areas of Barbados.

3.25 p.m.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there should be some means whereby you can get around this problem. There is a feeling in my constituency, in fact throughout the parish, that there seems to be something wrong because of the political leaning or political feelings of persons in St. Philip. I do not subscribe to this feeling, Mr. Chairman, because I have had very good response from the Ministry of Transport and Works when I appeal to the Ministry to do certain things about the roads up there, but I am saying this is the sort of feeling emanating from the people of St. Philip. But, Mr. Chairman, if you do not get a bus between, say 12.30 p.m. and 3 p.m., that is okay for Sundays or bank holidays, but I am sure that during the week, every honourable Member of this House would know that this is not a good thing to be happening to the people of St. Philip.

Recently, there have been complaints about queuing in the bus stand, but I would like to say, Mr. Chairman — and I am speaking from experience because I make it my business once every week to catch a bus — that what is happening in the bus stand is this. Let us say that a Route 12 leaves at 1 o'clock. When the buses come in they park on one side, so no bus is in the Route 12 position from, say, 1 o'clock until five minutes to 2 o'clock, which means that by the time 2 o'clock comes around there are about 100 people waiting by the Route 12 position for that bus, and 90 per cent of the times, that particular bus which comes into the area is the same bus that was parked over the other side for a whole hour.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that there is great difficulty in asking 100 persons who have been standing up for an hour or so to queue to get into a bus. I am suggesting that the bus should be made to go into the area for Route 12. You will hear other people complaining that this happens on other routes as well, but, Mr. Chairman, you would know that if it is a Bush Hall bus, they get buses every fifteen minutes, so the problem would not be as great as a route which only gets a bus

each hour, and that is why I say the problem is magnified as far as St. Philip is concerned.

I will go further. About two to three years ago, the Transport Board toyed with the idea of sending buses through Gemswick. The buses would go through Gemswick and come back to the main road. My information is, Mr. Chairman, that the buses had to discontinue going through Gemswick because the roads in Gemswick were too bad.

If that is the reason, Mr. Chairman, then this should be looked at by the Ministry of Works, because I believe that on mornings and on evenings people should be able, as far as is possible, to catch a bus near to their homes. I am sure that I heard the honourable Minister say that not even in the big countries like Great Britain and the United States do you have a bus coming to your door, which is true, and that is why I said "as far as possible." But this idea was used already, the buses used to pass through there, so there is nothing new.

Another complaint is that the people in St. Philip are saying that all the leaking buses are being sent into St. Philip. Mr. Chairman, I can only speak on the complaints I am having. That is why I have been sent in here, so I do not listen when I hear other things coming from the other side. I am speaking on the complaints which I am getting, and I will remain in here until the people in St. Philip South say they do not need me anymore. I have to come in here and speak about these things.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me say this. The honourable Minister for Transport has said that there should be 80 new buses coming on the road soon. All I am asking, Mr. Chairman, is that, because of the problems which I have outlined above, I would like to see at least two or three of these buses sent on Route 12.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak in support of this Resolution, and while it has never been my policy to deal with parish pump politics, I want to take this opportunity to speak on behalf of all the people in the country, and by that I mean areas like St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. Andrew, St. Joseph, St. John and St. Philip as well. I am not going to, like the last speaker, confine myself only to my constituency. I think I have a greater responsibility in that when I speak, I should speak for all Barbadians and for all people who are suffering in terms of any service at all which should be rendered, be that service rendered by Government or by public utilities services. We should always be broad in our outlook on these matters.

The Government in 1977, after its manifesto was endorsed in 1976, took a conscious decision under me, as Minister responsible for Communications and Works, to nationalise the entire bus service in this country. At the time when it was done, there were very limited buses at the disposal of the Government, be they Government buses or buses owned by the private concessionaires, because you will recall that the buses which were owned by the private concessionaires were so bad that it was extremely difficult to accumulate more than 20 to 25 of the total number that was available at the time.

The honourable Member for St. Philip South talked about St. Philip and the fact that leaking buses go to that area. I do not know if he is aware that buses that go to St. Philip must pass through St. Michael and St. George or Christ Church before they get to St. Philip and therefore they would not only be leaking buses to St. Philip per se, but leaking buses to all those areas that the buses will pass through, put down passengers and take them up. Therefore, his argument does not apply, at least it does not logically follow when you take into account that people are commuting between these areas and being dropped off at different points.

The point I want to put forward is that the Elite Bus Company was so bad at that time that when the rain was set up, the clouds were there, people would ask the bus driver to stop and let them get off by the first shop or the first school in order to shelter. Today, no matter how bad the service is, and no matter how much water you may try to make us believe is falling upon the people in the buses, the situation is not anything as bad as it was in 1976 when the Government was changed and in 1977 when the whole bus service was nationalised.

A line of argument was developed here today in connection with the new form of bus service which is being introduced, in terms of what is known as a mini bus. It was in my time that that service was looked at, and I went on record as saying that Government would have very shortly to bring in that type of bus to serve areas like the Pine, Bank Hall, Bush Hall and Howell's Cross Road and the Ivy and places like these. So, therefore, there was a clear thinking as to how the bus service in this country should be projected over the years from those early periods of the nationalization of the bus service in Barbados, and our objectives were clear.

3.35 p.m.

But there is something that we have to face up to, that when you are running a business for Government, people are not as discreet in the operation of a Government business as they would be with their own or a business that is owned by private people, when private people are always breathing down their necks. And a lot of the problems that you will find within the Transport

Board, and within the system, as I see it then and still see it now, relate to this problem.

