THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 13, 1984

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. o'clock on Tuesday, March 13, 1984.

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House)
Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams, Q.C., M.A., (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning)
Hon. H. B. St. John, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry)
Hon. H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. L. E. Sandiford, M.A. (Econ.)
Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, (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. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social Security, Sport and Community Services)
Mr. L. L. Sisnett, (Parliamentary Secretary)
Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs)
Mr. R. E. Brathwaite
Dr. D. G. Blackman, B.A., M.A., PhD.
Mr. A. Truss

Prayers were read by Fr. G. E. Vaughan.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, February 20, 1984.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of Tuesday, February 20, 1984, be taken as read.

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

The Minutes of Tuesday, March 6, 1984.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of Tuesday, March 6, 1984, be taken as read.

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

Messrs. W. O. FRANKLIN and H. A. BLACKMAN entered the Chamber and took their seats.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I have a number of items for today's Order Paper, and at this point, before laying the documents and giving the appropriate notices, I would just like to inform my colleagues on the other side, and the House, that there are some measures which I propose to do in all of their stages today.

I have had discussions with my colleague on the other side, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and I am still awaiting a reply from him.

I am commanded to lay the following:–

Statement showing the sums advanced to the Postmaster General for the payment of Money Orders for the months July to December 1983.

Statement showing Money Order Transactions through the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations for the period July to December 1983.

On behalf of the Honourable Attorney General I am commanded to lay the following:–

The Law Revision (Rectification of Omissions) (No. 2) Order 1984.

On behalf of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs, I am commanded to lay the following:–

The Markets and Slaughter-Houses (Amendment) Regulations, 1984.

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

Immigration (Forms and Fees) (Amendment) Regulations, 1984.

The Financial Estimates with Expenditure and Revenue for 1984–85.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

A Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Cane Garden, Bridgefield, St. Thomas, for providing recreational facilities.

A Resolution to approve of the lease of land and buildings at Weymouth to the Police Sports Club for recreational purposes and the development of a Sports Complex for members of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

A Resolution to grant the sum of $379 286 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1983–84, Part I – Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1983–84, No. 30, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

This is one of the Resolutions I propose to do in all its stages today.

A Resolution to grant the sum of $35 505 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Annexed Estimates 1983–84, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1983–84, No. 31, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

This is another Resolution I propose to do today, Sir.

A Resolution to grant the sum of $52 545 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1983–84, Part II – Capital, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1983–84, No. 32, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

This is the final Resolution for today.

I also beg to give notice of the following:–

A Bill to amend the Severance Payments Act.

A Bill to repeal the Druggist Act and make new provision for the control of the practice of Pharmacy and for the registration and control of persons admitted to practise and exercise the business or calling of Pharmacy.

A Bill to grant the sum of money out of the Consolidated Fund and to appropriate the same for the service of Barbados for the year ending 31st March 1985.

A Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Those are the matters on the Order Paper, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to the information given by the Leader of the House, that he proposes to deal with three money Resolutions in all their stages today, I would just like to state that indeed he did indicate to me, minutes before the House was due to start, that he intended to deal with some measures, and I indicated that I would give consideration to that matter. But I am wondering, in view of the fact that we are still giving consideration to the matter on this side, whether the Leader can give us some information as to why the matters are so rushed and so late, because I believe you were in a similar position last week.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I think my colleague has been a member of the last Government in the position of a Minister, and I think he has recognized that there seems to be something which no Government can get out of, that is, that you have these matters coming on at the end of the financial year, that there are always a number of outstanding matters to be settled.

I am not saying how the Opposition should conduct their business, but, in the light that we are going to have

to debate the Estimates in just a few days, I would think that I would wait, if I were in the Opposition – I am not saying how you must conduct your business – until the Estimates and fire whatever guns I have to fire, although they probably have in blanks, rather than failing to do this here today to accommodate the Government, if I may use that term, because I am not one who believes in numbers, who believes that because we have the numbers, we are going to do them, take a vote and then the numbers win out.

I think that my colleague is well aware of the fact that this is something which happens in every Government. Coming to the end of the financial year, there are a number of outstanding matters, which are unforeseen, and therefore we have to come to the House to get these provisions passed for the purpose of spending what money there is outstanding before the end of the financial year.

That is as good an explanation as I can give. I really am in no position to tell you what the facts of life are.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member for St. Michael South satisfied?

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Leader of the House has attempted to give an explanation for the rushed nature of this Resolution, and we will now give consideration to our response.

12.25 p.m.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

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

A Bill to amend the Severance Payment Act.

A Bill to repeal the Druggist Act and make new provision for the control of the practice of Pharmacy and for the registration and control of persons admitted to practise and exercise the business or calling of Pharmacy.

A Bill to grant a sum of money out of the Consolidated Fund and to appropriate the same for the service of Barbados for the year ending 31st March, 1985.

A Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS entered the Chamber and took his seat.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

MOTION TO SUSPEND SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, I am awaiting word from my colleague, with whom I get on very well. Of course this, is not in any way asking for any quarter, because you know I do not give any. I do not know if he is awaiting other Members. Some of them, of course, would not come to prayers, so it is quite natural he would have to make a decision with those who are here. I am awaiting some response from him before I proceed.

What I will do is to move that this sitting be now suspended for half an hour. This would give the Opposition enough time to sit down and determine exactly what they would like to do, and then we can always come back.

I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for half an hour.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Speaking on the suspension, I should like to point out that this suspension has nothing at all to do with giving the Opposition time to study anything. It is clear that all the Resolutions have not yet been circulated, and the Government, in its inefficiency in this matter, is now begging for time. That is all that is happening.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, a week ago I did not attend Parliament because my papers were delivered at 12 o'clock.

Certain remarks made at this point by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central at this stage were ordered struck from the Record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to have it clearly understood that Parliament stand separate and apart from the Ministries of Government, and you are well

aware of that, and you cannot cast aspersions on any Minister in here.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know what you mean by aspersions. What I am saying is that I am thoroughly dissatisfied with the notice which is being given to the Opposition for dealing with matters before Parliament, and this is going on week after week.

