THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday March 19, 1984.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.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. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LLB., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry)
Mr. L. E. Sandiford, M.A. (Econ.)
Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, (Minister of Education)
Hon. L. B. Brathwaite, (Minister of 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)
Mr. R. E. Brathwaite
Mr. L. A. Weekes
Mr. A. Truss

Prayers were read by Rev. G. E. Vaughan

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Mr. P. M. GREAVES, Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN, Dr. R. C. HAYNES, and Mr. M. A. KING entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, March 13, 1984.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Meeting of March 13, 1984 be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am to announce that I have received a message from the Other Place in connection with the Amendment to the Income Tax Bill 1984 and the passage of the Cable and Wireless Bill 1984.

Mr. B. M. TAITT entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Your Honour, with respect to the message which you have received from the Other Place, I crave Your Honour's indulgence to deal with this matter in all of its stages during this sitting; not necessarily today, but during the sitting.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

A Bill to amend the Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Limited Act, Cap. 275.

A Resolution to grant the sum of $1,055,319 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. 33, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

I also propose to deal with these matters in all their stages during this sitting.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN entered the Chamber and took his seat.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, a Bill to amend the Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Limited Act, Cap. 275 was read a first time.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 3, asked by the right honourable Member for St. John is now ready in written form.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of matters on the Order Paper which I would like to have cleared. They can be done at the end of the Estimates or they can be done immediately.

I have discussed this with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and it is at this point that I propose to deal with these matters. They should not be in any way controversial. The matters which I propose to deal with would be Orders Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 on the Order Paper. Two of these matters relate to land acquisition, one is a Bill to amend the Severance Payments Act, one is the Bill to repeal the Druggist Act, and the final one is a Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

I propose to deal with a couple of these items now. Therefore, I beg to move that Order No. 5 is the instant Order of the day.

Hon. L. R. TULL entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): On a point of order, Sir: The Standing Orders of this House are very very clear. Five days are allocated for the discussion of the Estimates. If the honourable Member is embarrassed because the person who normally should introduce the Estimates is not in his place, he can adjourn the House for fifteen or twenty minutes, or for whatever period he may consider necessary, to get the delinquent Member to present the Estimates.

We do not have a memorandum on the Estimates. That has fallen into desuetude too. Secondly, we do not have the Appropriation Bill. That is another defect of these proceedings. But we certainly did not come here to discuss Order No. 3, which is highly controversial, or to discuss Order No. 4, Order No. 5 or Order No. 6, which are not as controversial or as likely to take up the time of the House as much as the other three Orders.

We would have no objection, provided that the Estimates are done and dealt with in an expeditious manner, without a lot of filibustering and time wasting by the — I would not worry to name any particular Leader of the House in that respect. Let us just say as long as they are done in an expeditious manner. But to come in here now, at the beginning of the five days specifically allocated by the Standing Orders for the discussion of the Estimates, and to ask us to do Orders Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, which are five separate Orders, the length of discussion of which only you would have some kind of limited control, subject to the restrictions of the Standing Orders, is another matter. We are not prepared to do it, and, therefore, we object.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, let me deal with the first point. I have nothing to be embarrassed about in my entire life. At the age of fifty-five, I am proud, and I believe my family is proud of me. It has been a long, long road to the top, but I believe that I have now reached my zenith in life. That is point 1.
10.30 a.m.

Point two. The honourable Leader of the Opposition is perfectly correct in stating that there shall be five clear sitting days for the Estimates, but there is nothing in the Standing Orders which tells me that the five days should be Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, or Sunday. This is not like a five-day week, which you had introduced into the country, making it Monday to Friday. It should be five days, any five days, and, as long as I have the five clear sitting days, that is all that you have to be concerned with. If you have business to do other than the people's business, that is your problem. You cannot dictate to this Government as to how it is to conduct its business.

On the other hand, I made it very clear that these matters have to be dealt with, either before we start the Estimates or after we finish them, as we have done in the past. How you feel as to whether we should do them before or after the Estimates is immaterial. When the reins of Government is placed in your hands again, you can conduct the business of the House in the manner which you see fit.

Point three. The honourable Member alluded to filibustering. I hope that he will make it abundantly clear to his members to stop filibustering. We on this side can have the business of the House handled expeditiously simply

calling the Heads, putting the question, and have it passed. Any filibustering will come from that side of the House, so you are to dictate and direct your members to stop the filibustering.

You spoke about some Minister who is going to introduce the Bill. How do you know which Minister will introduce the Bill? Any minister can introduce the Bill. You are assuming, but that is your problem. You want to run over here and over there, too. Maybe years ago you could have done that, but I do not believe you are capable of doing it now. Years will catch up with all of us at sometime. You told the late Sir Grantley Adams – I recall very well.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow rose.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On what does the honourable Member rise?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order, Sir: I am drawing it to your attention that the honourable Member is pointing and saying "you this" and "you that" when he should be addressing the Chair.

Apart from that, the honourable Member has developed the habit of coming in here and saying that he has spoken to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I have not been out of the island, neither am I ill, nor am I incapable of performing the duties of my office. So when he comes in here, and he says that he has spoken.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the honourable Member.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: When the honourable Member, the Leader of the House, the representative for the constituency of St. James North for the time being, comes in here and says that he has spoken to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, as far as I am concerned, he has not discharged any duty.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Maybe if the honourable Member would come to Parliament at the prescribed time and be prepared to come in here and take prayers, I would have dialogue with him. I have never in my life telephoned you as a lawyer, an acquaintance, or a Prime Minister – and I have no reason to telephone you as Leader of the Opposition now. I come here at least at 11.30 a.m. to meet you, the Leader, or the Deputy Leader. If you have no confidence in your Deputy Leader, that is a matter entirely for you. I get on with him very well. I get on with you very well sometimes, because you are a very "some-timish", old fellow.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to refer the Chamber to Standing Order 64, on page 82 of the Standing Orders of the Honourable House of Assembly made under the Constitution, Section 51.

Standing Order 64(5) says:

> "Five days shall be allotted for debate on the Appropriation Bill and the Estimates, and the total debating time shall not exceed, on any of those five days, the maximum debating time allotted by Standing Order No. 6 for a day's sitting."

Standing Order 6 (2) says:

> "After the first sitting, unless the House otherwise decides, the House shall meet on every Tuesday at 12 o'clock noon, and, unless previously adjourned, shall meet until 9.30 p.m."

I am therefore ruling that as long as we devote the total number of hours over five days that would have been devoted to five normal sittings, under Standing Order 6(2), we would have complied to the Standing Order as appearing under Standing Order 64.

It has been my experience that several other matters are dealt with during the period that Estimates have been before the Chamber, and I would not want to break tradition at this stage unless there are very good reasons for so doing.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, without questioning your ruling, may I draw a point to Your Honour's attention?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Certainly.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, you indicated that in the ruling, you looked at the relevant Standing Order, including Standing Order 6. Standing Order No. 6 makes provision for the meeting of the House on Tuesday. Today is Monday, and I draw to your attention that the reason why this Honourable Chamber would be meeting on a Monday, as opposed to the statutory time of a Tuesday, is that the Honourable the House would have been informed – and the records of the House would so show that Your Honour would have been informed – that it is proposed to begin the Estimates on Monday at 10 a.m. of such and such a date.

I am submitting that the House having been so informed by the Leader of the House, whose business it is to organise the business of the House, it is not unreasonable for those honourable Members in the House, and Your Honour, to conclude that the five days referred to in the Standing Orders would begin from 10 a.m. of that Monday referred to by the Leader of the House. I do not question

Your Honour's ruling, but I draw it to Your Honour's attention in case Your Honour may have not apprised himself of the specifics concerning the reason why we are here on a Monday at 10 a.m. Otherwise, we would have been meeting at 12 noon on the Tuesday.

I am submitting, therefore, that the information which was given by the Leader of the House is information on which this House can rely, and that is why we are here at 10 a.m., and that is why it is the five days, beginning at 10 a.m., notwithstanding, the convention that when the Estimates are finished any other business on the Order Paper has been concluded, and can be concluded. I draw that to Your Honour's attention.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The exigencies of Government Business have always taken precedence over any other matter that is on the Order Paper. That is the convention which has always been followed in all of the Parliaments I have ever known, and that is stated in all the precedents I have ever read. Therefore, Government is allowed to conduct its business in the way it sees fit, provided that it does not do any damage to the Chamber.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: We would have been halfway through all of these matters to which I have made reference.

10.40 a.m.

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT BRIDGEFIELD, ST. THOMAS

Order No. 5 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to compulsorily acquire land at Cane Garden, Bridgefield, St. Thomas, for providing recreational facilities.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Deputy Speaker, while unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I do not feel that the matters which will come up for discussion are controversial, I would just like briefly to say that this matter we are dealing with here today, the acquisition of land from Cane Garden Limited, is a matter which, to some extent, has involved a lot of problems and confusion.

This matter was being considered from 1975, when the owners of Cane Garden Limited made an offer to the then Government of a playing area of approximately six acres of land. After the change of Government in 1976, the offer was neither withdrawn nor agreed on, and, therefore, the whole matter was in a state of limbo.

As a result of that unfortunate situation, the people in Bridgefield, who had been promised at that time that they would be given a playing field, continued to insist that they should have the playing field which had been promised to them. They called upon the present Government to do something by way of regularising the situation as it then stood, and, the Government undertook to compulsorily acquire the land, since the former owners decided to fall down on the former pledge of giving this playing field to the people of the area.

This Resolution seeks to satisfy the expectations of the people who were originally promised this portion of land, which they expected to have.

Without more ado, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): I beg to second that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Since this matter affects my Ministry, I want to say a few words.

Bridgefield in St. Thomas is one of two areas which were looked at by the National Sports Council recently. It was felt that there was a pressing need for recreational facilities in this particular area, and I visited the area to find out that these two areas of land were available. In this particular case, some young boys and girls were using this area for some time, but were advised to discontinue its use because the land had not been acquired by Government and was then in the hands of private persons.

I have already informed the National Sports Council to proceed to level the land and have it prepared, so that the residents in the area could have the use of this particular area as soon as possible. Funds are already provided, and it is hoped that, as soon as the engineering studies can be done, work would start on this area.

I have looked at the area in Content. Work cannot be done as quickly as one would want, because it would require very close study by the engineers to see how best we can level that area.

Plans are also afoot to make available some recreational facilities in the parish of St. Lucy. There is an area of land which was donated by the ADC, and the National Sports Council has been advised to have a look at that land and, as soon as possible, proceed to level it.

In Christ Church, we have looked at an area of land in Parish Land. The residents are using a very narrow area, which is totally inadequate for a proper football or cricket field. The Barbados Cricket Association and the Football Association usually set minimum standards, and by their standards this particular playing field will not be suitable. Therefore, plans are afoot to have this particular area extended. The acquisition will shortly be brought before this Chamber by the Minister of Housing and Lands, and as soon as the Section 4 notice is published, we will start doing some work in that area.

There are some other areas that are earmarked for recreational purposes. We feel that Government has a duty to provide recreational facilities in the areas in which people live, and Government is endeavouring to provide facilities in some areas that are now without such facilities. We have already made provision for such facilities in St. Philip, we have looked at an area of land in Passage Road, and as soon as the National Sports Council can find it possible to move in these areas and level the relevant area of land, we will have more recreational facilities.

I have been told that it is the desire of the representative for St. Thomas (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams), to have just a changing facility, but I was advised last week by a member of the Sports Council that the BCA set down minimum standards, and any pavilion or changing facility would have to take into consideration those minimum standards; some area for changing facilities for the home team as well as the visiting teams. I feel that we may very well have to put up a bigger structure, a more expensive structure, than the one envisaged by the representative of that constituency.

I hope that the residents will bear in mind that we are prepared to put down facilities that will meet the minimum standards of the Barbados Football Association and the Barbados Cricket Association. It is pointless putting down small structures. If we do that, when teams have done well enough and graduate to play BCA cricket, they will find that they will be unable to use their grounds because of very short-sighted planning.

I hope that Members opposite will not think that the Government is pursuing a policy of providing big facilities, or, in their words, is embarking on "a waste of Government funds." We are guided by the advice given to us by persons who know more than some of us on these particular matters.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very clear to me that the Appropriation Bill will not be ready, because we have not received it, and that is why a matter which was initiated by the Minister of the Democratic Labour Party responsible for Sport and Welfare nine years ago now has priority over consideration of the Estimates.

I can give you some history of this acquisition at Bridgefield. St. Thomas, amongst its other defects and distinctions, is a very hilly parish. My Godmother used to be Headmistress of Holy Innocents for 41 years or something. We have a playing field up there at Holy Innocents. It is one of the few flat areas in St. Thomas.

After a great deal of searching, the Minister and I discovered at Bridgefield an area of about five or six acres. The owners of Cane Garden Estates were approached, and they agreed to turn the property over to the Government for the purposes of a playing field. 10.50 a.m.

There was no DLP candidate, as far as I remember, at the time representing St. Thomas. But in the same way that we went into St. Joseph and gave them facilities, including electricity and a modern school, and other things which they had not enjoyed for a long period of time, from time immemorial, we went into St. Thomas. We did do this with the idea of putting out the incumbent prematurely, but, according to the people of St. Thomas, to give them the same facilities which the people at Gall Hill, in the parish of St. John, enjoyed.

As a matter of fact, Mr. F. G. Smith, who was Minister, started a scheme at Gall Hill and I stopped it. I said that we must go to St. Thomas and do something up there, because the people will say that St. John is getting all the facilities. His favourite reply was, "Well, I do not know about you, but as far as I am concerned, home drums beat first."