I have taken a conscious decision to stay away from any Ministry which I was in charge of, and for good reasons, because Ministers, when they take over Ministries, become very emotionally involved with their Ministries and do not like people to say much about them. You have to be very careful less you say something which will offend and therefore the best course is to keep quiet. But at times you have to recognize that you have a greater responsibility, and that when you are operating within the Cabinet system, that your responsibility is a collective responsibility, and you have got to speak on these matters.

I was heartened to hear today that since the new buses have come on stream, the new Mercedes buses, of recent times, that there has only been one accident. I can only hope for the good of the country that such a situation will continue for a very long time. I hope, as was cogently argued, that because of a humane approach towards the workers, they were able to respond in a positive way and are getting to realize that they are a part of the Transport Board, and are doing everything to maintain the rolling stock and the other stock of the Transport Board as though they are maintaining their own. I salute them and would hope that this attitude continues.

Pilfering within the Transport Board was a very serious thing, and it is said that you can get to buy more Leylands parts — and I hope that this will not be said of Mercedes parts now — from the Transport Board than you can get from the private people out there who are selling. People must realize that Government properties are their properties and when they steal from Government they are stealing from themselves.

I am happy to hear from the Minister of Transport and Works that very shortly the fare box system will be introduced. When the fare box system is introduced it will not be a question of putting somebody out of work, but rather, the conductor or conductress will continue to make sure that there is an orderly approach to boarding the bus, the seating of the passengers and will help passengers in one way or another.

Mr. Chairman, we are ensuring that there is proper collection of the Government's money by way of putting the money into a fare box. I would also wish to see the day when you will have a token system, where tokens are bought. Now that workers are adequately paid, I do not see any reason why anybody should be allowed to take the Government's money and put it in their pockets. We have got to be practical, we have got to be realistic, and we have got to say these things when they are to be said.

I opened my remarks by saying that I want to speak on behalf of the areas in the country, areas that have been suffering for some time now. The Chairman of the Transport Board, in his wisdom or lack of it, sometime ago was pleased to say — I talk about the present Chairman — that there were certain areas in the country that were regarded as dead runs. He talked about dead miles and dead kilometres. You can talk about all kinds of dead things when it comes to mileage and when it comes to transportation. A transport system is to help people commute and I am not concerned about all this talk about dead runs, dead miles and dead kilometres. I am concerned with a properly researched system in which people will be able to have proper service in order to move from one area to the other.

I represent a rural constituency, a constituency that offers much to this country, which is not always understood, and there are many people who have to suffer daily, between the hours of 2 o'clock and 5 o'clock, to get a bus coming out of Belleplaine to Bridgetown or going from Bridgetown to Belleplaine. I want to appeal to the present Minister of Transport and Works to look into this arrangement. It has been existing for a very long time and the people have been complaining to me quite often on this matter, I am answerable to the people of St. Andrew in the final analysis and I have to address their problems. They have elected me to articulate their problems and to speak upon those problems, therefore, I am appealing to all concerned to ensure, Mr. Chairman, that proper service is given to the people in the far districts of this country.

St. Andrew has no mini buses. I do not know if St. Joseph has, but I do not think so, there may be some plying the route from Speightstown and I do not know how many there are in St. Lucy, but I know none drive from Belleplaine to Bridgetown, and the people there depend heavily upon the Government's transport system.

I take this opportunity from the floor of this House to address that issue today. It is not a matter that I would have likely dealt with, but this is the forum on which I must deal with problems, and there comes a time when you have to deal with them here and nowhere else but here.

I feel that with goodwill on all sides, and with an effort to improve the situation generally within the country, things can improve. Because transportation is a national issue, road building is a national issue, water for houses is a national issue, electricity is a national issue, and these are matters which must be seen in the terms of people, and people's interest, Mr. Chairman, should always be paramount.
3.45 p.m.

It is for those reasons that I rise to support this Resolution, hopefully, that the problems complained of will be addressed in the fullness of time. I do not expect to have all the problems addressed overnight because Rome was not built in a day, but I do not believe that there are two classes of people in the country, the urban and the rural. You may use those terms to describe them geographically, but at the end of the day they are all Barbadians, and they should be seen in that light, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, Sir. I am going to continue in the vein of soap box politics, because I represent St. Philip North, and the people in St. Philip North cannot get to work in time, so I must continue in the same vein.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to start by saying we cannot harp back to 1976, because since 1976 some \$70 million of the taxpayers' money has been pushed into the transport system of Barbados. It is only reasonable to expect that if some \$70 million has gone into the system that we should have an improved transport service in Barbados, and I want to draw to the Minister's attention an experience I had that would illustrate what was said, that there seems to be a difference between the rural people and the urban people as far as the transport system is concerned.

One Saturday afternoon at about five minutes to one o'clock, I went over to the Fairchild Street bus stand with the express purpose of putting my daughter on a bus. When I got there the bus was already filled and I decided I would wait until the 1.30 bus was due. One thirty came, no bus; 2 o'clock came, no bus; 2.30 came, no bus. I walked over to two of the supervisors who were then on duty, and I said what is the position? By this time there were well over 150 people waiting in the bus stand for one Route 9 bus, and I asked the supervisor what was happening. He said to me that the last four buses that came in from the Mangrove Depot, when the drivers that were to take over tried them, they put them down. They said one bus did not have any brakes, so one driver said he was not driving it. The next one said one seat was bad so he was not driving it, and there were about four buses the drivers refused to drive, therefore no bus went to St. Philip.