I am also concerned about the fact that the affairs of Parliament should be better organised, particularly as we have a Minister whose sole responsibility, as far as I am aware, is for Parliamentary Affairs, a function which was performed in the previous Parliament by someone who performed the duties of Deputy Prime Minister and held several other major Ministries in this country at the same time. What problems he may have in relation to Ministries or Government as a whole is another matter.

My concern, as a member of the Opposition, is with the proper functioning of Parliament, and with the opportunity being given to members of the Opposition to study in detail documents which have been presented to this House, in order that they may make a useful and considered contribution to debates in this Parliament. It is as simple and straightforward as that. I will go along with the decision of my colleagues, but, as far as I am concerned, I would not even agree to deal with these matters at all.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, it is very uncharitable of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) to make an attack on the Governor-General of Barbados and on members of the Senate, and it is out of sheer ignorance. He is in no position to determine anything about Parliament.

Let me give you a lesson in parliamentary procedures. It is uncharitable and discourteous to say that you do not agree with how the Governor-General is running his office. That is the first thing.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order: at no time did I mention the Governor-General in anything I said, or the Senate, so that is a matter for him. If he wishes to go down that line, that is his problem, not mine.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Since the composition of Parliament is the House of Assembly, the Senate and the Governor-General, I can only conclude that he is referring to all the Members of Parliament, the Governor-General and all the Senators, and that is the ignorance in which he lives repeatedly.

He made reference to items coming down late. I believe that any person can testify to the fact that in a whole financial year measures seldom come down late; they are laid around the end of February and go into the month of March. The records will show this, because if measures come down late and they are not dealt with in all their stages, they are held over until the following Friday.

He is dissatisfied with the running of Parliament. People are dissatisfied with him as a doctor. People are dissatisfied with him as a parliamentarian and as a professional man. You yourself, Sir.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do not let us be personal. Make your contribution in respect of Parliament, because under the Standing Orders, you have to give notice that you intend to deal with any public figure in any other respect. Let us keep it very parliamentary.
12.35 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, Sir. We are going to keep it that way. People are dissatisfied with the Member for St. Michael South Central at all levels of his life. Because of his conduct in here, which you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have seen, he almost brought bloodshed into this country a few years ago as a result of a ruling which was given by the Chair. Again, today, he objected to a ruling. He even disobeyed your orders.

I think that something is wrong with the Member for St. Michael South Central. Some screws need tightening. Dr. Mahy should be his best friend before he comes in here on Tuesdays.

We have all the co-operation that can be had from the Leader of the Opposition and his Deputy. Whenever the Member for St. Michael South Central is in here, there is some sort of attack on people, about who works half day for a full day's pay; people's medical affairs are talked out in here by the Member for St. Michael South Central. Therefore, people are dissatisfied with him at all levels as a human being.

I regret, Sir, that I have to start the day in this vein. The Member for St. Michael South got up and he said that he would respond. I set out, therefore, to suspend the sitting for half an hour. The Deputy Leader sat down, and that should have been the end of it. But there goes the parliamentary guerilla, Sir. He is easily the worst person I have ever seen in Parliament! The Member for St. Michael South Central is the worst Member of Parliament that I have ever seen in my eighteen years in Parliament! God help you! You need looking after! You need psychiatric treatment!

This is a simple matter; the Leader agrees, the Deputy Leader agrees; but this is what the debate has to go into.

If the Member is dissatisfied with the operation of the House of Assembly, you are the Chief Executive Officer of Parliament, Sir, and he is dissatisfied with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not with me, not with the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. He has no idea of what is really going on.

I hope that my colleague, the Member for St. Michael South, would just respond as to whether we can proceed with the Resolutions, rather than having a vote taken on it.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I understand it, there is a motion before the House for a suspension for half of an hour.

As far as we over here are concerned, when the matters come to hand, we will be prepared to deal with them under protest.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The question that the sitting be suspended until 1.10 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.
12.40 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, as I indicated before the suspension, I would be very happy to do these three money Resolutions.

I beg to move that Order No. 3 be the instant Order of the day.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has moved that the matters before the House be taken as Order No. 3 and that they be done today.

If there are no objections, leave would therefore be granted for Order No. 3. Mr. Clerk, please call Order No. 3.

Order No. 3 was called – To move that the House resolves itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of this island.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee of Supply.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1983–84 NO. 32

HEAD 80 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Subhead 3 – Improvement of the Archives Department.

SUBHEAD 7 – BLAIN

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, of the $52 000 which is required, $17 000 is to meet the cost of repairs to the air-conditioning system; the other $35 000 is to meet the cost of equipment and three air-conditioning units. The equipment should be housed in an air-conditioned environment.

This is rather clear to us, Sir, as we need to have this money. The $35 000 is for BLAIN and the $17 000 is for improvement of the Archives Department.

I beg to move that Head 80 do now stand part.

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

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

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, both of these supplementary requests deal with sums of money relating to air-conditioning units. That is, if I can understand the Note to Subhead 7, Item 8, BLAIN.

I believe that it is not very often that we get to discuss these very sophisticated concepts in library, archives and informational arrangements; and BLAIN is one of these newer kinds of institutions which I do not think is well understood, either in terms of its aims and objectives or, indeed, in terms of its achievements. I do not know if I could be wrong on this. I am not even certain if the Prime Minister himself fully understands what it is all about, because I believe there are still some questions being asked about the BLAIN.....
1.20 p.m.

Asides

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I believe he understands some of it, and understands that it is a very costly operation, a matter which would be of great concern to him.

I think when we are dealing with a supplementary such as this one, especially when we are dealing with a relatively new matter, that it behoves the Minister to give us some kind of information as background to what we are dealing with while he is introducing it. I really do not think that it is satisfactory just to come and say we wish $35,323 for BLAIN. We do not even understand perhaps what it is all about. Is it BLAIN or "BLAME"? What is it? I hear some people calling it "BLAME".