I heard today about experts and engineers in relation to a playing field, a flat piece of ground. In 1975, the land was level; all the cane stumps were out, the ground was rolled, and all the youngsters from Bridgefield, Sharon and the surrounding districts were playing cricket on the field. There was a roller there, and I think there was some effort to bring water closer – there was something to the east – so they could bring water to do the pitch. The youngsters themselves went and prepared the wicket, and games were played at Bridgefield in 1975 and 1976.

We were informed by the Minister who introduced the Resolution, the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite), that the offer was not withdrawn. That is very interesting, because I thought that the purpose of a compulsory acquisition was either for an effective title or because the owners were now unwilling to sell the area of land. The offer was not withdrawn, but then the other Minister gave the game away, the Minister – from Tuesday to Tuesday I am being very honest, I am not being facetious, I am never quite sure what portfolio the honourable Member holds – the Minister who just sat down, the Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) – the Minister of Labour – honestly, I would not waste time if I knew, but there is so much you can contain – the Minister has now informed us here in the House that the users of the area were told not to play on it because the title was not perfect.

I knew that some young people in St. John played on plantation lands belonging to Pool, not without the knowledge of, but certainly without any formal permission, or even request, to the owners of Pool. So when one Sunday morning I passed and I saw the cricket ground at the Pool, where many a BCL game was played, being dug up with a plough, and I enquired of the attorney what was wrong. Pool belonged to a gentleman called Mr. Anthony Trollop, about whose writings the Prime Minister and I had a discussion in here, and his descendants in Australia. But when I got in touch with the attorney for the estate, who was Mr. Armstrong at the time, he said that they had decided to plough up that field because there was never any formality or any request, but they would give them a field close to the corner of Four Cross Roads. That turned out to be a very unsuitable site, because every time you hit the ball, you had to run into the road, at a very busy intersection – and that has been abandoned as well.

The point which I am trying to make is that young people in Barbados do not wait for engineering studies. They do not wait for legal titles or anything like that, sometimes they do not even wait for the owner's permission. If they find a suitable area that is not being used, whether it is a cabbage patch or whether it be a grass piece, or what you call rab land, they go and put down a little wicket and start playing their cricket there. In this particular case, the land was turned over to the Government.

There was an old form of conveyances, transfer of titles, in Barbados, which came from the old English common law, called "feoffment with livery of seisin." In the old time days, somebody would go on a piece of land and say, "My land goes from here to there", and they walked the four boundaries, if there were boundaries, and said, "This is your land", and then they would take up a handful of dirt and give you the handful of dirt. That does not reach a place in St. Thomas because the owners went on the ground with the Member for St. Andrew at the time and me, he showed us the area and he said that, subject to the legal formalities, the Government could take possession, which we did, when it was level.

The trouble now in Barbados is that we do not know anything about anything as far as the present Government is concerned. We hear about professional services and engineering studies. We have a lot of half-baked people, acting like competent people, living outside of Barbados, coming in to Barbados and telling us what we have to do with our own country. There are people who have never seen sugar cane growing in their lives until they came to Barbados, and they are advising Government on sugar cane agriculture.

We have to have engineers to level the Bridgefield playing field, which was levelled by the youngsters of St. Thomas and all the cane stumps taken out! What is the trouble? Why do we have to have a compulsory acquisition? We have to have a compulsory acquisition because, according to the Minister, the youngsters were told not to go on the playing field because the title is imperfect.

Do you think that anybody playing a little weekend cricket is concerned about title land? The land was turned over to the Government and it was illuminated. The honourable Member for St. Andrew said that the offer was never withdrawn. That was a free gift to the people of St. Thomas, it was not a gift to me as the Prime Minister of Barbados or the Member for St. John. I think that the only mistake we made was not inviting CBC up there, the then Member for St. Thomas and the rest so that everybody would know about it but he knows as well as anybody else. I think that he felt the owners – I do not know where he got that kind of information from – were a bit neutral as far as who represented St. Thomas was concerned.

It is regrettable that the people were not allowed to go on playing there and the legal officers did not follow up the donation which was made to the Government and the young people of St. Thomas at the time. I can only say, in conclusion, that having to rake over the ground at Bridgefield after nine years, when we should be doing the Estimates, shows that there is some other defect in the Public Service in the island, because we have not received the Appropriation Bill up to now.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable member who just sat down is in excellent form today. Since I have been here, at least, I see that he is anxious to get his teeth into the Estimates. I hope that he is better prepared with the facts when he gets into the Estimates than he is on this Bridgefield matter.

I do not want to be contentious, but the honourable Member, in my opinion, was misled by people around him in Cabinet at the time, and people who are supporters of his party.

This was a perfectly straightforward matter. Cane Garden Limited was one of those plantations in Barbados which was seeking subdivision, and had come to certain terms with the then Government on matters of subdivision. They were trying to get the land in Shop Hill subdivided, they were trying to get the plantation subdivided, but instead of pursuing the subdivisions in a straightforward way – if anybody did pursue subdivisions in a straightforward way at the time – they preferred to do it in a round-about and, indeed, in my view, corrupt way, as far as their own approach to the matter was concerned.

11.00 a.m.

The Government of the day had a policy of subdividing land in two-acre lots. Knowing the honourable Member, and indeed even knowing the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves), I believe it was possible to apply for a subdivision without having to sweeten anybody, either financially or in terms of some other concession, but very few people seemed to believe that. Cane Garden Limited therefore went overboard.

I admire the use of the word "neutral", referring to their politics, as used by the Leader of the Opposition. From 1975 Cane Garden Limited openly supported the candidature of Mr. Happy Bryan in the constituency of St. Thomas. The superintendent there was one of his principal canvassers. The estate vehicles were used to carry out his canvassers. Persons who worked there were provided with funds to go into the rum shops of Shop Hill, and even as far as Welchman Hall, to break the provisions of the election laws.

The owners of the plantation openly supported Mr. Bryan's candidature, and the Democratic Labour Party generally; and as a part of this open support, they offered a playing field to the Government consisting of one of the fields at the foot of Shop Hill between Bridgefield and Jackson. Far from not calling CBC to the scene, they did call CBC. Mr. F. G. Smith was one of the Ministers present. I think the honourable Member for St. Michael North, who was then the honourable member for St. Michael North West, was also present. Mr. Happy Bryan was present. The then honourable Member for St. Thomas was not invited!

There was a bun fight, as I believe it is colloquially known in Great Britain; it was not quite a bram. I do not know how much beer and what else was shared out. The cameras were there and a great to-do was made over the fact that Mr. Happy Bryan had obtained a playing field for the boys of Bridgefield, St. Thomas. It was on the TV and it was in the newspapers. The boys started to play cricket on the playing field. It was a big nine weeks' wonder!

We come now to the night of September 2, 1976. I well remember the scene inside the counting station when the votes for St. Thomas were being counted. I was walking around, Mr. Bryan was there, and a Mr. Martin Birch came to me and said in Mr. Bryan's hearing "You know you have beaten the man in Bridgefield", Bridgefield being considered a stronghold of the Democratic Labour Party in St. Thomas. I said that was impossible and he took me over and he showed me that I had indeed won by a small number of votes. Mr. Bryan's face fell.

I became very excited, I lifted a gentleman called Harold White, who weighs more than I do, onto my left shoulder – my strength temporarily was the strength of ten – I walked around the room, and there was a disturbance, which the returning officer had to ask me to quell. Mr. Bryan's face fell.

Mr. Bryan had then heard that his brother had lost his seat in St. Andrew, and his very charming wife, who was present, began to cry. He walked out of the polling station, and made his way through the crowd by saying "I have him beat, but I have to go to my brother." The crowd, in disbelief, allowed him to pass, and he drove down the road towards the same Bridgefield.

Then, on the Saturday following the election, the boys of Bridgefield sought to go and play cricket, as they had been accustomed to before the election. They were told that the Government had no land there and there was no cricket to be played on the land.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Not by me; I did not even know of it at the time. The honourable Member for St. James North and I, along with a number of people, very shortly after the election paid a visit to the playing field to discuss where to put down the pavilion, and when I asked for the boundaries to be pointed out as to which was the playing field that had been donated to the Government as was announced on the T.V., we discovered from an employee that the expression "the Government has no land here" now formed the policy of Cane Garden Limited.

It must be remembered that by that stage we had in fact revoked all planning permissions granted to Cane Garden Plantation. When Happy Bryan failed to get into the House after all the money that Cane Garden spent on him and all the investment they made, and the ten acres of land they gave to the Government to get Tom Adams out of the House of Assembly, they took back the land. And they were fortified in taking it back, because they said that the Government revoked their applications to cut up the estate.

Mr. Packer had to put up with a lot of fatigue when he went to watch Shell Shield cricket. People told him: "Man, Reds, I hear that you are reaping your canes in the best conditions in Barbados." The trucks had barbergreen roads to go down to bring out the canes, because there had been subdivisions and the roads and so on were in.

It is another story how the Cabinet thought that it had revoked all the permissions to discover that somebody, and I only discovered this recently, in the Town Planning Office revoked all the agricultural permissions and did not revoke the residential ones. So the barbergreen roads have been put to their intended purpose, which is a residential subdivision.

We have had to put up with these things in the Town Planning Department on many occasions. It was never intended that the Edghill part of Cane Garden should have been cut up for housing in the way that it has been, but somebody in the Town Planning Department fooled us, and we were only able to get to the bottom of it this very year. It has taken all those years of searching back to a decision issued by the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) in his time as Minister of Housing when Town Planning was.....

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are two honourable Members on their feet. On what has the honourable Member risen?

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I said on a point of order. I was not the Minister responsible for Town Planning from 1971 onwards.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: That may be so, but I am putting the Record straight. I was not responsible.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member has risen on a false premise.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The honourable Member is perfectly correct. I, in fact, was seeking not to put all the fire on the Leader of the Opposition's head. The honourable Member was Minister of Housing, and through his hands often passed some of those files, but in fact the honourable Member for St. John was the Minister responsible for Town Planning at the time.

The file with the decisions, which also contain the genesis of the offer of the playing field, has only reached my hands after eight years of many investigations – not continuous, but intense for a period of time. I dare say that if we were not willing to let the infelicities pass, and if we were not willing to let sleeping dogs lie, we could trace it back to whoever it was in the Town Planning Department who went to enormous lengths to conceal from the honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig), the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams) and the then Attorney General, the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. deB. Forde), the exact decisions which were taken in respect of Cane Garden development.
11.10 a.m.

It is a measure of the extent to which suspicion circulates, that the file was drawn to my attention with a note. The note said that it was during the time of the honourable Member for St. James North that the planning permission for the residential sub-development at Cane Garden had been given. It was in connection with that that I read the file very carefully.

What in fact happened was that the honourable Member for St. James North, in his time, approved the retention of certain of the subdivisions, which had been carried out, and where we did not want to disadvantage people. But to the ones that he had approved, a civil servant added the numbers of the lots: 42, 43, 44, 45 and 47 of Cane Garden – I remember the numbers – for the decision which was ultimately taken. Those lots were approved not in our time, but in the time of the right honourable Member for St. John and the honourable Member for St. Michael North.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Not me!)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Be that as it may, we are dealing with the planning history of the lot in question.

The simple fact is that the owners of Cane Garden threw in the playing field to help "Happy" Bryan win a seat. He did not win a seat and they took back the playing field. It is as simple as that.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: They took it back when their side did not win the Government. And through their lawyer, they have since offered that if we were to give them back the subdivisions, they would give back the playing field!

Laughter.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I believe it may be in the file.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes. Read it. That is what you have to deal with in Barbados.)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Yes! Through their lawyer, this is what they said:

> "At the time when our client contemplated the donation of lands to the Government of Barbados for a playing field, it was in the process of developing a substantial portion of the Cane Garden group of plantations.
>
> "Since that time, a number of developments have occurred, and at the present time there is further delay for our client because of the refusal of the Town Planning Office regarding the develop-

ment of Lot 41 for residential and building purposes.

"At the present time, our client's financial resources will not permit it to donate land, unless it can complete and carry out the development which it originally contemplated. And until the Town Planning appeal is finalized in a manner which will permit our client to repay its banking indebtedness, we regret that no further consideration can be given to donating land in this matter."

On top of all that, the gentleman concerned complained that he could not make any money. But he and the Inland Revenue Commissioner are now locked in a battle over $350 000 of unpaid income taxes arising out of his profits on that same deal. These are the people that said they had no resources to pay the Government! I understand that his salary at the Barbados Shipping and Trading was garnished and he has appealed against that. We cannot really deal with all these matters.

Let us get it clear. They called the television to say they were giving the land to "Happy" Bryan's Government, and when "Happy" Bryan had no Government, they took back the land. Anything to the contrary – all this talk about engineering and so on and so forth is foolishness. I know, because I had to put up with the battle of the Bridgefield playing field.

I am reminded of a late departed Member of this House, a man who enjoyed the affection of most of us. He was once promised that he would be given a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association trip, and he joined the Association and paid his subscriptions.

When we met in the Senate, we agreed for him to go, although some of us had misgivings. But Mr. Frank Walcott came in and said: "Do not let us make ourselves idiots. We cannot send this man abroad to represent Barbados." He turned to the man and said: "Look, you are my friend, but I will tell you straight that you cannot represent Barbados anywhere."

There was a little murmur and so on. The man called back for his subscriptions to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, he took them, and walked out and went along about his business. The Member for St. John will remember the person well, because he likes to quote him and say that there is no doctor who has a recipe for ignorance. That is what has happened with the Bridgefield land!