In the meantime, Mr. Chairman, I observed that eight buses left the bus stand, the Mercedes Benz, with 15 people each, going to Howells and Ivy and Bank Hall, and right in that bus stand there were still another four buses. I went over to the supervisor and I asked who was in charge. The first supervisor said he was only in charge of one section, and I said I wanted the senior person in

charge. There were my words: "There are about 150 people from St. Philip who need to get to St. Philip. You have buses there going to Howells and Ivy every 15 minutes. It is a bad management problem that nobody can make a decision. I need a bus to send to St. Philip, and the next bus that comes in must go to St. Philip."

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is harassment).

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Harassment or no harassment, Mr. Chairman, nearly 2½ hours, nearly 160 people in the bus stand from St. Philip waiting to get home a Saturday afternoon after work, and buses sitting down there, and 15 people and five people going to Howells and Ivy and Bank Hall — and not a bus going to St. Philip!

When the next bus came in, the supervisor, harassment or no harassment, sent it to St. Philip, and as was expected, there was a mad rush for the bus. What do you expect? It went to St. Philip. That is the type of situation you have. It is my opinion that inside that bus stand there is nobody at a senior enough management level to make decisions that are necessary in the bus stand.

You go into the bus stand and every supervisor tells you he cannot do this, or she cannot do this, so the moment you get the buses coming in and the people refusing to drive them, the people from out districts must sit down there languishing in the sun with no buses to take them to St. Philip.

This happened this year so you cannot tell me about Soap box politics. It is all right for the representative for St. James North to talk about soap box politics, because there are no mini buses going to St. Philip.

I am saying that you need somebody at a senior enough management level in that bus stand to take the situation into consideration and make management decisions to alleviate the problems you are having in the bus stand. Enough time and money have been spent that we in St. Philip should have a better bus service, and I am appealing to them to have a look at it so that we will have an improved bus service in St. Philip.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, in listening to this debate, and especially to the half intervention by the former Minister of Transport and Works, I believe that the focus of our attention is in the wrong direction. We are looking at too low an elevation. We need to re-focus this debate in the direction it should go.

It is clear that the problems of the transportation Ministry lie with the leader, they lie with the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. We had one Minister coming in here a year ago, he promised us a veritable

paradise — he did say it would take a little time — and he did indicate that we should wait at least a year before we judged and assessed it. We had the privilege of hearing his colleague, who has replaced him, judging him, and what his colleague had to say was not at all in keeping with what we had come to anticipate on the basis of the \$5 million we gave him last year.

We were led to understand that the Seddons — I am going to deal with the Seddon issue head on — apparently were a mistake. Let us agree that the Seddons were a mistake. If the Seddons were a mistake, and based on the information which the honourable Member for St. Michael East gave to us on the life of a bus, and based on the information which the present competent — and I wish to join with him, Sir, we on this side accept that the present General Manager is competent, so you do not have to tell us that, we accept that — and if he gives what is the standard life of a bus, I would like the honourable Member for St. Michael East and the fledgling Minister, fledgling only in terms of time, Sir, the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, to get up and tell us when the Seddons were bought and how long they have been in existence, and then at the same time tell us how long the Barbados Labour Party Government has had responsibility for the affairs of this country.

Are we for ever hereafter to have every problem which confronts the Government placed at the feet of the Democratic Labour Party? Are you suggesting that the only managers we have in this country are the DLP? We accept all of the problems that we created during our time. We regret that we were not as perfect as you wanted us to be. We accept that. We made errors, but, my Lord, we did so much and we did it so so well, that we must expect that we would have some errors.
3.55 p.m.

These Seddons were not purchased because the right honourable gentleman from St. John took a trip to Germany to buy them. The Seddons were purchased because some engineer, somewhere, gave somebody advice on the purchase of the Seddons. Unless there is a record which shows that the decision was made in the face of advice to the contrary, then I think it is false argument to keep putting up the Seddons.

I wish to know why you have not discarded the Seddons by now, because they have outlived their usefulness. So it is the Prime Minister. You are saying to us that it is the Prime Minister who is responsible, because he is the Minister of Finance. You said you were going to discard the Seddons and you said that the planners in the Ministry — you do not now wish to say the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance; I will say it for

you — anticipated that the Seddons would be long gone and so they gave you \$6 million or \$7 million less.

I want to say to you that fundamentally in the context of size fleet you were discussing, that that is poor planning. No self-respecting planner could have made that kind of error. That is not a 2 per cent error that is more like a 98 per cent error. If you are saying that they planned into effect the buses, when previous to that, when the honourable Member for St. Andrew was Minister, when we talked about buying new buses within 18 months of their coming into power, the honourable Member said that the speed with which we could build bus bodies did not allow us to have the buses with the profusion and in the spirit and way that he would prefer, how then can the planners — the same planners, in the same country, with the same group of people — be planning for those number of buses to have come into the fleet in so short a time? They do not know what they are doing, or the directors of the planners do not know what they are doing.

I remember the right honourable Member for St. Thomas said of me, when I indicated, sitting down here in the very first year after we lost power, that there was somebody else in Barbados who could build bus bodies beside Acme, he said that I was guilty of economic sabotage and persons like me should be hanged. I could never forget that, because whenever that right honourable gentleman speaks to me in those terms I take him seriously. So, Sir, when I speak on this debate, nationally, as my friend from St. James North would like us, I am saying that we have to lay the blame at the feet of he who is responsible for Planning, and he who is responsible for Finance.