We would like to know if any problems inside of the Public Library may be due to the operation of BLAIN. Are things working smoothly with this vast concept? I understand it is even stretching its arm into Parliament itself. It that true? I really would like the Minister to give us some more information about BLAIN; tell us exactly how it has been operating, whether it is on target in terms of what it was supposed to do, whether there are any teething problems or any banana skins or mango skins which the people may be encountering, which will cause some slips and falls, which would create problems for the Government.

I reserve my judgment on this particular matter because I do not have the information on which to debate it at this stage. I am seeking for some information to enlighten not only myself, but other Members as well.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): I am surprised, Mr. Chairman, that the honourable member is confessing to ignorance on this occasion. I know that the honourable Member is not ignorant, I know fully well that the honourable member is well aware of the origin of BLAIN and the purpose of BLAIN. What the honourable Member is really doing is trying to stoke fire.

Obviously, a sophisticated tool such as the Barbados Library Archives Information Network, because of its very nature, is likely to cause a little jealousy among the departments, particularly among those people who feel that they should have it. This is inevitable.

I do not think the honourable Member could query the concept. The idea of utilizing a computer in Barbados which has access to international data ought to be a commendable matter which should be deserving of the support of all honourable Members of this House and all thinking members of Barbados. Who heads it, or who does not head it, ought to be a petty matter in relation to the grandiose and laudable objective. I would like to see the day, and I make no bones about it at all, where we have an information network from which all of the information records of land law, all Government records, could be assessed by professional people from their own offices. I would also like to see us have an international connection, whether BLAIN is the instrument, irrespective of other pertinent information.

This idea that you must have every little Tom, Dick and Harry having his own international network should die an early death. I would hope that the honourable Member would lend his influence to try, once and for all, to squash this idea that one cannot have some degree of centralisation in this area. Who is going to pay for more than one service? Not the Government of Barbados!

Let us try to encourage people who are involved in this area to think positively for once. They must not think of their own petty, little kingdom. We have suffered too much already in this country because of people thinking only of their own little petty kingdoms.

A little later, when we come for air-conditioning of the Archives, I am going to have my say about a very unfortunate situation which has developed, that it took this Government six years to try and get across the idea that the Government is very serious that all of the records in certain departments of Barbados should be micro-filmed and micro-fiched. If we do not do it, we would be lending our hands to a criminal waste of taxpayers money, because a lot of office space is being taken up in Barbados which, hithertofore, was necessary before modern methods of preserving and storing data were devised.

BLAIN is part of a movement to bring to Barbados the technology which is taken for granted nowadays in all progressive societies. This Government believes that Barbados should be in the forefront of these technological developments and, irrespective of whose corns we crush to introduce it, it will be introduced.

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

1.30 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1983–84, NO. 30 – $379 286

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Mr. Chairman, various sums are required under this Head to meet the payment of National Insurance contributions and Utilities for the Registration Department, the Supreme Court and the Magistrates' Courts. In the case of the Process Serving Department, sums are required for Travel and for Maintenance of Property.

I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, I am really a little bit disturbed about the District C Magistrate's Court. We have been having considerable problems in that particular area due to a shortage of magistrates at that court. The magistrate who is assigned has been acting as Registrar on numerous

occasions, and there have been cases which have been postponed 15 times at District C. It is beginning to be a very great burden to the people of that area who have matters in the District C Court.

It is not only costly – because every day they have to give up a day's work – but it is frustrating. There is a particular case I know of where the lady has been there on 16 occasions and the case has not been concluded. I do not see the Minister of Legal Affairs in his seat at the moment, unfortunately, but I want to know exactly what is happening to make sure that this type of situation in the Magistrate's Courts is improved to make it possible for speedier resolution of matters before the courts.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Chairman, I should like to take the opportunity to make an observation. We are spending a lot of money on the construction of multiple towers and Central Bank offices for the Governor of the Central Bank and staff, but, under Head 28, Subhead 5, the Supreme Court of Barbados has been suffering from unsatisfactory accommodation for a very long time, and I would have thought that, if the Government had its priorities right, the construction of a new Supreme Court, or what the honourable member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) elects to describe as a Hall of Justice, or some grandiloquent expression like that, should have been high on the Government's list of priorities. It is a question of priorities.

I am not saying that one of these days we may not need more accommodation for the Central Bank, or we may not need more roundabouts when the traffic gets heavier. Fortunately for me, I do not do a lot of work in the Supreme Court, but the conditions in there are really almost insufferable, and I hope that a very high priority will be given to the construction of new premises for the High Court of Barbados.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): I appreciate what the honourable Leader of the Opposition has said, and, as Acting Minister of Legal Affairs, I will endeavour to deal with the points which he raised. Indeed, I suppose as substantive Minister of Finance I can handle both problems.

I do not agree with the honourable Member that the court should have a greater priority than the Central Bank building. I cannot concede that you would build courts which would contain office space to rent out. I know that in the fair city of Dublin, downstairs in the law library is where the barristers have their tables where they interview clients, but such historical oddities would not belong in a new Supreme Court building of Barbados.

The Central Bank building has an economic value. Also, central banks have access to sources of finance not given to Governments seeking to build new courts. Central banks can organise with other central banks in other parts of the world to borrow money at very low rates of interest and build a building in effect, out of its prospective profits, writing off its cost at something like 2 per cent per year.

The financing of the Central Bank was available only to the Central Bank. It would not have been available for socially more worthy projects in the form of low cost housing, or perhaps, even more productive, the building of factories or whatever in the nature of productive investments, more than the Ministry of Industry might be able to find.

The building of the Supreme Court is a different matter. It will have to be paid for out of taxation. It started life at $14 million, and it escalated to $16 million. We have already paid $2 million for drawing the plans, and it may seem incredible, but the technical services have already been prepaid. I am not altogether satisfied that we took the right course in respect of our approach to obtaining the professional services, but there it is. The construction cost by now will have escalated, so I would imagine it will be more than ten times the cost of the professional services when it is built.