Naturally, for years I have resisted dealing with these people, because these people seem to me to be trying to blackmail the Government.

In 1976, the lads of Bridgefield heard me very well. We all assumed that the matter of the playing field would go through. But I will be quite frank. In 1981, although we had a very good meeting in Bridgefield and I got a very large proportion of the vote in Bridgefield, an unbelievable proportion, when I held a meeting in the little meeting room which they have, a small meeting room on the front road, and the boys asked me about the playing field, I told them the facts. They said to me: "Mr. Adams, you are carrying on a quarrel with Cane Garden Plantation; meanwhile, we have nowhere to play cricket." I do not hide that that is precisely how they put it to me.

I saw it in the light of the youths of Bridgefield. I reflected that the Government was carrying on a quarrel with Cane Garden Plantation, but the quarrel, ultimately was at the expense of the youths of Shop Hill, Bridgefield, Jackson, Cane Garden itself and the surrounding areas. The Government decided that it is a quarrel which should come to an end in this financial year, the land will now be taken over, and Cane Garden will get its money.

I do not believe that a pavilion will be built immediately on the area, but perhaps it is not so necessary in the immediate future. I think that if the honourable Minister of Sport is contemplating building a pavilion in St. Thomas, he should build one at Welchman Hall. It is a bigger district and has had a playing field for a longer time, and I think that is the first place a pavilion should go. But in due course, a pavilion will be built at Bridgefield.

I am also glad to say that the political quarrels between Cane Garden and the Government seem to have abated in recent years. I have never had any conversation with anybody connected with the plantation, but I have noticed that they do not now seem to be as active in politics as they were. I think that is a good thing, because when politics come into matters of donating land, and dividing land – I am your political friend, so you must give me permission to cut up the land – it is bad for all of us. I am very glad to say that this matter seems to have been settled, on the one hand, in connection with the developments, and, on the other, it will be settled by this acquisition, and we can put an end to a sorry episode in the politics of Bridgefield, Cane Garden, Hopewell, Jackson, Shop Hill, Edghill and surrounding districts in the parishes of St. Thomas and St. Michael.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know nothing about the politics of Bridgefield. But I must say that I now have some extreme difficulty, having heard the Prime Minister. I usually treat anything he says with the greatest reserve, but today I have a special difficulty.

When the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) introduced this Resolution,

he said, unless my ears deceived me, that the offer has remained unchanged – it has not been withdrawn. I am sure that is what the honourable Member said. So either the honourable Member for St. Andrew, whose word I accept when he makes statements from the front bench, does not understand what the files say – and I do not believe that – or the right honourable Member for St. Thomas (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams) has misinformed himself, deliberately or otherwise, and is seeking to misinform us, deliberately or otherwise. I do not believe him.

I have no doubt that there are some facts related to the story which he told. But let me tell you why I have difficulty believing him. Can you imagine the honourable Member for St. Thomas at a polling station and somebody having to take him to show him that he has won a box? Nobody in Barbados would believe that.

I saw him in St. Philip at a by-election.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let the honourable Member get into the Resolution before the House and not debate the antics, or otherwise, of Members in polling stations at election time. Let us get to the Resolution.

I do not mind how you skirt around that aspect of it, but let us get to the Resolution.
11.20 a.m.

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

I am merely making the point that the honourable Member who just spoke, precisely and to the Resolution, in the course of dealing specifically with the Resolution drew attention to his behaviour in a polling station in Bridgefield, or in that area.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you speak on the Resolution, you may draw attention to anything around that. Do not let us go straight into the honourable Member's behaviour at the polling station. Just deal with the Resolution.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was merely showing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why, in relation to that polling station, in that area, I cannot believe anything the honourable Member says about that area which is being acquired, based on his past performance in my presence, in another similar place to the area which is being acquired, in a polling station. The honourable Member's behaviour then gave me the impression that when it comes to politics, and when it comes to discerning who has won, he follows each vote with a certain meticulous care.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member is still dealing with polling stations and their results.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am leaving it, Sir. I am going on to say that the politics of acquisition, as adumbrated by the honourable Member here today, would leave a wrong taste in the mouths of those who may not be familiar with it. He suggested that somebody offered some land to the Government of the day in return for the subdivision of a plantation and some tenantries. He further suggested that the Prime Minister and Minister responsible for Town and Country Planning took eight years – the Government has admitted this on the floor of the House today – to discover that somebody in the Town and Country Planning Office was misleading them. His words were: "Somebody in the Town Planning Department fooled us". Well, somebody fooled them on the laying off of 200 people! Somebody fooled them on the NHC taking away people's bedsteads and other possessions. Somebody fooled him in the Town and Country Planning Office about the pushing down of "The Shrubbery"! Somebody fooled him about the distribution of this property!

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member will not be allowed to go straying.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not straying, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are dealing with land acquisition in St. Thomas, and the honourable Member will have to deal with the acquisition of land.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the greatest respect, I submit that the honourable Member, the Prime Minister, responsible for Town and Country Planning admitted on the floor of this House to being fooled in relation to this acquisition.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He admitted to being fooled about the contents of a file dealing with the acquisition of land in St. Thomas. My judgment and my ruling is that the honourable Member will have to stay within those narrow confines.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Within those confines, I am saying that the honourable Member is incompetent as Minister responsible for Planning. The right honourable Member for St. Thomas has demonstrated on the floor of this House his total ineptitude in the acquisition of this piece of property. I do not believe any Minister who wants the people of this country to believe that over an eight year period, while he and his colleagues were responsible for the Town and Country Planning Department, they were susceptible of, and in fact allowed themselves to be fooled in the acquisition of a playing field. I cannot accept that unless the Government is prepared in toto to resign and go home and let somebody who can run the country take it over.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) got up and talked about

engineering studies. The Minister responsible for the Town and Country Planning Department got up and said that no engineering studies are necessary. He gave an entirely different story! It can only mean that the honourable Member for St. Michael South East does not know what he is talking about, or he really knows what he is talking about and the Member responsible for Town and Country Planning is seeking to mislead us.

I believe that there is another aspect of this acquisition which the people of Barbados, and in particular the honourable Members of this Chamber, should bear in mind. The accuracy and meticulousness with which the right honourable Member for St. Thomas can indicate what has happened to a particular individual in Barbados with regard to his relationship with the Income Tax Commissioner is a matter of serious concern. This is not the first time in matters of this kind that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and Minister responsible for Town and Country Planning, has demonstrated an unusual and peculiar knowledge about a particular individual in this society in relation to his affairs, tax and otherwise. I consider it to be a very serious matter that, in the course of an acquisition debate, the Prime Minister can identify, to the nearest cent, what has been happening with a particular individual in relation to a Head of Department, who is alleged to be independent in the performance of his duties, when that information is not in the public domain.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Attorney General says that even he knows.

If they do know, and if the matter is still one that is having the attention of a judicial tribunal, or a tribunal of any kind, to come into the House of Assembly, as he continues to do, and talk about what individuals in this country have done or are doing, or are about to have done to them, is to my mind a very pernicious approach to administration.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member should know that before he was a Minister, he must have phoned up somebody at some time. This is a small community and a lot of people believe they can do a lot of things, and they will phone up. But I am submitting that it is not right, and cannot be right, that on the floor of the House an individual's business can be talked about by a Minister. In my view, that is maladministration.

On the question of this acquisition, if the lawyer has written saying that his client is no longer able to make an offer, that is contrary to what the Minister who introduced this Resolution said to us, that the offer still remains.

I do not wish to go on *ad infinitum* about this. But since the honourable Members want to have a debate on these issues prior to doing the Estimates, which for some reason appear not to be ready, we can discuss them.

After hearing those first two honourable Members, the Prime Minister attempted to shift the debate into what he called "infelicities". He said that they decided to ignore them. On the floor of this House, he is suggesting, first of all, that there was some maladministration surrounding the acquisition. Then he said that they had decided to ignore them.

That is corruption, Sir! That is pure, undiluted corruption! Any Minister who can get up and say that he is aware of infelicities, and he is aware of maladministration, but they have decided to ignore them, that is administration corrupted. That is not what the people require of the Government.

We have always challenged the honourable Members that whenever they find maladministration, there is a Director of Public Prosecutions in this country. They must not use the House of Assembly to fool the Press into believing that some magnificent or magnanimous thing has been going on, but they are deciding not to bare it. I am submitting that it is their duty, it is their responsibility, to bring all of these matters out in the open forum. It is their duty and responsibility to bring them before the Director of Public Prosecutions, or let the Attorney General, himself, decide that he is going to enter a "no prosecution", of whatever it is they do. But we cannot have the Prime Minister coming in here and leaving people with the impression that all kinds of corruption was going on and, at the same time, they have decided to ignore it.

11.30 a.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think what you really mean is his reading part of a letter without saying over whose signature it appears.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have not got to that yet. I am working my way towards that, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I knew that was where you were going.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Oh yes, Sir! There is corruption and there is corruption.

I want to deal with another matter. He sought to give the impression that there is a particular officer in the

Town and Country Planning Department, a civil servant, who hid information from the Government for eight years. Recently, we heard about another set of files which the Minister could not find. All we are hearing suddenly, as the people rise up against that vicious and wicked Government, is that they cannot find the files, that the civil servants are hiding the files!

I say that in the same way a Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and Minister responsible for Town and Country Planning, will get in a House of Assembly and read a letter, which purports to be begging for something in lieu of something else, and tells everybody about Income Tax and does not tell us who wrote the letter, I say that at the least that is maladministration.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: You wait, I am going to expose you).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member is saying he is going to expose me. I look forward to it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Address the Chair.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I am addressing you. I am telling you that I look forward to the honourable Member, who is responsible for National Insurance, to come and talk about National Insurance. I have a list of each honourable Member on that side to whom he can address his remarks when he is ready. I am ready in these Estimates. I wish to let him and the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) who I hope will speak on this Resolution, know that this week we are ready for them. Let us do an expose on that side and on this side, and let us put it in the balance and let us see who will find whom wanting. I am ready for it!

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member will please get back to Bridgefield.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. Bridgefield is only the tip of the iceberg.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You will have the next five days. We have 48 hours and 45 minutes to debate the Estimates.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The way the Leader of the House was behaving this morning, I have doubts whether they are ready to discuss the Estimates today, since they say they have five other items on the Order Paper and it is our intention to discuss them in minute detail. It is clear that the Estimates will begin tomorrow, which is all right with us. To get back to the Resolution, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has managed on a simple acquisition to demonstrate, when we say having a single number in this country is dangerous, how wicked and pernicious the Government can be, and how no single citizen in this country is safe while that Government remains in power, and with the system which they have.

There are some other acquisitions which I do not believe Your Honour will allow me to speak on, but we will deal with them when we come to the appropriate Head. We will point out that the Prime Minister is being inconsistent when he talks about his attitude to this acquisition in relation to what we know as his attitude in relation to some other later acquisitions during the time of the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, the Minister obviously has the right to final reply. All I rise to say is that I am very, very disappointed in the debate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Minister will now reply?

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there seems to be some confusion as to what I said or did not say. I just want to put the record clear. I want to deal specifically with Bridgefield and the matter before the Chamber, and not to indulge in a wide ranging debate, which I hope will take place in no uncertain terms when we are dealing with the Estimates.

The honourable Member who just sat down said he had a number of questions to deal with in relation to acquisitions. I certainly hope that he will deal with them, because I am prepared to give the necessary answers.

I have before me a paper which deals with Cabinet matters, in which, on May 6, 1979, the Cabinet gave a directive. In this directive there was no question that the accounting officer was permitted not to apply the Financial Rules of 1971 as then existed, and to permit a number of firms to be given contracts for the preparation of playing fields.

I do not know if the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) was a member of the Cabinet on May 6, 1976, but C. O. Williams Construction was given a contract to develop Bridgefield at a cost of $10 000. There are others: Arsenal, Jackson, the same C. O. Williams Construction, $2 900; Waterford, R. M. Construction and Quarries Limited, $9 500; and Seawell, C. O. Williams Construction, $2 880.

I have gone out of my way to read this. This was done on the invitation of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sports. Obviously, you will see that there is a long history to this matter, and a Cabinet presided over it. And unless they had finally and totally run out of ideas, as subsequent events did prove, because the sovereign authority of the country recognised that they had and therefore dismissed them from office, they would not have undertaken to

embark upon such a programme of activity, going to the extent to by-pass the Financial Rules and Audit Act and give permission for the Accounting Officer to take such a decision, unless they were very satisfied that this offer was a concrete offer.

I am extremely disturbed to think that a Government composed of people who had some knowledge of law, and of course led by an attorney-at-law himself, and which would have had at their disposal an Attorney General to advise them in matters of law, would have undertaken to utilise Government's finances to finance projects of this nature without being assured of the title deeds to these properties. This could only have been as a result of an arrangement between friends, and that is exactly what it was.

I am going to read now the final paragraph of the letter which the right honourable Prime Minister read to you, and that is in support of my contention that the offer was not withdrawn. An offer was made, consequently this decision was taken, and the Government of the day had confidence in the offer made and therefore set out to act upon the offer which was made.

One would have thought it was all right and therefore there was no harm in reading this letter here, because this letter fortifies the idea that a decision was taken by Cabinet to spend money on Bridgefield and a number of other places. But this is what it said, and this is why I said the offer was not withdrawn:

> "At the present time our client's financial resources will not permit it to donate land unless it can complete and carry out the development which it originally contemplated, and until the town planning appeal is finalised in a manner which will permit our client to repay his banking indebtedness we regret that no further consideration can be given to donating the land, as no release could be obtained from our client's bankers."