Now, Sir, let us examine the repetition of errors. They accuse the Democratic Labour Party of buying Seddons. We bought them. They say that the Seddons are no good. For the sake of argument, we agree. They took over the Government from the Democratic Labour Party. That is a fact. What do they do? They repeat the same identical errors. They go and buy Mercedes; using a technique, they buy the Mercedes not from Germany, they buy Mercedes from Martinique. Now, I want to know if the Democratic Labour Party went to Martinique to buy Mercedes. And if it was not the Democratic Labour Party, it had to be either the honourable Member for St. Andrew who was the Minister, the honourable Member for St. Michael East or the honourable gentleman who is now the Minister.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Just on a point of explanation. When I was the Minister, I was responsible for the purchasing of Leylands.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well now, Sir, it does not seem as if anybody bought the buses from Martinique.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Of course, they had another Minister. Oh dear! The honourable Member for St. Joseph, now, so we have mayhem. Mayhem is following murder.

First we have the honourable Member for St. Joseph, he bought buses in Martinique. Then we had the honourable Member for St. Andrew, he went to buy Leylands in London. Then we had the honourable Member for St. Michael East, he went to Florida, and now, Sir, we have the honourable gentleman and all he is telling you is, "I have directed", so it seems as if all that went before was a waste of time and he is starting from scratch.

Now, Sir, if you examine their performance in the Ministry of Transport in the six years they have had the responsibility, do you really believe that those honourable gentlemen could come to this Honourable House and raise a question about the performance of this side when it was the Government? You had four Ministers of Transport in six years, and I make bold to say that when you discount for the passage of time, we are worse off in transportation today than we were, and were it not for the mini bus operators, the true position of our transportation dilemma would have revealed itself. The mini bus operators in this country has saved transportation.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Four Ministers, in six years, and were it not for the mini bus operators transportation would be truly revealed for what it is.

I would like to be fair. I do not believe that any single Minister is capable of turning around the problems in transport in any single one year or 18 months period, so once again, Sir, it is the mismanagement of the Prime Minister, in his choice of persons for the Ministries, in his failure to allow persons to settle into the Ministry to carry out a particular policy, in his understanding of how the system which he has the responsibility to run ought to run, and in his failure to support those Ministers who do not apparently follow his own concepts as to how the Ministry of Transport should be run.

We have had four different strands of policy in the Ministry of Transport in those six years, and God knows what is to come in the few remaining years which this Government has with us. I believe that when we are

having a discussion on matters which affect both Barbados Labour Party people and Democratic Labour Party people we have to be serious, because, unlike South Africa, when you are boarding a bus, you do not have to show a pass. You do not have to have a Democratic Labour Party passport or a Barbados Labour Party whatever it is you have to have in order to get on a bus.

The little girl who was trampled, I do not know if her father is a Dem or a B, and all of us in here would be concerned with the fact that whatever is our problem, and whoever is responsible for administering it, a child of eight years is trampled in our bus stand. 4.05 p.m.

I believe that honourable Members on that side are as concerned about these problems as we on this side would be. We will make political hay of those matters that deserve political hay, but on the issue of transportation, we can no longer continue with this business of the Seddons is responsible.

The Seddons were a mistake and the Mercedes with the gear boxes that cannot go up and ant hill are also a mistake. The difference is time. We made mistakes in 1966 or whenever it was that we bought the Seddons. You have come to be a Daniel. You come to the people and you said a Daniel has come to judgment. You are not entitled to the same excuses which we have. You have had the benefit of expertise. You have files in the Ministry and you have errors that were made, and if you come subsequently and present the same kettle of fish and seek to present the same excuses, we say you should be doubly damned.

I would not, Mr. Chairman, allow myself to feel guilty about the Seddons. I admit freely on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party that we purchased the Seddons. We say the time has come to put the Seddons away and let us get a proper transportation system for the people of Barbados. You promised to put Barbados first. Stop putting the Seddons in the forefront of a national debate on transportation.

Mr. Chairman, I am told my time is up. I will end by saying that I hope the new Minister of Transport will stop issuing directives and take the trouble to go down in the byways of his Ministry and learn about his Ministry before he starts to issue directives.

Thank you very much.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, when the honourable Member for St. Michael West rose to address this Committee, he indicated that he was going to speak on transport at a national level. I believe that if you were to address this Committee on any matter at all at a national

level, one would probably hear a scheme dealing with all the problems that would embody national hope for the Ministry of Transport. Rather than that, he dealt with it more or less, as I interpret it, at a personal level rather than at a national level.

Very briefly, Sir, I would just like to make a few comments about the transport system in Barbados. Sometime I am at a loss when I hear colleagues on the otherside of the floor condemning the transport system in this country, talking about leaking buses, gear boxes and things of that nature, and how a man can go into the bus stand and tell a supervisor, charged with duties and directives given to him by the transport management, that he must get a bus now to go into a constituency. Now I should be the supervisor. Now that is what you call harassment, the harassment that my colleague was talking about, because the Member for St. Philip North.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, the honourable Member is misleading this House when he said that the type of harassment which the honourable Member for St. Michael East was talking about had to do with the incident in the bus stand. The type of harassment had to do with high-ranking officials in the Barbados Labour Party harassing the General Manager. That is what he is talking about. He said it in this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Please carry on with the debate.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I have always referred to you as a parliamentary joker. I do not pay much attention to you, because at no time did I hear my colleague refer to anybody in the Barbados Labour Party. I heard him say there was harassment at the Transport Board and that the Manager of the Transport Board could not work because he was harassed. That is what I understood.