There is also a new factor which has entered into the situation. For years the Jewish community in Barbados has been agitating against the demolition of the old synagogue, and when the machines were actually, as I understood it, on the site, they finally summoned a series of arguments which have persuaded the Government that it will indeed be a desecration of an ancient religious monument, of major importance to the history of Judaism in the western hemisphere. I think we were told that that is the second oldest synagogue in the western hemisphere, the one in Curacao being the oldest among the surviving structures.

The Jewish community has managed to reconstruct colour photographs of the old synagogue in some particularity, and has given a pledge to search for the synagogue furniture, the Holy Ornaments and various other things, including things of worth. There were some even set into a wall at Ilaro Court. I have instructed that they be taken out for safe keeping, and I very much hope they were kept safely, because they will be required for the restoration of the synagogue. They are also undertaking, for example, to restore the exterior staircase and the interior galleries, and the Government is now negotiating with the Jewish community to open the synagogue as a major tourist attraction.

I myself have discussed the matter personally with Lord Bernstein of Granada Television, and sent him the photographs and other correspondence, about possible participation by British Jews in the restoration process.

1.40 p.m.

Since, however, the synagogue is situated exactly in the middle of what is supposed to be the entrance hall of the new Supreme Court building, certain difficulties have ensued, and we have asked the planners to turn the building around. So instead of having the entrance facing towards Magazine Lane and Pinfold Street, we wish to turn it around so it will have the entrance facing towards James Street and Coleridge Street.

It may be possible. There may be room on the side merely to twist the building. The Supreme Court is planned as a Y-shaped building, with a very shallow Y and no foot. We are planning to have the Y pointing in a different direction. The synagogue, then, will be a free-standing building, and Codds building will be a free-standing building in the back court, so to speak, of the Supreme Court. I am hopeful that this can be done, but the Government is prepared for the cost of amending the plans, if such should prove necessary, making the angle more acute, so as to let the synagogue be within the two wings of the Supreme Court or whatever.

What I am quite satisfied with is that a restored synagogue, maintained by a body interested in Judaism, and set out as a museum of the history of the Jews in the western hemisphere will certainly be a new amenity, and an addition to the tourist facilities of Bridgetown.

The building of the Supreme Court has been post-poned, for financial reasons, for two years running. It is no secret that the Ministry of Finance and Planning is hostile to the expenditure of this money, which, although it may make a very substantial contribution to employ-ment in the building industry for a couple of years, has no economic value once it is constructed. If you spend half a million dollars in building a factory, you are giving potential employment to 100 or 150 people for all time, so it is clearly better to spend $1 million on building a factory than to pay 100 people $10 000 a year, for a year.

This is the argument of the Ministry of Planning, and in these past two years of economic restraint, the argument has prevailed. We were to have started in 1984/85. I think it will have to be postponed all together to 1985/86.

But it is not being dismissed from consideration. We fully accept the argument of the Leader of the Opposition, and we appreciate his interest in the matter. I think he has done us a service by mentioning this here today, but I think he will have to wait one more year, and then proceed.

I think the honourable Member wants to say some-thing. I have more to say, but I will give way.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I could not resist the temptation to tell the honourable Member a story when he got up and said "as Acting Minister of Justice."

I once had a Cabinet meeting in which a Minister kept on every five minutes saying, "as Acting Minister of Home Affairs," he wanted to advise the Government on this, that and the other, and after he had said it for the fifth time I turned to him and I said "Sleepy, do you realize that you are the Attorney General of Barbados? What is this foolishness about acting Minister of Home Affairs?"

The honourable Member is Prime Minister of Bar-bados. He does not have to say that he is acting Minister of Justice. He is Prime Minister, so anything that he says, he says *ex cathedra* and *ex summa monte,* as it were. I could not resist the temptation of telling him that story. Having heard him, I thought I was hearing one of my former colleagues exulting in the fact that he was acting in another capacity.

I wish to congratulate him in getting the Jewish community to take an interest in the synagogue, because I have been trying for years.

It is a great pity that when the late Mr. Hutchinson, of Hutchinson and Banfield, parted company with the synagogue, it showed that they did not take it up then, but only expressed interest in the churchyard. The person who did a great service was another solicitor, Mr. E. Maxwell Shilstone, who wrote a very well known treatise on the inscriptions in that graveyard. I hope that, in the construction of the new courts, the graveyard will not be obliterated, because some of my very good friends are buried there.

The honourable Member spoke of the Ark of the Covenant, of which there is a picture in Mr. Shilstone's book, which the honourable Member has probably seen – I think his father had a copy of that particular book. I have my own copy, not the one that Sir Grantley had. I do not know if this is what is now embedded in the wall of Ilaro Court, but I hope that the Ark of the Covenant can be recaptured, as it were, and put in its former setting.

Lord Bernstein has already done a lot for the arts in Barbados. When we were establishing NIFCA he helped us a lot with some of the equipment, and I hope that neither the Jewish community, nor the Government, could expect that Lord Bernstein is going to pull his pocket and be totally responsible for the restoration of the synagogue. We always look at people outside to do things for us in this respect instead of putting our hands in our own pockets and making our contributions.

I do not entirely agree with the honourable Member that the Central Bank building is not an imposition on the taxpayers of this island. I have never agreed on that theory, because the Central Bank Act itself said that half of the profits go into the Consolidated Fund and the rest of the profits, or certain proportions – I am not pretending to quote verbatim from the Central Bank Act – allocated to certain specific purposes, which are definitely for the use and benefit of the Government of this country, and, in general, the taxpayers of this country. So if half of the profits have to go into the Consolidated Fund, and you take out some of the profits to pay for the Central Bank building, then the taxpayers are paying directly, by having less paid into the Consolidated Fund, and therefore they have to pay more taxes. That is how I arrive at that.

Quite apart from that, I heard from the honourable Member that the central banks help one another by making low interest loans. This is the first time I have heard that that building is going to be the beneficiary of a low interest loan from any central bank. The last thing I heard was that some financial group in Nigeria was negotiating with the Central Bank to advance a substantial part of the money required for its construction.
1.50 p.m.