11.40 a.m.

It would seem to me that if the conditions set out in this paragraph could be met in terms of Town Planning approval, and the banker's willingness to release the land, that it would mean the offer would still go through. I state that on the basis of my own knowledge and what I read.

I do not know how much conflict there is between the right honourable Prime Minister and I, but that is my view on reading this file. I am very concerned over the developments as stated in this file here. There is certainly a tremendous amount of conflict. That is as much as I can say.

I do not want to get into the irrelevancies that I have heard. I do not think it is necessary. I think we can save a lot of time in this Parliament if we stick to the issues and the matters before us.

I thank you.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

LEASE BY THE CROWN OF A PARCEL OF LAND ETC AT WEYMOUTH, SAINT MICHAEL TO THE POLICE SPORTS CLUB

Item No. 6 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve 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.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is quite straightforward, although at times you expect matters to be straightforward and they do not turn out to be that way. I do not believe anybody would want to question the willingness on the part of the Government to grant the sporting facilities to the Royal Barbados Police Force.

It is a straightforward lease. The amount involved is the handsome sum of $100 per annum for 5.63 acres or 22 804.9 square metres of land.

With those few remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass. The Addendum sets out clearly what is involved.

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

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

SEVERANCE PAYMENTS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1984

Order No. 3 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Severance Payments Act.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to claim that this measure is not going to be controversial. However, there are a number of things which I intend to state relating to this Bill, which need not be controversial.

The Severance Payments Act, Cap. 355A, was placed on our Statute Books in 1973. It was felt, leading up to 1973, that workers should be entitled to a form of payment in case they were severed by an employer. You will recall that early in the 1970s there was a big fire in Bridgetown which resulted in the severing of hundreds

of employees. It is reasonable to assume that this particular incident prompted the then Government to bring this particular Act into being by 1973.

A lot of concerns have been expressed. It has been said from time to time that it is a cumbersome Bill, and some concerns were expressed about simplifying the Act. There was a school of thought that some amendments were necessary, because at that time, 1973, a lot of things were not taken into consideration.

The present Cabinet looked at the Severance Payments Act in November, 1976, and decided that it should be reviewed, and a committee was set up in 1977 to examine the present Severance Payments Act. Certain recommendations were made, and from time to time these recommendations were moved into the Act as amendments. Today we have some amendments which Government feels are of immediate concern and ought to be dealt with accordingly.

I should say that while we are reviewing the Severance Payments Act, it might be necessary to come with a new Severance Payments Act. Some provisions are obsolete and there is certainly reason to feel that we ought to look very carefully at this Act.

The areas of immediate concern, as outlined in the Bill before us, relate to a burning concern throughout Barbados of employees and their relatives, and to Government in particular, that when employees are severed and are entitled to severance payment, the employers, for some reason or another, delay the payments of those severed employees.

This is an area in which I do not intend to ask any quarter. Some employers are frustrating Government's policy and frustrating severed employees. It is downright failure on the part of employees to carry out their responsibilities to their employees, the people who have made a contribution to the development of their enterprises.

The Bill seeks to put a time limit on the time taken to pay out those severed workers. I am aware that the Barbados Workers Union moved a Resolution some time last year asking Government to consider a three-month period as the stipulated time during which the employers ought to pay severance. But the Government had decided long before that to make it two months, and this particular measure will make it mandatory for the employers to pay severed workers within a two-month period.

There is provision in the Bill for an extension of the two-month period to four months. The National Insurance Board will have to decide, after investigation into the particular case or cases, whether or not it would allow an extension, but after four months there is no extension at all. The Board has no power after four months.

11.50 a.m.

We have decided to do this because we are fed up with employers not paying over to the Fund. But they not only refuse to pay, they have not been paying interest on the sums due to those severed workers. This Bill will seek to impose interest on sums due, which will be fixed by the Minister of Finance, so that severed workers will not only receive their severance payment based on the basic pay which is explained in the Act, but also the accrued interest on the quantum of compensation due to them.

In addition to this, there has been some concern over the fact that when the National Insurance Board is called upon to pay out funds to severed employees, there is no machinery at the moment to expedite the claims from the employers, because the National Insurance Board has got to retrieve the amount of money that is paid out of the National Insurance Fund to severed employees.

What we are seeking to do in this measure is to give the National Insurance Board power to retrieve that money which is paid out as a result of their slackness or their inability to pay. We propose to do so by having the unpaid certificates for the monies due retrieved by way of the courts. All funds from the Transport Levy, the Training Levy, National Insurance, all contributions that are now collected by the National Insurance, will be retrieved, and there will be a deduction from whatever money is outstanding or is to be refunded to the employer.

It is hoped at the same time to increase the rate of rebate from 10 per cent to some 25 per cent, at a date to be announced later.

We feel that there are a number of persons who owe contributions to the National Insurance. I heard an honourable Member over there got up and accused this Government of being a vicious and wicked Government. I really could not believe my ears because it worries and hurts me that he could turn his eyes over here and accuse this Government of being vicious and wicked, and talk about corruption.

Certain remarks made at this point by the honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW) were ordered struck from the Record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: There are some Members who should know when to keep their mouths quiet. Some of his colleagues ought to be exposed for what they are. I know a lot of things. I do not want to come in here and disclose them, otherwise the honourable Member

might not be in here. But that is the way the game is. I am going to warn him and his colleagues to desist from calling people on this side vicious, immoral and corrupt. It does not lie with us, and they should not seek to tell anybody so. I am sure the Press will take up that. I am prepared to expose them. I will say what I have to say publicly on the platforms – I might not be able to say it in here because of the Rules of the House – and then you will see.

Burger Bee owes money. You owe $25 000 to the National Insurance Office. Burger Bee and Little Bee and the directors.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Why don't you tell them that you are shutting it down because you are vicious and wicked?)

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Yes, because it belongs to you and you would not pay!

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Please! Standing Order No. 33(6) says that Members must be heard in silence. Will the honourable Member for St. Michael West please restrain himself? I do not want to be able to hear asides.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this measure, I must say, is not one that is activated by any spite. You will remember that as early as 1976, the Barbados Labour Party Government in its manifesto promised that all provisions which worked to the disadvantage of the worker should be removed. We were referring to the severance payment, and we went on to point out that we would look at the specified minimum time during which an employer is called upon to pay out money to severed workers.

There are a number of employers at the moment who have not been paying those funds into the National Insurance Fund. I want to take this opportunity to say to them that I feel they have an obligation to pay. There is nothing which prevents them from paying the funds, because not only do we find that they are not paying over the contributions which by law they have to pay, but they are not paying over the part which is deducted from the employees' pay cheques. I have already said that this is not fair, but I am sure I have heard one or two Members from that side get up and make a case that we are hard on the employers. Well what we are seeking to do by Order is to increase the rebate.

In 1975, two years after the Severance Payment Fund was set up, it was broke. The then Government was giving a rebate of 50 per cent, and by 1975, the then Government, the Democratic Labour Party Government, had to come to this Honourable Chamber and seek a supplementary in order to pay people who had claims against the Severance Fund. That is what prompted us in 1976 to set up a committee to review the Fund, and to carry out an actuarial study to determine whether, and how soon, the Fund would be liquidated.

In 1979, we found it expedient to reduce the rebate from the 50 per cent to 10 per cent. I must say that the Fund is looking a little healthier and that is why the Government has considered at this time to pass an Order which will increase the level of rebate from 10 per cent to 25 per cent.

I am sure that this will be welcomed by the employers. They have made representations to me and the Minister of Finance that it is unfair to have to pay out severance, and only get back a little, only 10 per cent, and they indicated that they wanted some working capital to help them in their business. Twenty-five per cent is as much as we can afford at this time. If we opt to go for a higher rebate, you may very well see a depletion of the funds once again, and we do not think this would be prudent management.

I hope that this matter would not lead to controversy, but I want honourable Members to understand that I am prepared to take on the controversies and deal with them. This subject has been fully ventilated, but a lot of people have said a lot of things about it without understanding it at all. They do not have a clue, but they would seek to say things which have no relevance to the subject matter.

I said earlier, and I want to make it abundantly clear, that there are a lot of other amendments, lots of other recommendations, lots of good suggestions that have come from interested parties, various organisations and workers as well as employers' representatives, but we cannot take it all in one bite.

We are moving in some of the amendments which we feel are of immediate concern. We feel that the workers who have made an invaluable contribution to businesses, and because of some reason are severed, ought to be treated fairly – they should get whatever money is due to them under the Severance Payments Act, and get it in a reasonable time. That is why we feel we should move in a stipulated period, which is two months, so that employers will know they have to pay the money out. If the National Insurance Fund is required to pay, then those employers will have to pay the money into the National Insurance Fund, because we intend to take them to the magistrate's court to retrieve the money that we have to pay out.

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

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

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am a little surprised that the honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O Bradshaw) should vouchsafe that there are a number of valuable amendments which they find necessary for the severance payments legislation, but yet do not find it appropriate to get them before this Honourable House in good time.

The Severance Payments Act is not a new Act, and for a long time suggestions have been made about amendments which would better the working of the Act. And we find that from time to time the Minister talks about amendments which are coming – still, they never get here.

There are one or two areas which I think are of tremendous importance to the working population of this country, which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. I will deal with some of the problems with which people who work in the sugar industry, particularly in the sugar factories, are faced.

There are some sections in the Act which deal with payment of severance to persons who are made redundant as a result of closure of factories in the sugar industry. People who work in the sugar industry are persons who are engaged in seasonal employment. What the existing legislation says is that where persons are engaged in seasonal employment, they can only get a severance payment if the circumstance which leads to their severance takes place during the course of a season.

So in relation to people who are employed in the sugar industry, factory workers for instance, if the sugar factory decides to go out of business outside of the sugar cane season, and if you follow the strict letter of the law, all persons who are made redundant in that period of time are not entitled to severance payment, because the circumstance which gave rise to their severance would have taken place outside the course of the season. That is an area which needs to be addressed immediately.

I believe, fortunately, that in the administration of severance payments by some of the factories which have had to make workers redundant, although the redundancies may have taken place outside the season, in most of the cases, the workers have received their severance payments. But the Act, as it stands, does provide for an unscrupulous employer to take advantage of the situation and deny a worker a severance payment to which he may be justly entitled. So this is an area to look at. It is not an area which needs any lot of intricate research, it is an area which can be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

There is another area which needs to be addressed immediately, one which has caused problems, because from time to time, a number of employers in the industry have hidden behind this provision. Where you have persons who are engaged in seasonal employment and, subsequently, engaged in full time employment – I am not necessarily saying that I agree with that interpretation, because I do not – the Act has been interpreted by the Tribunal and by the court to mean that after a period of seasonal employment followed by a period of full time employment, a worker who is then severed cannot add the period of seasonal employment to his period of full time employment and therefore get the benefit of the extended length of service.

This has worked a lot of injustice in a number of cases. Where persons who worked as seasonal employees for let us say, fifteen years of their life, and then, for the last three years, may have been engaged in full-time employment with a factory, have been severed after that period of full-time employment, the severance payment has only been allowed in relation to the latter three years of full-time employment.

I know of cases which have been taken to the courts, and the courts have agreed with the Tribunal that the Act as it stands makes no provision for joining the periods of full time employment with periods of seasonal employment. There are several cases which have worked severe injustice on a number of employees. This is another area which, in my view, needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to make a very short contribution to this debate, because I believe that in the interest of the community, there are certain matters which ought to be clarified.

I will not declare an interest in this debate, but I think I ought to establish that I, as a management consultant, had, as clients, two companies which operate in the fast foods business.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Long before that! There is a difference between Management Consultant and Manager).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: They, like a number of companies in Barbados, large and small, have had some difficulty meeting their net payroll at the end of a week.

The manner in which the Minister speaks of those people who have not "paid", would suggest that the people are paid their gross salaries, that they pay back a sum of money to the employer, and that the employer

pockets that money. The truth is that, for a number of employers in Barbados, meeting the net payroll at the end of a week is a problem.

Anyone who has been even remotely connected with a business in this community can testify, for the Minister's sake, that meeting the payroll at the end of a week, or the end of a month, can be a horrendous experience. What most companies do is, to try to meet their payrolls, to the extent that the bank allows them, and try and survive to the following week, trying their best to see if they can get sales to cover the outstanding amount, which invariably goes beyond the limit which the bank sets for their overdraft. Any honourable Member in here who has been associated with any company, at any time, can attest to that particular problem!

No one will ever gainsay that the failure to pay the National Insurance contributions is a matter of serious concern. It was a matter of serious concern when we held the Government. The difference between the Democratic Labour Party in Government and the Barbados Labour Party in Government is that in dealing with the respective companies concerned, our eyes were blind. We paid no attention to the fact that a particular person of a particular political persuasion might be associated with a particular company. If that were so, at least four then Opposition members, many of whom were associated with companies whose National Insurance contributions were in outstanding arrears, would have gone out of business.

But, Sir, those two companies to which I refer are two in a list that is so long that it takes 73 pages of single-spaced type to list them. It includes some of the largest plantations in this country. It includes the *Beacon* newspaper. It includes a whole number of companies with which honourable Members on that side are associated, to which I will not refer. Seventy-three pages!
12.10 p.m.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now we are hearing who is not on the list! It takes 73 pages to compile the list, and the list would read like a Who's Who in Barbados – from the top to the bottom! But an honourable Member in this Chamber in seeking to score cheap political points, will offer the suggestion that some honourable Member over here is associated with a company that has not paid its National Insurance and therefore is corrupt!