It was made very clear today where the harassment is, because here is a member of the Opposition who, because he is an M.P., goes into the bus stand, is told by the supervisor that the reason why he cannot get a bus is because there are mechanical defects in the brakes — and had there not been any mechanical defects he would have had the bus, according to his argument — and he goes on to say that he directed the supervisor — that supervisor should be charged under a disciplinary measure — that he must get a bus to St. Philip North because he had his little daughter with him. That is harassment. That is what you call power play. I should have been the supervisor. I would tell him where to get off, because I am quite sure that James Haynes, known as "Slims", could not tell the supervisor that, but this is a small society in which we live.

Sir, here is a Warrick Franklin — not a Member in here — here is a man by the name of Mr. Franklin who

can go and tell a supervisor, who is charged with certain responsibilities, that he must get a bus to go to St. Philip North — for that matter he could have told him it must go to St. Peter or St. Lucy — just because he is a certain individual. That is what you call harassment, and that is the harassment my colleague is talking about.

The other point which I should like to draw to your attention is the statement that we are worse off today with buses than before. What did he say? These are the worst buses you ever had; this is the worst system. Is that what the honourable Member for St. Michael West said, that we are worse off today with buses in this country than we ever were? Is that really possible? Then he went on to say that had it not been for the mini bus operators, it would have been a sad day.

We were giving the mini bus operators money through the BDB. The whole transport policy of the Government is to assist the mini bus operators with money, through the BDB, to buy proper mini buses to put on the road to help the travelling public. That is part of the overall plan, and in these very trying days, with economic problems plaguing the entire western world, the Government of Barbados can still find enough money to buy buses, not like the ones you have in St. Vincent, or in Columbia, where the honourable Member for St. Philip North and I were together at the same time but to buy a coach. I believe we will probably soon have them air-conditioned. We help them buy coach-type buses, not like the ones in St. Vincent or Dominica, the ones in oil-rich Trinidad or in Venezuela.

In little Barbados, with a fragile economy, we can still boast of the finest transport system in the entire Caribbean, yet we hear complaints about a bus leaking and a bus not leaving at 1.30 p.m.

I thought the Members on the other side would have lauded the Government for the type of buses which they now have on the road and the new injection which the former Minister of Transport and Works referred to today, where the Transport Board is actually accident free because of motivation, inspiration to work, better conditions to work under, and better training programmes. I salute the workers and all the Ministers for lauding the workers of the Transport Board, the operation of which is not a very easy job.

4.15 p.m.

It is not a very easy job driving a bus and dealing with people all through the day, and then have the Member for St. Philip North compound the problems of the workers at the Transport Board by giving them a directive, that they are to take a bus somewhere else or get one immediately, because his little child cannot get home at 1.30. That is the type of behaviour pattern that you have on the other side.

I thought that after hearing the former Minister and the introductory remarks by the present Minister of the Transport Board, one would have said, knowing that the Estimates are coming up next week Monday at 10 o'clock.....

(Aside)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: It is a wonder that you know anything at all. You used to be in Cabinet and I heard you say in here that you did not know anything about so and so and so and so. They never paid you much attention, but I pay you attention. You are my friend and constituent. You voted for me, so I am going to support you. You told me repeatedly that I am a good M.P. and I represent you.

Sir, as far as the mini bus operators are concerned, there is no doubt in my mind, as I have seen them in other countries, that mini bus drivers are problems. I will say it again, they believe they are the only persons using the road. They park around corners to pick up passengers, because they have a kind of personalized service, if I may phrase it in that way, and they do not mind dropping people to the door. But one must conform to the limits of the law.

I have had problems with the mini bus drivers. I have criticised them. There is a one Mr. Tull, President of the Association, who, after I referred to them as road hogs, and said that they do not dress properly and their conduct should be better since they are dealing with the public of Barbados, and that the Association should look into these things, he took it upon himself to make some sly remark that I was stupid and did not know what was going on — just because I was critical of the way they were dressed and their conduct as a whole. Yet, I read quite recently that they are bringing uniforms for them.

I have seen with my own eyes Rastas get in buses with big bags of nuts, selling the nuts in the buses. But if we were to say that they are not to do this, you will hear that you are interfering with the small man. I believe I have more concern for the small man than a lot of people on both sides, especially those from the Mafia college gang and those from the Castro element.

I would like to support all the Ministers on this side who, between 1976 and today, have undertaken what had looked like an impossible task, from the inception taking over the privately owned buses that used to travel the roads of this country without any insurance at all on them and carrying people on the buses, with all the mechanical defects, which could not pass a mechanical test, and to give this country today one of the finest transport systems in the Caribbean.

As a matter of fact, I go on record as saying "the best", because I have been to every single Caribbean territory, and I have always paid attention to the roads, buses and the housing, and we have the finest network of roads, the finest transport system. We should be proud of this as Barbadians. And when the other side talk about a lot of soap box politics about a bus breaking down in front of Kirton's shop and somebody could not get off and about taking leaking buses to a particular constituency, that is utter nonsense.

I do not believe that we operate within such a narrow scheme of things. We plan for the entire country. I believe they have leaking buses, I believe they have buses with smooth tyres, I believe they have buses with gears that do not function properly that travel in St. James. I do not come in here and shout for murder about that.

On the back of all the talk, you hear the very member for St. Philip South say that he has always got good response from the Ministry of Transport and Works a good response, I understand him to say that whatever he has asked for, they have granted him. Yet, he complained about a leaking bus on the Floor of this House, when all he had to do was draw it to the attention of the Minister of Transport that the buses in his constituency are all leaking and he would get response. According to his own argument, response is always good.