Do not ask me how I know, but the group was operating out of Trinidad and Tobago. I do not know what happened to the negotiation then. It broke down, but certainly there was no other central bank offering at that time to lend money to Dr. Blackman for the construction of that building.

I think that one ought to disabuse Dr. Blackman's mind that this is his little project and that he is not accountable to the taxpayers, or to Parliament of Barbados, for the expenditure of that money. It is already the costliest building per square foot, which I knew long before Mr. Miles Rothwell said so. I can still do arithmetic, and all one has to do is to divide the cost by the number of square feet. I did not have to wait for a structural engineer like Mr. Miles Rothwell to tell me that.

I am not going to tell the honourable Member for St. Thomas, the honourable Prime Minister, anything that he can attack Mr. Miles Rothwell on; all of us make mistakes, and when he is passing the building at Martindales Road, the one just before you get to the hospital, he will see that it is sloping at a certain angle. He can ask Mr. Miles Rothwell how it got like that. I think it is the Nutrition Centre. Before they put up the building, I said, "This was the Deanery, I used to catch crabs in the crab holes out here, it is going to sink." He said he was a structural engineer and that they are accustomed to doing this. Go and look at the angle of it now. But his arithmetic is still correct on the Central Bank.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: If the honourable Member would give way on a point of order; I am trying to find out if this nutrition centre is the building right beside the Hospital.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Yes, the one that is sloping.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Do you mean where the Deanery used to be?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Yes.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Isn't that the same place that you intended to put the polytechnic?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: No, no. That was already built. The polytechnic was going to be where you have the cricket ground, built on piles. What they did there was to float what they called a raft, and I said it was not going to hold, you would have to drive piles, and he sat down in front of 40 people and said they knew what they were doing. If you check on the files, since you are so fond of checking files, you will find that the polytechnic was going to be on piles, which were to be driven until they got to foundation. There is a difference in construction.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, just for information: is that why it would have cost more money going under than coming up? Is that correct? I am just trying to get my bearings in connection with this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am saying that Mr. Miles Rothwell's arithmetic is still impeccable, whatever his knowledge of Barbadian conditions might be. This brings me now to my third point.

There was a time in Barbados when all of our public buildings were constructed by the Ministry of Communications and Works, as it was then. We were able to build up an expertise in that Ministry not only amongst the engineers, but amongst the foremen and the workers, because every public project in Barbados, from the Ministerial Buildings in Bay Street to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and many other structures in the environs of Parliament, including the Treasury Building, was constructed by the Ministry of Communications and Works.

When you do have that Ministry doing the constructions, there are two things that happen. First they

come under the purview and inspection of the Committee on Public Accounts. We know where the money is going and we can check on how the money is spent. You have the expertise built up amongst your own staff, and you come out much more economically, no matter what people might say.

Captain Tomlin did a magnificent job on the Ministerial Buildings and on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. You would be surprised to know that Captain Tomlin, in building the Queen Elizabeth Hospital – I hope I am not saying anything which might in any way detract from his professional expertise – drew his plans as he went along. He came to a water course and he went back, as he did in Bay Street with the Ministerial Buildings, and he designed as he went along. There was no hold up, no three or four years drawing plans, but now we hear today that we have spent $2 million on plans alone on work which will be going to foreign contractors.

I checked with one of the engineers from the Canadian Development Agency just a couple of weeks ago, and he assured me that 80 per cent of the total amount of money spent on any of these buildings here in Barbados does not remain in the country at all. He said that whereas before we could have a 40:60 or 50:50 ratio of local content and overseas materials and so on, it is now 80 per cent going overseas and only 20 per cent remaining in this island on labour and so on. That cannot help the economy of a country which has a balance of payments problem.

I think I should inform the Prime Minister of something that he probably knows already. Every time they bring in a D-9 or any kind of earth-moving equipment, or a crane, they do not charge you rent for that. For instance, they charge you the total cost of the crane and the cost of moving it into Barbados, and if they decide not to take it back out of the country, if they sell it here in Barbados, they sell it at a profit. In construction like the building over there, Higgs and Hill have already charged you in that job for the total cost of that crane. Every single contractor coming from overseas to do a job does that. In addition to that, the average profit of a foreign contractor is something like 40 per cent of the total construction cost.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: We went through a bad period because there was a boon in Barbados during our regime, and a lot of our engineers went to work with private firms. We went through a bad period because we could not even get, without any reflection on anybody, a highly qualified person to head the Ministry of Works – I do not mean at the ministerial level, I mean on the engineering side – with the mentality of people in the Civil Service.

The situation was such that Permanent Secretaries did not agree that anybody, except a Minister, should get a bigger salary than they. They even believed at one time that a Minister should not get a bigger salary than they! So you could be the greatest plastic surgeon in the world, and a Permanent Secretary did not believe that a plastic surgeon should get more money than he gets, or that an engineer, Chief of the Ministry of Communications and Works, who has $200 million, or a sum like this $180 million, in capital works, should get more money than $3,432 a month, if that is the salary of a Permanent Secretary.

That is the mentality, so the MTW got run down in that way. The sooner we can build back up that kind of expertise, the sooner we will get a better quality of workman.

We had people in the Ministry of Communications and Works at the level of junior foreman who could read plans on any building at all. When we give out this work to foreign contractors, we have to issue work permits for all kinds of people, even carpenters and masons, and I understand that in one celebrated case in the north, even security guards. Do not ask me what place it is. Do not provoke me now to say that, because we are not on that. I will do that another time, and I will reserve that for the Deputy Prime Minister when we talk.

It is a fallacy to think first that the Central Bank is not going to cost the taxpayers anything. Secondly, I deplore that we are employing so many foreign firms to come in here and do work which we, Barbadians, have been accustomed doing. This building was built by the Department of Works in Barbados with Barbadian labour, Barbadian stone masons, Barbadian stone cutters and everything else, this building in which we are, which has been here now over 100 years, I believe; I think we should continue in that tradition.