I admit freely to being associated with Little Bee Limited and Burger Bee Limited. What I find absolutely unacceptable is that a Government could pursue those two little companies to the point where it is only a matter of time before they go out of business. The only reason why they have remained in business is to allow – and the records will show this – the 25 persons who are associated with that company, who work and get paid every week, to get their pay cheques every week. It takes a very mean and demented kind of approach to put 25 or 30 people out of work for a debt which, in fact, is no different from that of 73 pages of names, which, as I said read like a Who's Who in Barbados.

Since I consider it unacceptable for them to name two, it would not be proper for me to name them, but I give the honourable Member the assurance that on any occasion he wishes me to, I can take the time and put the names in the Record of this Honourable House, or I can go on a political platform and list all of the names of all the people who find themselves in arrears. I hope that will put paid to the concept of giving the impression that there is some underhand thing going on.

Check with some of the honourable Members on the front bench and ask them about their attachments to some of their small companies, ask them if they do not have the same problems, and if they do not appear on the list as well. Let no one confuse themselves about this.

You are getting up and trying to give the impression that you happen to know that a company somebody is associated with is short in paying its National Insurance and therefore he has something to hide. No one who has been involved in business will agree with you on that, and it is totally and thoroughly unsuited for the kind of debate we should have in this Honourable Chamber to be raising an indication that somebody is afraid.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I ever believed that in my public life I have anything to be ashamed of that any honourable Member over there can expose to the public, I give you my word that I would leave public life. In my public life, I have tried to uphold high standards.

In a professional capacity, we come across a number of things which we are bound by professional ethics to leave in the professional arena. There are certain confidences between client and the person who is dealing with the company, and those confidences are not to be divulged in public to score cheap political points. There is no secret that the companies to which I refer have not been able to pay any of their executives one single cent over the last four years.

Aside

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member says that they should shut down. They happen to have more consideration for the people who work for them than the honourable Member has for the Transport Board. That is why he recommend to shut down! If he was sensitized to the suffering which people who go home when you shut down have to bear, if he were sensitized to the

absolute pain which comes to a person who is shut down, he would not glibly and easily say "Shut down, then!" The reason they have not shut down is because there are 32 persons who work there, who have families, and who make a contribution.

The National Insurance which is not paid, therefore, is not always a result of any attempt to steal. It may be the result of ineptitude, it may be the result of bad management, but I do not think it is fair to suggest that all those persons who are not able to pay in their National Insurance on time are thieves, rogues, and robbers. If that were so, that would apply to 95 per cent of the businesses in Barbados, and it would apply to a number of Government statutory corporations. Let the honourable Member get up in here and read out the list of the statutory corporations which have not paid in their National Insurance. Let him get up and read that list. I think I have made my point.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): It is really amazing to hear the righteous indignation expressed by the honourable Member who just sat down. The honourable Member started off in here today throwing bricks, forgetting, of course, that he lives in a glass house. So when you throw bricks in the House of Assembly.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: When I spoke earlier today, I was speaking of corruption, but when I just finish speaking I was not talking about corruption. There are no glass houses over here. The honourable Member will not get away with "glass houses". There is no corruption – there are straight facts available for anyone to examine.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: When the honourable Member spoke today, he started to throw bricks, and when you live in a glass house, you must not throw them. The honourable Minister in charge of this matter is an expert of throwing rocks at people who live in a glass house.

The question of National Insurance is not only a matter of considerable difficulty in Barbados, but in many of the countries which have introduced a system of voluntary deduction by the employer of the National Insurance of the worker, along with an obligation to pay over his own proportion, the employer's proportion. Many countries have tried to tackle this, and we cannot evade the issue here either. Sooner or later, the modern methods of putting pressure on people, who are really trustees of the money, will have to be introduced in Barbados. It is only a matter of time.

Directors of companies will have to be made personally responsible for their statutory duties to the country's Social Security system. The more we fail to recognise that these matters come prior to other claims on revenue of the business, the better for us. Barbados is going to have to face up to this issue, whether we like it or not. In the United Kingdom, they had to face up to it. Many Commonwealth countries, have had to face up to it, and here in the Caribbean recently, other territories have had to face up to it.

I do not know why we are not discussing the pros and cons of holding directors responsible in a very intelligent manner. As we bring in individual cases, and as we bring in the matter of personalities we are going to lose sight of the real gravamen of the problem. And the crux of the matter is that not paying over the money has an economic benefit, because you do not pay interest on the arrears to the National Insurance, but if you borrow the money from the bank, you have to pay the overdraft rate.

I hope that some discussion on this matter will take place not only in the House of Assembly, but in employers' and workers' organisations and others, because the true cost of the Social Security system in Barbados, as I understand it, amounts to somewhere in the vicinity of an add-on of 20 per cent to 25 per cent. These are important factors.

12.20 p.m.

An evaluation by all and sundry should take place on that fact, because when we come to the costing of our products, obviously our competitive position has to be determined not only by the cost of our wages, but also by our other inputs of costs. The cost of our utilities, Social Security, rents and transport are all matters which must be thrown into the melting pot when we look at our position.

Too often people tend to think that when you discuss these things they have to be discussed in this personal manner. I hope that that is stopped and we can discuss this issue in a comparative manner. You must not come into the House of Assembly and say that this Government is heartless. You cannot prove that the Government is heartless. This Government has done more for the people of Barbados in the eight years it has been in power than the Democratic Labour Party did for 15 years. Do not crank me up! If you crank me up, I will point out everything for you during the course of these Estimates, and I will tell you how much the Gross National Product increased, how much wages increased – everything! I will tell you that when you were Minister of Trade 440 small shopkeepers went out of business. You had better be careful. You presided over a price control system that brought 42 per cent price increase in Barbados.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the honourable Member please address the Chair?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes. I am going to keep my fire, Sir.

I really hope we are going to be discussing this matter in the future as part of other very important problems with which we have to deal – the problems of cash flow, the quantum of Social Security payments, and our competitive position today in this world, in which, if we are to survive, we have, given our costs, to be able to judge ourselves against other countries in the world which do not provide the same kind of security that we provide for our people.

This is nothing about which Barbadians should be ashamed. Barbadians should be proud of the fact that our people have a standard of living that they have. I hear that the Coney Island down there is making a lot of money. That is why Burger Bee has a little problem in Baxters Road, the people are spending their money at Coney Island. The honourable Member should have advised his clients to get the concession at Coney Island; then Burger Bee would be able to pay for everything. But you know in Barbados new brooms sweep clean. The Coney Island will last for two or three weeks and then they will forget it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation, Sir: At the time when the Coney Islands were coming in, the two persons who are responsible in Barbados had it tied up too tightly. We would have to refer to two persons who the honourable Member might know quite well, Sir. I could not say that on the floor of the House.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I told the honourable Member not to throw bricks. He will get knocked down. The position is that the Government is under an obligation to take a firm stand on the collection of this statutory charge on the money. The people are trustees, and it is no use getting up in here trying to condone the fact that when employers do not pay over the money they deduct from employees, and when they fail to pay over their own contribution, that they conduct is bordering on fraudulent conversion.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: There may be a little question of intent to defraud, because you may have the greatest expectation of being able to get it from the bank to pay it in at the relevant time, but that is the problem. We must take a firm stand on it in Barbados.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are some features of this amending Bill which I welcome, particularly the feature dealing with the placing of a penalty of interest on the late payment of severance. Only a few weeks ago, when I spoke on an amendment to the Income Tax Act, I drew attention to this matter, and I am glad to see that the reaction of the Government has been swift in bringing the necessary amendment before this House. I am sure that it will have the support of both sides of the House.

I wish, however, to say that it is necessary for a substantial revision of the Severance Payments Act to be effected rapidly. When the Act came into being in 1973, I believe that we used the English Redundancy Act of 1965. That is really not a very well drafted Act. It has posed serious problems of interpretation for the law courts, and for the employers and employees who have had to operate under it. In many respects the language of the Bill is too complex. It should be possible, with the modern form of drafting, to considerably simplify the Severance Payments Act.

I recall that some work had been started on this exercise during the time I had the honour to be responsible for law revision. I know that it is an exercise that calls for constant endeavour. It may well be that the Ministry may have to adopt the same technique we adopted with the Companies Act, that is to get the assistance of an outside expert, along with a team from the Ministry and other interested organisations, particularly the employers' and employees' organisations, to simplify the language of the Severance Payments Act.

The complexity of the language of the Act has made it almost impossible sometimes for legal advice to be given with certainty to those persons seeking a redundancy payment. Indeed, the complexity of language has led to very strange decisions in interpreting some sections of the Act. The court has held, for instance, that the common law right to terminate a contract by notice, or by pay in lieu of notice, does not any longer apply in relation to this Act. In jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere, where there is similar legislation, the decision has been otherwise, and although that decision has not reached beyond our Court of Appeal, I think that the legal concept has left some of us at a loss. It may well be that in due course Parliament will have to clarify whether that was the real intention of the legislature. I have always understood that it was possible that an employee, by giving notice, could terminate his contract of employment without being wrong. And surely if that right exists for the employee, there will have to be more than clear language in the Severance Payments Act to say that the common law right of the employer to do the same thing, without the employee being thereby wrongfully dismissed, has been revoked.

12.30 p.m.

At present we have a decision. But whilst I respect the ruling of the judiciary, I think that the Ministry should decide, as a matter of policy, whether that was the clear intention of the legislation, and if it is necessary to bring the amending legislation before this House.

Within the Act, the periods of notice are too short. In this day and age it is ridiculous to believe that the notice of termination, the notice to determine a contract, is only two weeks where the contract is up to five years, and four weeks where the contract is beyond five years, and that that must be the minimum period of notice.

I believe that the Minister must give urgent consideration to increasing the notice, which must be given to employees whose employment is being terminated, particularly where they have given a lifetime of service to organisations. If all a person who has served an organisation for 20 years has to be given is four weeks notice of termination, that seems to me to be inhumane and unrealistic.

In common law jurisdictions in Canada, in the absence of statutory provision, the courts have recently been holding that periods of notice must be longer. And this is not only for managerial and executive staff, but for staff at lower levels of the employment ladder.

The exclusion of certain categories of persons from the Severance Payments Act, in my view, is probably based on a wrong policy approach to subjects such as these. It is ridiculous in this day and age to exclude some statutory boards, those that are set out in the Statutory Boards (Pension) Act, from the benefits of the Severance Payments Act.

I cannot believe that the only rational explanation of this is that the Government, normally, would pay the equivalent of severance payment. I believe that was the explanation given of the *ex gratia* payments by the last Government. I do not believe that when we are dealing with the worker's equity in his job there should be any discretion by any employer, regardless of whether the employer happens to be the Crown, a statutory board or anybody else. In fact, I think that this idea that the Crown must be treated differently from everyone else is an idea that is archaic. The time for that idea has come and gone.

Modern jurisprudence and modern talk is to assimilate the Crown more and more, particularly where the Crown is getting into commercial and other activities, to a normal employer. A lot of the hostility which one sees in the quasi-public field and in the public field will be minimised if we deal with the Crown on a proper level.

We are too much taken up with the idea that the Crown is the person of Her Majesty the Queen, and that the Crown cannot do any harm – without seriously considering the equity of situations. The jurisprudence must be changed. And I am dealing with a situation accepted since 1973, and perpetuated since then, so I am not hurling stones at any one person.

The other thing that I cannot accept is that fishermen, who may be remunerated by part of the share of profits on gross earnings should be excluded from the benefit of severance payments. I do not believe that there is any proper policy consideration for this archaic provision.

I am also appalled that where a wife may be employed by her husband, or a husband may be employed by the wife, that he can fire her, or she can fire him, even without notice, and that there will be no severance payments payable in those circumstances. That anomaly has to be removed. We must no longer treat women as though they are second class citizens.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: My friend says: "Do not come with that....." I would not use the expression.

The idea is that if you give the woman her economic due, you are creating bad relations with her husband. That is absolute nonsense! And we are finding a lot of these cases occurring without any means of redress:–

Say a woman is working in a business with a man. She is being paid, she may be the managing director, but relations turn sour and she gets fired. That woman has no right to severance payment and that is wrong. The law should be allowed to deal with those situations where they occur. There is no reason why she should be treated differently.

If she was living with the man in a common law union, doing the same things that a woman who has a ring does, she would be entitled to payment. There is no fundamental difference in that situation, so I cannot understand the purpose of the law when the law appears to discriminate in this fashion between two people.

I think that the excluded classes happen to be too wide, and one should seriously revise this area of excluded classes, particularly those areas which I have highlighted.

There is a re-definition in this Bill of "basic pay." In my submission, even the redefinition is not clear enough. While I believe that a person who has been made redundant should have reasonable compensation, given the fact that he has an equity in his job, it seems to me that where allowances are paid to that person tax free, and it is argued for Income Tax purposes that the allowances were by way of reimbursement for expenses incurred on behalf of the employer for a job, that the definition of basic pay should make it clear beyond a doubt that those allowances are not included in the calculation.

I made the point in here under the Income Tax Act, and I wish to repeat it. The Government could have saved themselves increasing the percentage of rebate if it took a progressive attitude towards allowing people to write off certain payments for severance payments, or to provide for them as against their tax position.

I see the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) is very interested. No doubt he will put it in the manifesto the next time. I will give him a couple of ideas on this if he wants to hear them.