I could not say that. When I was on that side the response was always negative. You drive through St. Philip; you will see fine roads in a little side street like Gemswick. And I will tell you this now, I plan to go in Gemswick and see how bad the roads are in Gemswick, because the former Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Works, what was Communications and Works at the time, made sure not only that he got the roads fixed in Gemswick, but he changed the name from Penny Hole to Gemswick; so much power he had in his hands — and this is the attitude of Members on that side, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to go on record also, Sir, in giving my wholehearted support to workers — from what I have heard from my colleague, the former Minister of Transport and Works, because I believe that I have recognized a change in some of the workers — I would not say all — at the Transport Board.

I remember that there was a time when the former Attorney-General, "Sleepy" Smith, and Dr. Ramases Caddle, used to have ten people washing off one bus in August, 1976, around election time. They did not then have chamois leather, so they used to clean the buses with handkerchiefs, ten men to one bus. It was around the time of election and this is the sort of thing you got. I would have thought, Sir, that when my friend, the

President of the Democratic Labour Party and heir to the throne.....

Aside.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You are always praising Barrow on the side. I know you well. Your action is suspect, the umpire will call a no ball, and that old fox who is sitting in that chair has been around for a long, long time. Don't think that because you lauded him last week on the auditorium and so on, that he does not know that you lauded him on the one hand and is taking away on the other. The auditorium is on George Street and buses pass across there.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time, time.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I support the Resolution, as you know I would have to, and I would like to go on record as congratulating all of the Ministers for the outstanding job they have done under the circumstances. When they went into office they had to take over the Transport Board loaded with political fanatics of the Democratic Labour Party and they survived, and they will continue to survive.

4.25 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, finally.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The time has come.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: For me to say, Mr. Chairman, that I am in full support of the Resolution and wish to go on record as supporting and saluting the workers of the Transport Board and its administrative staff, from the Manager right down, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There are just about two and a half minutes left, which the Minister may use, if he wishes, to wind up the debate.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I will only say some quick words. The honourable Member for St. Michael West sat down by saying that I should go into the Ministry of Transport and Works and spend some time learning the Ministry before I start issuing directives. His problem is that he spends a longer time learning than I have to. I have been in the Ministry now for a little over a month and I have learnt enough to be able to issue the kind of directives that I have issued. It would take him about six months to come to the same position.

Mr. Chairman, the Transport Board is a difficult place to administer, for the simple reason that it has tremendous responsibilities and limited resources. We with the resources available to us will pledge that, during the next financial year, we will use every ounce of our imagination and verve to bring to the Transport Board

service the kind of professional management that it needs in order to make it the kind of service that all of us would be proud of.

The minibuses have a decided role to play. There are about 200 registered mini buses on the roads, and my attitude to the mini buses is that they provide a good service, which is an adjunct service to the Transport Board, and we will have to find the means through which we can work together to perform the task of moving people from one place to another in Barbados. We have already started by trying to make the mini bus operators a bit more comfortable.

I would like to issue an appeal to them, though, that they have a responsibility as well to make our job as easy as possible. We have asked them to be co-operative. There are a number of them, I am told, 35 or so, running about who have not bothered to re-register for this year, and I am sure that if the Government has to take steps to bring them within the law you will hear all sorts of noises about how wicked the Government is. The Government is here to govern, and those mini bus operators who are now operating without the proper licence, I would encourage them, and I put it no stronger than that, to make sure that they bring their operations within the ambit of the law so that we do not have any misunderstandings in the future.

Mr Chairman, I beg to move that Head 42 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. V. L. JOHNSON, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. V. L. JOHNSON, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY
ACQUISITION OF LAND AT WALDRONS,
CHRIST CHURCH FOR THE PURPOSE
OF ROAD IMPROVEMENT**

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in moving the passing of this Resolution, I just want to make one or two very brief comments.

In August 1979, the Ministry of Communications and Works, as it was then known, moved into Waldrons

No. 1 Tenantry Road in Christ Church to carry out some work on a piece of road there, and it involved encroachment on certain areas of land, including the piece of land which is the subject of this Resolution.

After the Ministry moved in to carry out its works, a letter was received. Before I say that, let me say that they actually made contact with the owner who was to some extent amenable to the construction of this road, but who subsequently got his lawyer to write an objection, and then after he was prevailed upon, Mr. Foster, the owner of the land, agreed that Government could carry on its works, and after the completion of the road he made a request for compensation, and this Resolution seeks to meet such compensation.

What I want to say, and what is of concern to me, is that Government is experiencing great difficulty in its efforts to improve the social amenities in districts in the country because of the obstinate behaviour of owners of land, whose properties will invariably be enhanced in value as a result of the improvements which will accrue from the construction of these modern roads, with the implementation of the necessary social services of water and electricity which will flow as a result.

I believe that the time has come when people who are greedy should be called upon to compensate in some way for any benefits which will accrue to them in large measure as a result. While nobody will seek to deny a person the rights which are theirs inherent in their ownership of property, it is unreasonable for landlords to believe that whenever improvements are to be made they must get their pound of flesh and, also, their drop of blood.

4.35 p.m.

Government in its massive social programme and massive road construction throughout the country, will be called upon from time to time to make enormous acquisitions of properties, and I want to take this opportunity to appeal to the social consciences of people not to be unreasonable in their requests for compensation or seek to take advantage of situations when the Ministry of Transport and Works move in to carry out these various improvements.

I recall very vividly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was in the Ministry of Communications and Works at the time, a number of people from the Checker Hall area wanted to get access to a piece of land — of course, they had a right of way to this land — but the owners of the adjoining land were extremely difficult in facilitating these people only to get a small piece of road.