2.00 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I have always commented that if there is one time of year during which the right honourable Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW) reminds us that he was head of the Government for fifteen years, and that he was is some way qualified for that position, and learnt something in that position, it is Estimates time. We always appreciate his contributions to debates around this time, and I think that what he has said now is but another example of the contribution which he can make. I hope the tone of the Estimates next week will remain at the level which he has started at today, and which, I am sure, he will set in his speech on the Second Reading.

I feel constrained to agree with most of what he said. I do not think that, in fact, as much as 80 per cent of contracts do go out. A little less that half would go

out on imported materials, perhaps 40 percent, but we have tried to make sure that the margins are not so great as to allow percentages of that sort to leave the island on the award of a foreign contract.

We are building the cement plant to keep even more of the money in the island. The Cement Plant itself to take one of two examples, is being built by foreign contractors. We simply do not have the expertise in Barbados to do the high speed concrete pouring that is necessary to put up those silos at the cement plant.

I went around the cement plant on Friday. There is a massive investment, much of the work being clearly beyond the experience of any Barbadian contractor. What Barbadian contractor could you get to put up the precipitation tower, the kiln and the special concrete buildings involved? The cement plant contains massive electrical generation systems, and it contains entirely new technology. We were obliged to use foreign contractors for that. We were very fortunate to have been able to negotiate a turn-key contract which, when we compare it with what the Trinidadians are having to pay for the revamping of their cement plant, I am satisfied that we have done well in negotiating that.

The Central Bank building may be on a slightly different stage. No Barbadian firm, not even MTW, has ever built a building of that size and sophistication. It is true it is very expensive and all the rest. It is also true that the first tender for the building was for $20 million more than we ultimately agreed to pay. In fact, all the tenders were refused. We said we would not build the building at all at those prices, and there was a re-negotiation.

A great number of concessions were insisted on at Cabinet. The Deputy Prime Minister deserves very considerable commendation for bringing his own knowledge of the building business, and the building potential of firms in Barbados, to bear on the situation. We have succeeded in restricting the right of the overseas contractors to unlimited work permits. We have limited their rights to the perks that these people ask for such as tax free salaries – they do not even want to pay the Transport Levy and the Health Levy, although they may benefit from them when they are in Barbados – so I do not think that it is fair to characterize that contract as being one in which there is a rip-off by foreigners.

We also have to consider something else. Barbados is a member of the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank. When projects are being financed with funds from those agencies, it is not possible for the Government to insist on local contracting. The contracting must, by the rules of the agency, be generally open, and it is not always that local contractors can either meet the pre-qualifications conditions or bid satisfactorily. The situation where C. O. Williams and Company was able to bid a couple of million dollars less than all the foreign contractors for the building of a road was a little bit unusual.

We also, while thinking of C. O. Williams and Company, have to bear in mind that we are moving into the multinational contractors business, too. There are Barbadian firms, that is one, which, by their expertise, have become certainly multi-Caribbean contracting companies. You cannot discriminate against foreign companies and then expect that other countries would stand by and award contracts to C. O. Williams, or whoever.

We have probably benefitted more from the massive works done by C. O. Williams in St. Lucia – the construction of a whole oil terminal, a couple of hundred million dollars; the building of twenty schools, almost as an after-thought, as a gift from the Hess Oil Company to the Government and people of St. Lucia – than all the profits which have gone abroad to foreign contractors working in Barbados. And C. O. Williams is not the only contractor seeking to enter the overseas business. I noticed others interesting themselves greatly, for example, in completing the Grenada airport.

I was very amused when I had a conversation with Mr. C. O. Williams himself, and told him that I heard that one of his competitors was negotiating with a British firm, hopefully to finish the airport in Grenada. Mr. Williams replied to me, "I am not negotiating with anybody, I am waiting to negotiate with the American contractor who is going to get the contract from the Americans to finish the work." The situation, therefore cuts both ways.

Those are the defensive points which I am making in respect of foreign contracting. We share the honourable Member's sentiments, but we fear that, in today's terms they are not always practical in today's terms.

As far as MTW is concerned, the honourable Member has put the whole matter in a nutshell. When Mr. Tomlin was there, he was a very outstanding man who well understood the economics of building in countries that do not have very much money, building soundly and reliably in conditions where elaborate contracting could not be handled.

You may remember that when we talked of building a Hall of Justice in Barbados for $14 million, the Trinidadians were negotiating to build one for $140 million. The Central Bank is building a headquarters for $70 million. The Trinidadians are building a financial complex, Central Bank headquarters and Ministry of Finance, for $1 billion. Therefore, we are a very small bearer in the international contracting states.

I am negotiating now with the Turf Club, and if "Let's Go To The Races" continue at its present rate for much longer, they will have $10 million in their hands, which I am suggesting that they should put towards a new race track. In Trinidad, the perimeter road at the new race track by itself started at $40 million, and ended up, along with the car parking space, at $100 million. Therefore, we are really not the worst when it comes to the outflow of funds to foreign contractors.

MTW cannot handle some of the work in this day and age. We cannot attract any longer, at the salaries we pay, perhaps for the very reason the honourable member mentioned, people of the quality of Captain Tomlin.

We had Mr. Matthews. In order to get Mr. Matthews to work at all on Government projects, you had to allow him to work on two; more or less work full-time on one for the salary, and then work in his own time on the other for half the salary. And when we thought that we had attracted him, he has come and put a case to us that he has been requested to help another Caribbean island "which really has a greater need than Barbados for expertise at his level." He has asked if he can be permitted to go abroad and enjoy a tax free salary, considerably greater than any salary we could offer him here. These are our talented people.
2.10 p.m.

The work on the building we are speaking of was put in the hands of a MTW architect. When he saw what work was involved, he indicated that he could not see his way to do that kind of work for the $1600 a month, or whatever it is people at his level were being paid.

I recently held very cordial discussions with the National Union of Public Workers about a great number of topics relating to the conditions of service and wages of public employees. We have agreed on a regrading exercise, to be carried out later this year, in which one of the areas for examination will be the area of technical people.