The problem with the small employer, and the problem with the housewife or the househusband who has to provide for someone working in employment, is that he cannot insure against the contingent liability of having to pay severance payment. It is not beyond the intellectual capacity of either the Government or the Civil Service to look at the situation where, tax-wise, you can provide enough incentives to ensure that, for the future, you can insure either your severance payments liability or write it off and provide for it over a period of time.
12.40 p.m.

The honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Mr. M. A. King) is quite correct when he makes the point that Barbados has got a sophisticated system of Social Security. It is a point that is too often lost on the country, and, unfortunately, in the political battle that goes on between the two major political parties. In our anxiety to attack each other sometimes, and to take power the one from the other, we have failed in our duty to underscore to the country that the successive Governments have progressively increased the Social Security benefits available to Barbados.

Obviously, there has been a price to it. Part of that price is carried by the worker, a large proportion of it is carried by the employer. Perhaps it is not yet an ideal system, one that ensures that no senior citizen goes without support and sustenance in their old age, but it is a tremendous advance for an under-developed country such as Barbados.

Unfortunately, one of the disadvantages is a consequential increase in the cost of the products which we sell. We will have to underscore the need for higher productivity and for economic growth of the Gross National Product if the political parties are to continue to recommend an increase in Social Security benefits to the electorate.

I know that it is difficult, particularly for an opposition that wishes to become a Government, as it indeed becomes difficult for a Government as it gets near to an election year, to make statements such as these, but the Social Security system is getting to the stage where we need a comprehensive study on how to increase its quality without necessarily weighing down the overall public weal. I am sure the right honourable Member for St. John, (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow), with his vast knowledge and experience in this area, not only academically, but also from the practical aspect, will understand that point quite clearly. I am sure he does. We can only look at it in the context of what we can afford, and there is no point in the two political parties trying to outdo one another in his area in offering benefits that, eventually, will cripple the public weal.

In this regard, it is quite right for Government to try to collect every cent that is owed to the Social Security Fund. Let me make two points for the consideration of the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central in particular. In the first place, the administration of the Social Security system in severance payments or National Insurance contributions must be such that people must not be allowed to build up defaults over several years. We cannot have a situation where it is three or four years, or even six months, before we are going to find a tax certificate being filed in the magistrate's court, nor should we wait until a business has gone into liquidation or receivership for the Government then to step in.

If there is a shortage of manpower within the National Insurance Board and their duties are too much, you must streamline the administration, you must revise the system, so that people are not running up arrears of severance payments contributions, or arrears of taxes, over a long period of time, because severance payment has now become a priority in the paying out in a winding up. Land Tax and Income Tax have become priorities in fact, every conceivable tax due to the Government gets more preferential treatment than people lending by way of mortgage or debentures. The long term effect of this is that the banks are going to be hesitant to lend money for real development, because they are unsure of their security, or they are going to be demanding on a daily basis that you keep so many records in order to show that you are up with your payments. In this way, we are going to frustrate doing business in Barbados, particularly among the small businessmen.

I do not know of any country in the world, and the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central should research this point, where the Government has been given a total priority for all outstanding arrears of public taxes. In most other systems there has been a limitation on the amount for which preferential treatment is given, so that if a business go under – and businesses will go under, for different reasons, and not only in a recession – the people who have been financing and carrying the business have some right to share in whatever is left for distribution among each other.

So I agree with the Minister. I welcome his call for the employers' and the employees' organisations and

other interested people to do a total study, because I think that in our anxiety to bring more money into the Public Treasury, we are sometimes seeing the wood and not the trees. We ought always to keep our attention firmly focussed on the trees, on the substance of matters. We must not use legislation to bolster inefficient administration, because, in my view, eventually it does not improve the efficiency of the administration – and it frustrates business.

I believe that the National Insurance office is one of the better run offices in this country, but we must be careful not to continually load it with additional jobs, without giving the department the manpower and all the improved technical aids so that there will be much more efficiency.

There is a lot more I can say in relation to severance payment, but I believe that this House has other pressing business. I trust that the Minister will at some time provide us with the opportunity of a full debate. More important than that, I trust that we will use the obvious expertise that is available in this country, on both sides of the political spectrum, and on both the workers' and the employers' sides to bring a better Bill before the House, which can only redound to the proper functioning of the Act and to the benefit of those people who enjoy the provisions of the severance payment and Social Security legislation in this country.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only thing, as I see it, that is controversial about this Bill is that the amendments have not taken place sooner. We are now in the twelfth year of the Severance Payments Scheme. It began, as some honourable Members quite rightly observed, on January 1, 1973, and as we came down the road, we have been able to identify the problems relating to the scheme and to take corrective action. Long before now, not long after the scheme came into operation, the problem that we are now seeking to redress in this Chamber manifested itself, that particular problem being the hesitancy, the reluctance or the failure of the employer to speedily pay the employee what severance payment had become due because that person had been severed from his job.

It has been said in here that in 1976 the Fund was bankrupt. The Fund began with a commitment. Even before the first penny was collected persons became eligible to receive benefits from that Fund, because it was made retroactive, as far as I can remember, from September 1, 1969. All those hundreds of persons who had been severed between 1969 and 1973, and in respect of whom no payments had been made by the employers or anyone else into the Fund, became eligible to receive benefits from that Fund. So it is all well and good to come in here and say that the Fund was bankrupt.

12.50 p.m.

The Fund continued travelling in that way until 1979, as I understand it from the honourable Minister who introduced this Bill, when the employers' rebate was reduced from 50 per cent to 10 per cent. I do not want the honourable Member to believe that we on this side are saying that the employers were hard done by because the rebate had been reduced from 50 per cent to 10 per cent. I believe it became necessary to so reduce the rebate. What I sought to do when I last spoke on this matter in this Chamber, probably about two meetings ago, was to relate the increase in rebate to the employer with taxing severance payments paid to employees. But it is not a question that the employers have been hard done by.

The Barbados Workers' Union for many years now have been pressing for a mechanism to enforce a speedier payment to employees, and this has been for some time before the Resolution passed at the last Annual Conference. I believe that Senator Greaves has at some point introduced a Resolution to that effect. So what we are now getting is perhaps what we should have gotten quite some time ago.

I have to take issue with the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) on the question of making the directors of a company responsible in their personal capacities for monies due, whether it be severance payments or National Insurance.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are we going to waste time discussing something which is not yet before this Chamber and which is only a thought in somebody's mind?

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Sir, I am making a comment on what has been said, which, I assume, was relevant, because the Chair allowed. The Chair having allowed it, the assumption is that it was germane to the debate before the Chamber.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member said the time may arise when you may have to do certain things. I do not see how that can be the subject of a debate at this time. That may never come into any form that will reach this Chamber. That is a very debatable point. I do not think we should waste good parliamentary time debating hopes that may never materialize.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Sir, I accept Your Honour's ruling in this particular matter.

It has been said from time to time that the Severance Payments Act is a most complicated Act. But when one gets around the language of the Act, it is, to my mind, a very simple Act to administer. A lot of

misunderstandings have come about principally because a number of workers felt that, so long as they left the employer's employment, they were due for severance payments. That is certainly not the case. I believe that most of the workers in this country have now come around to the understanding that in fact they only become eligible for severance payments in certain circumstances.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) has referred to a certain ruling of Supreme Court in respect of the termination of service. I am one of those persons, probably one of the few persons, who support the Ruling of the Supreme Court in this matter. I understood from what the honourable Member for Christ Church West said that he himself does not support it, but I support it. Because if you take the case of an employee who has been with a particular employer for 20 years, which means that he has built up a 20-year entitlement to severance pay, and you give that worker two months' notice and sever him from his job, it means that that 20 year entitlement built up over those years is completely wiped out.

(Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is where you have your unfair dismissals legislation.)

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: But we have not got unfair dismissals legislation!

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: It is coming.)

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: The particular ruling of the court is linked to wrongful dismissal.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, I think the honourable Member is missing the point I am making. I think he has imputed to me whether I have agreed with the policy of the decision or not.

Whereas I would go for the policy of the decision, I believe that legislation must be certain and must be properly interpreted. The absence of an Unfair Dismissals Act cannot be brought in by judicial legislation. That is the point I am making.

There is a case for a strong Unfair Dismissals Act. But if we confuse the interpretation, we are making a mistake.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I accept that we have no unfair dismissals legislation in this country. I understand the honourable Minister to say that such legislation is coming.

What the courts have sought to do is to interpret whether in fact the employee has been wrongfully dismissed. And in their interpretations, they have then applied a section of the Severance Payments Act, which states that the employee should be compensated at no less than the amount he would receive if he had been so severed. I personally agree with that interpretation, even in the absence of any unfair dismissals legislation.

I agree with the honourable Member for Christ Church West that the exclusion clause, as it exists today, is too wide. It may have been too wide from the beginning, but it certainly is too wide today. And when we look at the operation of certain Government statutory corporations, and see the layoffs which have been taking place in the National Housing Corporation, Soil Conservation and other places, and the numbers of persons who are uncertain as to whether or not they will get severance pay, I think one has to agree that the exclusion clauses are indeed too wide-ranging.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: You laid them off in 1970!)

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: At the time it was felt that those persons who were employed by Government, and Government corporations, had security of tenure of their jobs. Today, we see that those persons have no security at all, or do not have that security that they thought they had, and we thought they had, at the time when the legislation was first passed.

At the same time, there was, let us say, a gentleman's agreement that the Government, or the statutory corporations, would observe the terms and conditions of the Severance Payments Act and make the payments as if those corporations had been included. That gentleman's agreement was made when the Severance Payments Act was introduced into this country. I regret that that gentleman's agreement appears to be observed more in the breach than otherwise.

1.00 p.m.

Finally, I want to make this small point. I believe that there can be some administrative improvement in determining whether an employee is eligible for severance pay without necessarily having to have a hearing of the Tribunal. Again, that slows down matters. I believe that there should be some mechanism devised in the office itself to get certain understandings from the employer, so that it might not be necessary for there to be a tribunal hearing if both employer and employees agree as to how those terminations of service came about.

Asides.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: He says that it is already being worked on. I am glad to hear that.

That is my contribution on this matter. I look forward to the time when we can have some other amend-

ments to the Severance Payment Act, particularly, to review the excluding clauses.

SUSPENSION

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2 o'clock for lunch.

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.
1.05 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

In view of the fact that the Standing Orders have been suspended, I wonder if the honourable Leader of the House will move that Question Time will now be taken.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I do not propose to do that at this stage.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does any other Member wish to speak on the Resolution which is before the House?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill which is now the subject of debate provides, in its Objects and Reasons, for an improved method of recovery of unpaid Severance Fund contributions among other things.

There has been considerable debate in this Parliament in the last few weeks of matters pertaining to National Insurance and, more recently, on matters relating to the Severance Fund and severance payments. It is my considered judgment that legislation of this nature, while conceptually accepted and desirable, can only be effective in an environment which permits the legislation to operate.

It is important to appreciate that the question of problems relating to severance has occupied the attention of lawyers for sometime because of problems relating to the law in respect of severance payments. But this question of problems has also substantially affected workers sporadically, – and the situation in recent times has changed very drastically – and, therefore, one would have thought that the opportunity would have been taken on this occasion to make a matter of law what was a matter of agreement, and bring the situation relating to employees of wholly-owned statutory bodies of Government within the ambit of the legislation. Since persons employed by those statutory boards have recently been the victims of widespread layoffs within the community, and since under the existing legislation they are not entitled to severance payments, except in so far as a Government has enough respect for a moral dimension of Government to honour agreements entered into between a previous Administration and the unions in this country, one would expect that the employees of such bodies would be brought into the law.

The second point I wish to make is that any form of legislation will be frustrated, no matter what amendments you bring, by the realities of the situation. These amendments can only apply in circumstances where there is money to be paid, and it is my submission, as I have said again and again on the floor of this House, that the central problem relates to the absence of cash, and credit, within this community, which would have avoided the sort of pressures on the National Insurance Fund as a whole, and on the severance payments position.

This situation has been made worse by the legal requirement whereby certain money owed to Government, for example, in the area of National Insurance contributions and in the area of Property Tax, rank ahead of first legal mortgages, making it even more difficult for lending institutions in Barbados to continue a line of credit which would ensure that an employer under difficult circumstances will meet his obligation to the National Insurance Scheme, out of which the Severance Fund arises.

It should not be too difficult for Members to appreciate that if a company goes bankrupt, it has no money, and that that is the end of the story. Therefore, where you have a spate of bankruptcies created by a series of fiscal and monetary conditions operating within the society, then you are going to have this kind of pressure put on the Severance Fund.
2.10 p.m.

There has been a very serious misunderstanding of the contributing factors which have led to this amendment, and it is important for us all to be seized of this background.

Many Members on the other side, not only in here but elsewhere, seem to be under the impression that people in the private sector have all of a sudden become a lot of crooks and that they are not prepared to meet their obligations to their employees. I would like to suggest that it is not that on the whole, members of the private sector are dishonest. There has always been a hard core of people who were prepared to divert National Insurance payments to their own use, or to reduce their obligations to the bank in terms of interest payments or to assist their cash flow position. That has been so for

a long time. But when the situation reaches the kind of proportions that exist today, then one must begin to examine the true causes of this problem.

This legislation will help the worker legally, but, as I say, the reality of this legislation can only be achieved if money is available. I think that one of the worst things that has ever happened in this country is the serious compromise of immediate cash flow position of most businesses in Barbados, particularly those of small businessmen, by requiring them not only to deduct National Insurance contributions, but also to deduct taxes outside of the PAYE system, under the form of the levies, and pay them to the National Insurance Board.