These are problems which Government will face from time to time, and I hope that a situation will develop in which we will see people not so aggrieved as

they have been in the past and making such great demands upon the Government's purse in order that they can get compensation for every square foot of land which they feel they should concede.

People must bear in mind that when roads are put in they stand to benefit overall because there is development to the community, and therefore they should not always look at what they alone can get as a result.

With those few remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that brings us to the end of Government Business. Earlier in the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I indicated that I would revert to Question Time so as to give the reply to Question 29, asked by the Member for St. Michael South. So, Sir, I would like to revert to Question Time, if it be the pleasure of the House.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. Question No. 29 in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I should have mentioned, Sir, that the time would be for about half an hour, Sir. I would hardly think it would be more than that. Question time, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I presume we will allocate the same amount of time for Question Time now as it would be if the normal Standing Orders had not been suspended.

Question No. 29 standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Question No. 29 reads:-

"Will the Prime Minister indicate what is the difference in the Barbadian context between a Minister and a Minister of State?"

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 29 is as follows:

"The difference is the same as existed during the period when the honourable Member was a

Minister sitting in a Cabinet with Ministers of State."

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ask the Prime Minister, what is that difference?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The honourable Member should address his memory.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Prime Minister indicating that he will soon be a memory?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member will have to ask a Question. I do not consider that an appropriate question at this stage.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: So I have only asked one supplementary?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: One.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Thank you. Is the Minister aware that a Minister of State is in the general Westminster model not a full Minister?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: No, Sir, I am not so aware.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: A supplementary, Sir: to ask of the Prime Minister, in view of the explanation which he has given, and bearing in mind the clear difference in quality which has been exercised at the time when the honourable Member was Minister and now, will the Minister indicate whether it is his intention, in the light of his explanation, to create any more Ministers of State?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The answer to that question lies within the prerogative of the Prime Minister under the Constitution of Barbados.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Is the Prime Minister aware that the creation of Ministers of State is causing a measure of dissatisfaction among members of his party, including former Parliamentary Secretaries and other backbenchers?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am certainly not so aware. What I am aware of is that it is a rule of the House saying that honourable Members should not make statements and questions unless they are prepared to substantiate them.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: A supplementary, Sir: is it reasonable for honourable Members to assume that the dismissal of the Parliamentary Secretary was merely to pave the way for his appointment to a Ministry of State?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Could the honourable Member repeat his question?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The question was, would it be reasonable for honourable Members of this House to assume, in the light of the explanation given, that the dismissal of the Parliamentary Secretary was merely to pave the way for his appointment as a Minister of State?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not normal to ask an honourable Member if he is aware of either of his own actions or his own intentions. But despite the fact that honourable Members clearly wish to make this an occasion of, can I say, malicious comment, I would just like on the matter of a Minister of State to tell honourable Members..... 4.45 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the honourable Member who has asked that question would refer to Standing Order No. 16(2)(b) the honourable Member would find that the latter part of the question certainly is irrelevant to the original question which was asked, and therefore infringes the appropriate Standing Order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I wish to apologise to the Chair.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: It is worth making a comment that the appointment of Ministers of State is sometimes a convenient device available to Prime Ministers, because it is not in every case that a Minister of State needs the whole paraphernalia of his department, including the Permanent Secretary and other officials. It is therefore possible to appoint a Minister of State to share the services of Permanent Secretaries who might otherwise be unused and to relieve the burden on other Ministers who have a number of Permanent Secretaries and departments which can be devolved without increasing the burden to the taxpayer, and the appointment of a Minister of State would be recognised by honourable Members as representing some saving to the taxpayer in that it allows someone of Cabinet rank to handle a subject without necessarily expanding the bureaucracy.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As a supplementary. Sir,....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member has already asked three questions.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: One was out of order, Sir. Do I have one more then, Sir.

Taking into account the answer which the honourable Member has given concerning savings to the taxpayers, is it reasonable for this side of the House or this Honourable House to assume then that the appearance that there are in fact more Ministers than the honourable

Member indicated as the policy for his party, is in fact a saving rather than a burden on the taxpayers?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question is irrelevant to the main question. If the honourable Member wishes an answer to that question, I would advise him to ask a substantive question on the matter.

Parliamentary Question No. 20 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael North West, whom I do not now see in his seat.

The Minister is therefore entitled to lay the Reply to that Question as well as the reply to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 21, 22 and 23.

Parliamentary Question No. 24 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. John, the right honourable Leader of the Opposition, whom I do not now see in his seat. The answer should therefore be laid.

Parliamentary Question No. 25 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. Philip North.

QUESTION RE REPAIR OF ROADS IN ST. PHILIP

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of Transport and Works:

1. Is the Minister aware that the public roads in Lynchs, Bayfield, Eastbourne, Blades Hill No. 2, Thicketts and Vineyard are in need of repairs?
2. Will the Minister state what action, if any is being taken by Government to have those roads repaired?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 25, asked by the honourable member for St. Philip North is as follows:

"The Ministry is carrying out investigations to determine the areas in the island that need maintenance, and the areas in question will be considered during the financial year 1983-84."