I really do not think it is fair to some of the competent young people, for example, road engineers, who we have taken up from the university, sent abroad and trained, and given them experience, now that they can do a lot of good, solid road design work, to have their total emoluments work out to $2 200 a month, or some sum like that, when they are working as counterpart staff alongside of North Americans, with no more qualifications than they, who enjoy a tax-free salary – twice as much, in U.S. dollars as our people in Barbados get, and on which they have to pay a tax. We are not paying the foreigners! These are people coming here under technical assistance programmes. Under those conditions it is very hard to attract the people to MTW, who can do the work that MTW did in the old times.

I must, however, say, since the honourable Member has mentioned the Public Buildings, that the Public Buildings were bulit by the Works Department in those days, and at the time when it was built, no better Gothic building than this was going up anywhere in the world. This was a building which, when it was built in the 1860s in Barbados, was comparable to the neo-Gothic churches that were being built all over Victorian England, by people who had been stone masons, by ancestry, perhaps for 700 years, no doubt the descendants of the original Gothic masons. This stained glass – of course, I do not think anybody in Barbados actually put this glass together – is of the same quality as the glass that was being put into those Victorian churches that constitute 60 per cent or 70 per cent stock of the Anglican Church buildings in Britain at the present time.

But the world has changed since then. The B.M.L.A. was a building which could have been built in Boston or Philadelphia at the time, it was no smaller than commercial buildings being built in North America, but Barbados has been left behind in building techniques. I do not think we can now make the approach to that level of competence.

I know that MTW, has done a brilliant job with the addition to the House of Assembly, that addition just backing the honourable Members, in matching it with the old Gothic. I told Mr. Harold Griffith then, when we were in Opposition, that I did not believe he could match the old work, and he merely smiled in his inscrutable way and proceeded to surprise us.

The reconstructions which were done in here were done very quickly and cheaply. All of these mahogany doors were done by MTW. But I do not know if MTW could have possibly thought that it was going to build the Central Bank Building. They just do not have the people who could have done that kind of work. They said that they could not finish the Post Office. Having bought a crane, possibly to get the contract to build the Post Office, they said that they could not finish it, and a Guyanese contractor, with whom the Government is well satisfied from its earlier works, has come in to do the work.

At the moment an institutional study of the Ministry of Transport and Works is going on. Indeed there has been at least a preliminary report, and they have given us some ideas on how to strengthen the Ministry. We would like to rebuild it, because if there is one thing that is absolutely sure about MTW, it is that it has the staff to build anything. MTW has a work force of over 2 000 people, which so far exceeds the number of workmen at any work site in Barbados that if numbers alone could produce sky-scrapers, we would have the Empire State Building in Church Village and not merely the Central Bank Building.

I hope that we can get some better value for our money in due course, and I very much welcome the

assurance implicit given by the Leader of the Opposition that the Public Accounts Committee will be keeping an overview of expenditures by Government departments in these construction fields. I would advise him to look at the Housing Authority and see some of the things, even in our time, not infelicities of the same sort of which we complained in the past, but circumstances where Ministers have discovered that you have 400 men assigned to a building site who do virtually no work for a month because there is a shortage of metal windows or some kind of bottleneck. That is what we are getting when Government constructs things. We are not getting the degree of supervision that is needed, and that lack of degree of supervision, and controlling the plot with the proper flow of work, is directly related to the bad wages paid to the technical and professional staff – the surveyors, architects, engineers, and the people who actually have to make the project go. We cannot afford to pay them, and we are getting what we are paying for.

The question that Head 28 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 32 – FIRE SERVICE

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: This relates to an increase in the utility rates, and this is to carry them through until the end of the financial year.

I beg to move that Head 32 stand part.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): I just want to say something very briefly. An article appeared in the Press soon after there was a minor fire at the Holiday Inn, to the effect that the Fire Service would have difficulty putting out fires of tall buildings because it does not have a high enough ladder. The Chief Fire Officer has gone to some trouble to give an explanation, departmentally on Estimates, that although there is a need for the tall ladder, it is not putting out the fires in tall buildings at all.

That is really much too simplistic an explanation. To put out a fire in the Empire State Building you do not get a ladder 1,000 feet high. I do not know how you would put it out myself, I am not a fire fighter, but you use other means. Whether you use a helicopter or whether there is some other way of dealing with it internally, or of controlling it at an earlier stage, I do not know.

What is needed is a tall appliance to control the fires in the narrow streets in Bridgetown. You need an appliance which can, for example, if there is a fire at High Street, drive here and go right up to direct the jet down into High Street where the appliance cannot get into High Street.

I am told that there is a very considerable danger of fires in Swan Street going right through Swan Street over Milk Market and into New Orleans, and that such fires can become uncontrollable if they take place at the back of stone buildings. Many of these buildings have yards with wooden structures, flammable structures, which you cannot get at from the main road, and you need a tall appliance to be able to spray over them.

I am happy to be able to report to the House that, contained in Capital Estimates, there will be a vote for such an appliance. We may very well not reach it, the fortunes of the Estimates being what they are, but I think that I can take the opportunity of giving general reassurance on that point. This is what they need to control the danger of a fire starting, for example, in Swan Street and spreading right down to Fontabelle, as it very easily could, if there were a sufficient number of adverse circumstances.

2.20 p.m.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I should like to make a comment. I was rather surprised when I saw this criticism, if you can call it that, in the Press, because years ago the Fire Services were supplied with a tower ladder, on a turntable, of at least 90 feet in height when we realise that we were going to have buildings of more than five storeys. If the honourable Member will check with the Chief Fire Officer, he will be able to verify that.

The point with the Holiday Inn, of course, is that in most hotels, fires take place internally. You do not start a fire at a window.

In this case, the fire started in a corridor. Tower ladders on turntables, such as the one we had bought, are very useful for rescuing people from buildings, say, of more than five storeys. They are also useful for the purpose which the honourable Member has stated, to take a hose up and project the jet over another building, like in the environs of Swan Street and James Street, where buildings are *choc-a-bloc,* side by side, and you simply cannot get a fire appliance between the buildings.

I do not know whether there is any need to buy a further ladder, but I know that the Fire Services did have one, and I have seen them using it on demonstrations in the tower which they have there at the back of the Fire Services building.