When a company employs people, the employers find that they have to deduct some 8 per cent from the worker's salary, and then match that with another 8 per cent or so. The net effect of that is that you would have some $128 million, which should have been available within the private sector of this country to meet their cash flow needs, to meet their National Insurance payments, and to protect the integrity of the Severance Fund. So it is my contention that the Severance Fund and the National Insurance Scheme have been substantially undermined by the requirement to deduct these large amounts and in that way compromise the cash flow of all businesses in Barbados, particularly those owned by small businessmen.

You have a clear choice. These weekly expenditures are directly labour related. Either they continue to keep people in employment, or, alternatively, they send them home. So legislation of this kind, in the face of these realities, is just going to precipitate a further wave of unemployment in Barbados, because employers are going to regard their legal obligations as a contingent liability as a result of the generation of employment.

I would strongly advise the employers in this country to make a clear distinction between any delinquency that they may incur in respect of payments of National Insurance contributions and in respect of paying taxes in a form of levies. If I were a businessman and my cash flow was compromised, I would sent a cheque to the National Insurance Office, designate it a cheque for National Insurance and make it quite clear that the money I have sent should be applied to the National Insurance cover of my workers.

It would be a different matter in relation to taxes. I would elect to be delinquent in relation to the paying of taxes if I cannot afford to pay them, but I would make sure that my employees are covered by National Insurance.

I believe that if two separate cheques were sent to the National Insurance Office, then you would not find this level of delinquency in relation to National Insurance, which has completely different implications in respect of the workers. That is why I referred to delinquency in respect of National Insurance payments as distinct from delinquency in respect of tax payments. Indeed, not only is the significance different in respect of the workers, but there should be a different category of legislative instruments in order to make recovery. In other words, a person who is in default in respect of deductions which are payable as levies, should have one category of sanctions, the provisions of the Income Tax Act, applied to him. He should be no different from any delinquent taxpayer, whether it be Income Tax, Corporation Tax of otherwise.

Where an employer is delinquent in respect of National Insurance payments, which compromise the social security of the worker, then I think different categories of sanctions that should apply. Therefore, while I am not trying to suggest to the employing community that they should be delinquent in their payments of either, I am saying that if they cash flow is compromised, they should ensure that they pay the National Insurance component – send a cheque to the National Insurance Department and clearly designate to the Director of National Insurance that that money is to be applied for that purpose, and then let the Minister of Finance find other means of trying to recover the money under the levies.

Another major problem to which this Bill should address itself is the question of the extent of delinquency and the length of time of delinquency. The problem here is that the National Insurance Office was set up to deal with Social Security matters. The honourable Minister of Finance, recognising that this is a ready source of securing transfers from the pockets of the workers and the employers – an even readier source, a more easily tapped source, than income tax or PAYE deductions – has added an additional function to the office of the Director of National Insurance, who now has to perform a tax collecting function in addition to a Social Security function.

2.20 p.m.

The net result of this is that there is no proper method of monitoring arrears relating to Social Security, and unless the administrative process within that Department can be enhanced, then this legislation will be largely compromised. As I said at the very beginning, you cannot get anything out of nothing; and once a company has a limited liability, is incorporated in Barbados as such, and its assets has been depleted and it has gone into a state of bankruptcy, then there is nothing you can do about it.

I, therefore, must completely and totally reject the thrust of the argument of the honourable Minister who introduced this matter. He has failed to recognise

that the circumstances which have led to delinquency in these areas, on such a wide basis, have largely been the creation of the Administration of which he is a part.

I would urge, whilst we support this particular Bill, that the Government should have a very critical look at the circumstances which have led to the major problems in relation to severance: the problem relating to the statutory boards, the problem relating to increased lay-offs within the society, the problems relating to the question of cash and credit within a private sector, which often has an unfavourable debt/equity ratio and depends very much on bank finance to meet its immediate needs. I urge Government to look very carefully and see to what extent these problems can be relieved by some increase in the purchasing power in the community, in order to enhance the weekly incomes of companies so that they may have sufficient cash flows to pay their employees and to meet their obligations under the National Insurance Act and in relation to the levies.

We are talking about a lot of money. We are talking about at least $128 million. In order to meet these obligations, the employers in Barbados would have to find something like $128 million, which would be tied up permanently within the National Insurance Scheme and within the levy systems.

Quite clearly it is obvious to anybody when you place these kinds of strains on the private sector, then the net effect is going to be the kind of delinquency which has occurred. Indeed, I saw the honourable Minister introduce a list of names of people who owe money to the National Insurance Board. It looks to me like everybody is inside there.

I gather that my name is there, and I do not owe the National Insurance Board any money. I pay them about $2 600 every year. I pay them once a year. The last time I went to pay them they told me that they were not going to take any money in advance, because, according to them, they have problems monitoring and recording it.

I offered them my cheque since the beginning of January to cover me for the entire year 1983–1984. So if it appears that I am in arrears for the first quarter of this year, that is their problem, not mine. They can have my cheque anytime they want it. I do not know what they have my name in there for.

But do you know what they have done? The computerised tax system in Barbados also has me listed as a foreign company. So all the tax bills that I have received this year have been multiplied by four times what I should pay, and it is almost impossible to get the various tax departments to change the system. I do not know how on earth that they could have me listed at any point in time as a foreign company and attach tax liabilities to me personally.

I live in Barbados, I am an individual, in my personal capacity they have me listed as a foreign company – and I cannot get it corrected within the system in Barbados. I do not owe the National Insurance any money. Get that straight. Nor am I a part of any corporation in Barbados that owes any money to the National Insurance Board. And if I was part of a company which owed money to the National Insurance Board, then I would seriously give a direction to pay the National Insurance debt, and, when money comes along, pay the levies thereafter.

Asides.

I think that if the Minister of Finance would take that step and issue a directive that employers should send two cheques to the National Insurance Board and that the insurance component should rank above the tax component, as social justice would demand, a lot of this delinquency that we see today, in respect of meeting National Insurance commitments and so on would disappear almost overnight.

The problem is that the Minister of Finance is too greedy. He wants too much from the employers and the employees. And when you are too greedy, you end up getting less than you would have got if you took a little and gave a little. I hope that all those people who are involved in corporations, and those who are involved in the weekly business of trying to meet wages, are listening very carefully to what I have to say on this particular matter.

This is a serious matter because many of us might well find ourselves in a situation where we are legally liable to the National Insurance Board for a lot of money. Indeed, those who are shareholders of delinquent corporations might find themselves – without their knowledge, not being an active participant in the management of the operation in which they might have an interest – guilty of a serious offence, either legally or morally, in this regard, and due to no fault of their own.

I wish to give no aid or comfort to those delinquent individuals who, irrespective of their financial position, have always abused the National Insurance Scheme and have retained the money in order to save themselves interest payments at the bank. Let that be clear. I speak here on behalf of the employees of this country and those employers who are committed to the welfare of their employees, who, in my judgement, constitute an overwhelming majority of employers in Barbados who, for one reason or another, have found themselves in a situation where their cash flow does not permit them to meet these immediate demands on a week-to-week basis,

to continue the existing levels of employment, and to remain in business.

Now, it is quite incorrect to convey to the public that when an employer is delinquent in respect of these payments, what he has necessarily done is diverted money which he took from the worker, or money which formed part of his profits, as part of the counterpart funds, and has failed to meet his obligations in respect of National Insurance and taxation.
2.30 p.m.

The more usual situation, and this is a fact, is that there is only X amount of money available, and that goes towards wages. If you think of it carefully, you will find that probably for every seven persons employed, or thereabouts, you are actually employing eight people, when you think of the National Insurance contributions and the levies together.

Often, what you will find is that the money was never there at all; it was a liability which the employer incurred as a consequence of keeping a person in employment. So it is not cash that he took out of the pay cheque of a worker and put in a box. The money was never there. He just happens to have people employed, he had enough money to meet their net wages for the particular week – and he had no more money, but he still has the liability.

It is unfair to project to the public that if the wage of a person is $100 a week, that the employer has taken out $8 and diverted it to his own use rather than paying the money towards National Insurance. The fact is that he might well have had only $92 and the $8 is a liability, and therefore he can meet that liability usually by reducing the level of employment, because as I said, this kind of dual imposition, taxation coupled with National Insurance, is tied to, and impacts very heavily on, employment levels.

It seems to be impossible to get into the head of the honourable Minister that there is a difference between a man who has $100 for a worker, takes $8 and probably gives it to a girl friend or something like this, and the man who has $92 net to pay the man and does not have the $8, but hopes that in a week or two he would be able to make the $8 to pay. There is a distinct difference. One is straightforward stealing, the other is probably trying to keep the person in employment whilst building up liabilities against himself and the company.

There is a clear choice; either you are inviting employers to send home people, or you try to find some means of reducing the impact of these direct impositions on the employers in Barbados. My immediate suggestion is to make a clear distinction between National Insurance and Social Security payment and taxes, and let the employers send in two cheques, one for National Insurance and Social Security, and the other for the levies. In that way, I think that you would find that the integrity of the National Insurance and Social Security system in this country would be better protected, because any negligence would probably go more towards paying the taxes than towards paying Social Security. But when both are demanded.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member's time has expired, and I am afraid I cannot allow him any further time.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would have wished that you would give me a little warning, but these things go that way.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: According to the Clerk, you started at two minutes past two and your half an hour has expired.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am sure you are quite correct, Sir.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am a most sad person today after hearing the contribution from the honourable Member who has just taken his seat.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): On a point of order.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are two honourable Members on their feet.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order: I just wanted to know if the Minister was winding up, because I would just like to make a short intervention. I do not believe I am entitled to speak after him.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the honourable Member wants to make a contribution, please make your contribution.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I thank you, Sir.

I just want to take up where the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) left off. The real problem is that the National Insurance and Social Security Board now has to deal with a lot of contaminated portfolios. Taxpayers are paying twice for these levies, which should have been paid into the Consolidated Fund, and the expenditure of which does not appear in the Estimates anywhere, once on behalf of themselves as self-employed persons or as employees, and then they are making contributions to every single Government department for these levies, and these levies

then become part of the morass with which the National Insurance Board now finds itself bogged down. I do not want to mix my metaphors.

It is clear from the Constitution of Barbados that all monies raised for the support of the Government in any shape or form should be paid into the Consolidated Fund, and the reason is very simple. By the Administration and Audit Act of 1964 and the rules thereunder, not only does the Administration and Audit Act say that any monies spent out of the Consolidated Fund have to be voted on by Parliament, particularly by this Chamber, but cannot be spent in any other way other than the way in which Parliament has voted it.

Now the first breakdown in the Constitution and Rule of Law is when you follow these bright boys in the International Monetary Fund – I am not speaking in a derogatory sense about them – who never had anything to do with Government, or business, or, it would appear, anything to do with morality. They come down here telling you what you must do, breaking up the Constitution, breaking up Barbados, breaking up everybody, breaking even the banks in Barbados, to an extent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would be surprised to know. Every single banking institution in Barbados is delinquent, every single one without exception.

In his own way of trying to inspect and find out who is doing what, he knows – because he has in his possession the information – that every single bank in Barbados is delinquent in respect of National Insurance Contributions, without exception. Two of the Ministers on that side are delinquent in respect of National Insurance Contributions.

I do not employ anybody, so I cannot be delinquent. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to employ anyone except in the general office administration, which I am not responsible for, but for which I pay my dues, as I have paid my dues in every single respect in this country ever since I was the age of 21.

When we get to this business about people stealing money from National Insurance, you have to look at the general state of the economy of this island. When you see that even banking institutions, including the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company – I do not have to list Barclays, the Canadian Imperial Bank, the Royal Bank of Canada – and several Government departments are delinquent, you have to look at the economy.

Are the people in the Government departments, for whom we are being asked to vote National Insurance contributions, stealing the money as well? Why is it that the MTW does not pay up their National Insurance contributions? Why does the National Housing Corporation not pay up their National Insurance contributions? Is it larceny on such a grandiose scale that it has permeated right through the corridors of Government, far and wide, from east to west and from north to south? Why is it that every single banking institution in Barbados is delinquent?
2.40 p.m.

I agree with the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde). He usually waits until everybody has spoken and then throws an oily substance on troubled waters – I do not know if it is oil or what it is, it could be pitch for all I know – in his own smooth, cool sanctimonious way. But today, he made a good contribution here.

(I see the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) trying to analyse the word "sanctimonious" in a parliamentary sense, and deeply smiling when I said so.)

The point I should like to make to the Minister is this. When you look at the number of people who are delinquent, you will find that some of your colleagues have not paid up their National Insurance contributions. I do not know about the Member immediately to your left, but if you drift a little further to the left, without going as far as the lady Minister, you will find other Members who are delinquent. I am not calling any names. Then, if you come immediately to the Prime Minister's right, you would find another Member, but the Member is not there in his place. So all I am saying is that we have to leave this thing about stealing money out of this.

What I am concerned about.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What I am concerned about.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: My time is not up, Sir, because.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: ..... Is not that your time is up.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Far from it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: .....but that the honourable Member may be accusing Members on that side of dishonesty.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I never did, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, you may be.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Oh no, Sir, far from it. I was asking the honourable Member not to accuse people of dishonesty, because then he would be accusing

Members of this House. I said it was not a question of dishonesty at all.

It is not a question of taking money from anybody, of embezzling it. I do not like to challenge, and you have enjoined me not to challenge anybody. But you belong to the same profession which I enjoy. How can you charge a person with embezzlement of funds that never left his hands. That is a conundrum. Write it down, and when you go home, study it.