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As a supplementary, Sir: in view of the fact that the holder of the post of Minister of Transport had in fact indicate that such an exercise had been carried out and that certain areas had been designated, can the Minister indicated whether there are any areas at all in Barbados where the exercise has been definitive and whether such a decision has been made? Can the Minister so indicate?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of areas that have been approved for road

improvement and some of those works are currently being carried out. I believe that the honourable Member lives in St. Michael West and he would see Odle Road being fixed. That is only one area, and if he looks around carefully he will see others throughout the island being fixed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As a supplementary: will the Minister indicate if there is any specific reason why my careful looking around cannot discover one at all located in the constituency of St. Michael West.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Perhaps the reason is that St. Michael West is already well served with roads.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a supplementary: I wonder if the Minister will indicate what guidelines he has laid down or what guidelines are in existence in order to ensure that all constituencies get a fair share of resources as far as the repair of roads is concerned?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Technical Division of the Ministry of Works has a survey team that goes around, and on a priority basis, depending upon the state of disrepair, we again, within the limited resources available, make priority allocations based upon how bad the roads are.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As a final supplementary, Sir: based on an assiduous continuous examination of the constituency of St. Michael West carried out by myself and on one occasion by the honourable Minister's predecessor in office, and bearing in mind that the predecessor indicated that the roadways in St. Michael West were among the worst he had seen, will the Minister still insist that St. Michael West is properly served, and if he now does not so insist, will he consider or indicate when St. Michael West might expect at least one of these roads to be fixed?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, St. Michael West is very fortunate indeed, because a very large allocation in the vote for road improvement has been spent on the Spring Garden Highway which runs, to a large extent, through St. Michael West.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that brings us to the end of today's proceedings.

As I indicated some time during the day, we are going to do the Estimates on Monday. I know my colleagues are well fortified, and I sincerely look forward to

the very interesting debate. It is true that I am tired hearing about the economy from the economist on that side, and I have already started to document the speeches made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. I am actually confident that whatever he is going to say on the Appropriation Bill would be what he said before about the economy from the time he was charged with the office of Shadow Minister of Finance, and I am confident that we will be hearing that on Monday.

I beg to move that this House do now stand adjourned until Monday, March 14, 1983, at 10 a.m.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, speaking on the motion, I just wish to raise a question for the consideration of the Leader of the House and, more particularly, the Ministers. We have been debating the Estimates now for the last three years using the new system. I wish to suggest that consideration be given to debating subheads within a Ministry as it is now set out to accommodate the computer.
5.55 p.m.

It is now necessary for a person to generalise for a number of areas under the particular Head. If that happens, what tends to occur, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that persons have to repeat themselves and make general statements to accommodate entire Ministries. It would seem to me that an examination of the subheads would allow a more succinct and cogent debate of specific areas, and I would submit that it would allow the presiding officer to keep persons more close to the particular subhead.

I am not discussing sub subheads, but if one looks at how the Estimates are laid out, the new system brought about by computerization, which was introduced, I believe about four years ago to my mind, causes a certain amount of wide range in the debate. And I wonder if the Government would consider examining the suggestion. If it is not acceptable, one would understand, but I would like then to consider examining it with a view to our debating the Heads as they come up more succinctly.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I think you may recall that in 1976 we approached the Members on that side to call the Heads so that they could fortify themselves with the appropriate information and we, in the meantime, would be at all times ready. It was bluntly refused on the premise that we were trying to outsmart them. That is what the Leader of the then Opposition said. I believe that is still their policy.

As Leader of the House I have no plans of changing the policy in debating the Estimates on this occasion as I have done in the past, and I believe you will be cuffing against a wall with a naked fist at this point in

time. This is one area that I am not going to give away anything to. When we offered it to you to make your suggestions, to sit on Committees.... and I think that at least you can respect the Standing Orders that when one Member is speaking that you should take your seat.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The honourable Member obviously did not understand.....

Hon L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I understand. I am not doing it, and it is point blank like that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Two honourable Members are on their feet. I do not believe that the honourable Member is on a point of order. If the honourable Member wants to rise on a point of elucidation to explain what he was saying, I will accept what he is saying.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, having said a point of order, and if Your Honour is allowing me to say a point of elucidation and continue, thank you very much, Sir.

The point I was making did not have to do anything with who would call the Heads or any such related matter. If one takes up the Estimates as they are prepared and open any page at random, you will see that Head 15, Cabinet Office, that is the page at which I opened, has (a) Executive Direction and Central Administration and, on the following page, it has Head 15, Cabinet Office, (b) Administration of Electoral Laws.

Now, Sir, a person who rises to debate this from either side, is forced necessarily to discuss the Executive Direction and Central Administration and the Electoral Office in the same speech, based on the system we have been using.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw the entire suggestion.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a matter which I consider would have to be raised when the House goes into Committee. This is not really a matter to be dealt with now. We are on a motion for adjournment. This matter really does not concern the House at this given time. I really believe that the matter should be discussed between the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On the motion for adjournment, and even on the withdrawn suggestion, I think honourable Members may have forgotten that we interpret the rules in these days less restrictively than they were interpreted when we were in Opposition.

In Opposition, the phrase that "a Member may speak for fifteen minutes at any one time" was interpreted by the then Chairman of Committees — truly, Sir, I have forgotten who it was; it was either Mr. Yearwood or Mr. Lowe — I believe it may have been Mr. Lowe — to mean once.

We have since reverted to the correct interpretation, which means you can speak for fifteen minutes at any one time. So all an honourable Member has to do is to get up and say that he is speaking on subhead 1 — speak, sit down; get up again, when he gets his chance, and speak on subhead 2.

This is how it was done before any of the honourable Members I see opposite were in the House, and it is the traditional way of doing it. And if honourable Members will take the time from the members, for St. James, St. Thomas or St. John, they will see how to handle themselves among the subheads.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Monday, March 14, 1983 at 10 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
5.05 p.m.

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