You get a lot of unenlightened comment by unenlightened people in the Press from time to time, and I wish that the Government Information Services would devote a little more time to bringing the public up-to-date on what is available and what is not available, and telling people that we have had this for 15 years, instead of the kind of misinformation which is being promulgated.

The question that Head 32 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 38 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): I beg to move that Head 38 stand part.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Could the mover inform us what Subhead 2 – Government advertising, Item 1, $27 392, covers?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: This is a carry over, again, to the end of the financial year, to pay bills and things of that nature.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a suggestion. Those of us who have to deal with the Government Printery are somewhat concerned that when we send to the Government Printery and have notices put in the *Gazette,* advertising for claims against the estates of deceased persons, and we have to wind up an estate – I do quite a bit of probate work amongst other things in my practice – we cannot get a bill from the Government Printery.

I call them up and say I am sending up a notice and it has to be advertised over two or three months. They should know in advance – every notice is the same notice – what it would cost. If I say I will send a cheque, or send cash if they want it, because I want to tidy up the estate, they tell me they cannot do that, they cannot take any money until all the notices have been put out, like if the Printery is going to close down in the meantime.

You would be surprised to know that I have probably done about 15 probates last year.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Did you speak to Mr. Waithe?)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I speak to him every week. I got back a big refund, $8 000, for 1981, but I only got it back this year.

What I was saying is that you would be surprised that I have not received a single bill from the Government Printery; and I cannot do the accounts for the people's estates, because I do not know how much we owe the Government Printery for the notices. Every time I ring them and say, "Can you let us know," I am told I have to ring somebody else because the accountant is not there, and they have to check and see if all the notices are out. No wonder that the Government runs out of money, because it is printing notices for God knows how many legal attorneys and not collecting the money! The money will not come out of my pocket, but I cannot tell the Registrar that an estate has been properly wound up and the accounts are in order until I get an account from the Government Printery.

This is not happening in the Government Printery alone. The honourable Minister of Finance is almost – and I am not saying this in a derogatory sense – scraping the barrel to get all the money that he can from everybody to spend for Government purposes. We are not dealing with hotels that do not pay the tax, but there are a lot of areas in which people are willing to pay over money to the Government and cannot get the Government to accept the money.

That is a strange state of affairs, and I think that we ought to do something about seeing that these little areas are cleared up, because you know in advance how much it is going to cost. Yesterday I sent for a police report and they told me it would cost $50. I sent $50 to Coleridge Street and I got the police report. Similarly, in the same accident, I wanted a report from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and they said it would cost $20. I sent the $20, I do not know if the report has come yet, but they said it was ready.

The Government Printer knows that a probate notice is so many lines and taking up so many inches in the *Official Gazette,* and he should be able to tell me that six notices will cost me $48 over the next eight weeks, or whatever the period is, and I should send the money. If he does not print the notice I will call back for my money. It is easier for me and all the other members in the profession if that is done. Do not tell me that you cannot send me the bill yet because you have to wait until the notices are published, and when the notices are finished publishing I still cannot get the bill. As a former Minister of Finance I do not like that sort of thing, because it is untidy.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman. I am referring to Subhead 5, Public Library Department. I do not know if my colleague, the Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin), may get an answer to the query that he is raising. I do not know if my colleague wants to know if this is required for "Civic File" or whatever it was.

I should like to raise a matter here under National Insurance contributions.

I am wondering if someone on the Government side could explain why so many members of the public are being called into the National Insurance Office and are being asked to bring passports, I.D. Cards and other kinds of identification in the National Insurance Office. Apparently, they do not understand the reasons why they are being brought in there and, more than that, they are being brought in there in very large numbers, and it is taking up a considerable amount of time.

Asides.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I do not think it is to get money, but this is what I am asking. Somebody on the Government side should be able to explain what is the problem here.

There may be a very good reason for it, but from the complaints that I have been getting from my own constituents, it is highly time-wasting to be called in there to find an office almost full of people, then to be told, "We will check your records, you will get them back in a minute," and then you are waiting for over an hour and a half on a working day to try to get these matters sorted out. Somebody on the Government side should be able to explain what the piling up of people and the waste of time is taking place in that particular office is about.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, I think the honourable Member ought to be aware that the National Insurance, due to the heavy workload and responsibility which it has to undertake, is finding it very difficult to handle as speedily as possible, as we would like it to, the number of cases and number of matters that are supposed to be dealt with.

As a result of this, this Government has decided to computerize all the accounts of the National Insurance. This will eliminate many of the problems which are currently faced by the public and the Department itself, so just hold on. We are working feverishly on the computerized programme so that we will be able to eliminate most of the problems being experienced.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1983–84 – No. 31
HEAD 50 – POST OFFICE

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 50 stand part.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I beg to second that.

On motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of three money Resolutions, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, the three Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I have an item of which I have to give notice, and I hope to do in all its stages today. I had indicated to the Leader of the Opposition what I planned to do, and the Opposition have agreed. I have to give notice of it, and then the House can go into Committee on it. After we conclude that, that should be the end of Government Business.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the House has permission to give notice of the Resolution.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to amend the Note to Subhead 2 – Improvements to the Government Information Service of Capital Head 80, Ministry of Information and Culture.

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

RESOLUTION TO AMEND EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEAD 80 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Order No. 7 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to amend the Explanatory Note to Head 80 – Ministry of Information and Culture.

Hon L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: 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. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply. and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

THE ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Monday, March 19, 1984, at 10 o'clock a.m., when we will come to do the Appropriation Bill. I have all the appropriate documents. Those who have not yet received them will have them in time, and I look forward to a very interesting debate over the Estimates.

I know there is a little fever in the air, and we are looking forward to the cut and thrust of debate. It should be an interesting one. I do not believe the Leader of the Opposition may be around. I think he is probably going to Mr. Waithe, as he indicated today, and therefore we are sorry we will not have him here.

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

The question that the House adjourn until Monday, March 19, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

2.45 p.m.

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