I heard the honourable Minister pontificating on the Real Property Act, so he can give himself a little legal exercise when he goes home tonight. How can you charge a person for embezzlement or fraudulent conversion of money that has never left your possession? That is something that I have not figured out yet, so maybe tomorrow, he will have the answer for me. So let us leave aside accusing anybody, whether it be your colleagues in the banks in Bridgetown, or the Mortgage Finance Corporation, or the Ministry of Transport and Works of fraudulent conversion.

This is a reflection of the state of the economy in Barbados. The failure to pay your Income Tax is not a question of stealing. The failure to pay National Insurance contributions is a question of the method of collection, and we welcome any measure that would make the method of collection a little more efficient.

I am not suggesting that the honourable Member adopt this suggestion. I belong to one or two sporting organizations in this island, not because I can make any contribution on the field now, at this stage, but I like to give them my moral and financial support such as it is. Do you know the only way they get subscriptions from me? They have to send a man around with a book periodically to get the money out of my pocket, because I do not remember. I am certainly not getting in my car and driving up to Empire or to Queen's Park, the Cruising Club or the Light Aeroplane Club, or any of the organizations to which I belong, to pay my subscriptions. They have to send to me to collect it.

It might be worth the Government's while to have people who are allocated certain districts to go on a Monday morning with a big bag and a Brinks van or something and collect the money. The only sure way you will ever get any money collected in Barbados – you can take it from me – is if you send and collect it. It is a half serious suggestion, I have not examined all the implications, but I know how people in this country react.

You must not accuse people of embezzlement or fraudulent conversion or anything like that. It is a question of the methodology which you employ in order to make sure that you get in all the collections which you expect to get. I certainly should like to see the severance effected between National Insurance funds, and also a separate accounting system for the various levies which have been enforced.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, to begin with, I never accused anyone in this Chamber at any time of stealing, so I do not know where the honourable Member got that impression from. And I am not so sure that when the honourable Member tries to explain the question of embezzlement and the legal implications, I am prepared to accept his opinion. I will prefer to await the opinion of other learned persons on this occasion.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) said something today which I feel is nothing short of irresponsible. In 1973, when the Severance Payments Act was brought into being, the Act made provision for a contribution to be made by the employers into a fund. If the honourable Member is saying now that he would advise employers to pay NIS only, what he is in fact saying.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir: the honourable Member is suggesting to this Honourable Chamber that during my speech I was inviting employers to commit an illegal act.

What I said was that employers should distinguish between their obligations under the National Insurance Act and their obligations in relation to taxes. The National Insurance Act covers National Insurance and various categories of Social Security, including severance.

Thank you very much.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member does not really understand it. The NIS is different from severance payment altogether. The NIS does not embody the severance payment contributions or fund.

What the honourable Member said is that he would advise employers to pay the NIS and disregard all other contributions. That is what he had said!

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir: I will re-emphasize that I never said that.

The burden of my argument was a distinction between taxes and Social Security payments. I have urged people to pay their Social Security in the event that they are short of tax.

The honourable Member should not get up and accuse me. I realize that he does not understand. If you do not understand, do not get into the argument.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to contend that the honourable Member said that he would advise employers to pay the National Insurance contribution and disregard all other contributions. I know that he would get up and deny it, but I have got him this time.

What he is saying is that the very Fund that was set up with a view to paying severed workers, who have made a contribution to the development of an enterprise, should not now be compensated. In other words, he is saying that they should not be any severance payment at all. The only other way that money could be made available in the Fund is by coming here to Parliament for such money.

I am sure that when the honourable Member reads his speech, he will find that he has made one of the greatest errors ever, and it will haunt him for the rest of his political career. People have always looked forward to severance payment,after making contributions to services.

The honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) has raised a very valuable point relating to the expediting of claims by severed employees. It is a matter which has been drawn to my attention, and I realize that it is very serious indeed.

At the moment, we have three Tribunals dealing with severance payments, with cases which are contested. There are some cases which are not contested. By that, we mean that some employers have not denied owing these people, nor have they denied being responsible for paying these people severance.
2.50 p.m.

We have recently taken a decision to allow the Board to hear those contested cases and uncontested cases, and decide on them. So we hope in this respect to be able to deal with more of the cases that are now not being dealt with.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) raised some very interesting and very vital points indeed. There is some substance in the argument put forward by him on the question of taxing allowances. I wish to give him the assurance that we will be looking very seriously at that particular matter. I think that we could spell out more clearly the question of allowances for severance payment purposes.

The National Insurance Fund is contributed to by the employer – the employees make no contribution whatsoever to it. It is computed on 1 per cent of earnings. So it is not fair for the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to try to give this Honourable Chamber the impression that a worker is denied anything to which he contributed.

The member talked about 8 per cent. I am trying to simplify it for you because you do not seem to understand. The employer has to pay 8 per cent from his purse. If, let us say, an employee works for $100, and you take out 8 per cent of that and do not pay it in, neither do you pay in the money that you are supposed to pay in, and the law requires you to pay it in, what is that? If the law requires you to do something and you do not do it, are you not in breach of the law? You will have to be in breach of the law. So you are acting illegally – I do not want to say unlawfully.

Honourable Members must be very careful not to give people wrong advice. By adhering to the advice of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, employers may very well find themselves in a very serious situation, because this present Bill makes provision to deal with those persons who fail to pay over this money. We will be lodging a certified certificate in the High Court, and we will get a judgment against such defaulters.

I do not want honourable Members to treat this matter lightly at all. Let us understand that. We cannot afford to have a situation where employers continue not paying in their money. Money is paid out of the National Insurance Fund to the severed employee and then we are not able to recoup that money. I think that there are a lot of people who have been engaging in this practice and we want to discourage it altogether.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West raised a question in regard to equality for women. He is well aware that Cabinet has already approved the Equal Opportunity Bill, which deals with this, and the Unfair Dismissals Bill, which is coming before this Chamber very shortly. Most of the points and concerns raised by the honourable Member, and other Members on that side, especially the honourable Member for St. Michael North, will be dealt with by the Unfair Dismissals Bill.

I should point out that, under the National Insurance Act, if a husband employs a wife or a wife employs a husband, in any case they are treated as independent employers. We want to make that point clear. But under the Unfair Dismissals Act, we will seek to deal with the question of the employment of a husband and wife in the same establishment. It is just a matter of time before that Bill finds its way in this Honourable Chamber, and most of the fears expressed will be alleviated by that particular Bill.

As I said, honourable Members have made some very valuable contributions. But I noted when I introduced the measure that, although a number of recommendations were made, at this point in time we are unable to bring all of them in the form of legislation, to this Chamber. I do agree that there is room for a new Severance Payments Act, but there are some areas

which we have to look at, which are of immediate concern. We feel that the areas covered today fall in that category.

I hope that employers will adhere to my appeal to pay over the contributions. I hope they will understand that the Government is very serious about this particular matter. I know a lot of employers will welcome the news that their rebate will be increased beyond the 10 per cent that is now being paid to them.

We hope that a lot of these problems which we have, and the criticisms of the Severance Payments, will no longer be with us, and it is hoped that all concerned will try to co-operate. The Unfair Dismissals Bill will deal with certain issues that are now causing problems within the Severance Payments legislation, and it is intended to repeal a particular section of the Severance Payments Act, because we know that even the courts are having difficulty administering the Act. Knowing this, we feel that we should bring an Unfair Dismissals Bill, which will seek to simplify once and for all our position as far as unfair dismissal and severance is concerned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have dealt with a number of points raised by honourable Members.

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

On the motion of Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 7 inclusive were called and passed. 3.00 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I propose to do Order No. 1, but I would like to indicate to Members on the other side that there is a Resolution which I propose to do during this sitting, maybe some time tomorrow. I would just like to alert Members on the other side. I am told that the Resolution has already been circulated and I dare say that all Members will be *au fait* with what we proposed to do.

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 1984

Order No. 1 was called – To move the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill, 1984.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is Estimates time again. As expected, the Estimates, which have been laid on the Table of the House, show record levels of estimated Government revenue and estimated Government expenditure.

The revenue for the forthcoming year is estimated at almost $600 million, $596 131 000 to be precise, and Current Expenditure is estimated at $565 392 000. Capital Expenditure is estimated at $181 500 000, and there will be some additions to that moved in to the printed copy of the Estimates.

What perhaps makes this year's Estimates unusual is that, virtually for the first time that I can remember, we are budgeting for an excess of Current Revenue over Current Expenditure, of an amount of $30 million, almost $31 million.

Normally, the Government has budgeted in the past for an excess of expenditure over revenue, and put down any Current Account surplus to the buoyancy of the economy or other adventitious factors. But on this occasion, we are obliged to say that the trends indicate that it would be unrealistic to judge that, without changes, expenditure could be expected to pass revenue, as it did in the two depression years of 1981–82 and 1982–83. For it is a fact that except for specified areas in Barbados, tourism and sugar in particular, there appears to have been a marked degree of economic recovery within the country, and certainly there has been a considerable recovery in Government revenues.

As the Memorandum to the Estimates indicates, the year 1983–84, which comes to an end in two weeks' time, has recorded the first Current Account surplus since 1980–81. The projected surplus on Current Account is $27 389 799.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): I would just like to inform the right honourable Minister of Finance that no memorandum was circulated with the Estimates. Do you mean the summary in front in Roman numbers? We used to have a memorandum with the Estimates, but there is nothing in here marked "memorandum".

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The honourable Member is correct. We have not circulated a separate memorandum. It was the case in the past that a separate memorandum used to be based on Cabinet Papers circulated to members of the Cabinet, but things tend to move

more quickly in these days. There used to be a discrepancy between the printed Estimates and the memorandum which Cabinet saw, and therefore it was wise for the memorandum to be circulated to bring Members up-to-date.

I must say that there is a small discrepancy in one or two things this year, but they are not such as would occasion us circulating a separate document. The figures contained in the printed volume are very much the most up-to-date figures which I can give honourable Members. The honourable Member may safely rely on them in argument, because I have no other material which I will seek to use to update the printed record.
3.10 p.m.

On the basis of our Estimates, Current Revenue during the current year has risen 13.2 per cent, while Current Expenditure has risen 6 per cent. Total revenue during the current year is expected to be $555.8 million, which is $47 million more than we estimated a year ago. Current Expenditure, including supplementaries, is $529 million, which is $13½ million more than we estimated a year ago.

We have thus been able to return to a situation of relatively healthy Government finances, although, of course, the Current Account surplus is nothing like the surplus of 1978–79, when we recorded an excess of Current Revenue over Current Expenditure of approximately 10 per cent of expenditure. This year it is a much smaller amount.

I will advert to this point later during my speech, but I should, I think, divert myself for just a moment to warn against complacency, assuming that all is well in the Garden of Eden, and that no serpent has ever entered therein. I do assure the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) that I am not taking him into account in this metaphor at all.

The fact that there is a Current Account surplus will be as nought when one considers that the Government is currently engaged in salary negotiations with the National Union of Public Workers, which will certainly absorb the whole of the projected surplus. Secondly, it is also a fair criticism of the Government, and one on which I think the Government should not hide its head in the sand, that we have had to put the brakes on economic expansion in the country.

We have had to spend considerably less capital, and we have also had to keep Current Expenditure in rein for balance of payment reasons. Faced with economic conditions abroad, which meant that we could not sell our goods and services on the scale of previous years, we have not been able to take the risk of losing all of our foreign reserves. We have therefore had to run the best surplus that we could and, also, reduce capital expenditure.

This has had its effect in the fact that average unemployment last year in Barbados rose to the level that it was at, approximately, in 1977 – 15 per cent. There is little doubt that the figures, which Parliament will see next month when I present the Budget, will show that gross capital formation fell during 1983–84 in Barbados, that direct Government expenditure on productive investment fell, and that this has had its effect on employment in the country.

The newspapers in this country, although I must say not by any means prompted by the Opposition, assume that unemployment can be measured exclusively in terms of the layoffs in Government.

In a single big employer in Broad Street, there is more fluctuation in employment in a single year than all the layoffs of Government during the last 12 months. The Government layoffs, of 250 persons, are well known because they attract the attention of the media. The media, perhaps, do not look at the shrinkage of retail sales in Barbados, and the other evidence of fewer tourist dollars being spent, which have their effect on employment in the services sector. The media also seldom look at the construction sector, which is responsible for infinitely greater fluctuations of employment than the Government's own payroll strength could ever be. The number of persons employed by Government does not show any particular expansion in the last seven years – but it has not shown any particular contraction either.

In many areas, there were far too many people in the system, who were, for example, in the area of construction, occupying positions where their productivity was extremely low. In other words, they were drawing a salary but producing very little in the way of fixed investment, and their release in the private sector will, in the long run, be an addition to employment in Barbados, because production investment alone is what creates serious employment within a country.

I must also say that although the Government, in the restrictive investment atmosphere in the private sector as well as the Government, has to carry some of the responsibility for unemployment, it should also be pointed out that those same policies are responsible for the average rate of inflation being halved during 1983. Barbados' rate of inflation for the year just past is just over 5 per cent. This compares very favourable with rates of inflation in the other MDCs of the Caribbean, which were 15 per cent in Guyana, 16½ per cent in Jamaica,

and 17 per cent in Trinidad. So although rates of unemployment at 11 per cent in Trinidad were lower than in Barbados, we have also got through 1983 with a very low rate of inflation.

I should also say that although unemployment has risen again to the levels of 1977, there is no evidence that incomes in Barbados have been falling overall.

I was very surprised to be given the printout of an analysis of the latest income statistics which we have, which, necessarily, are for 1982, because the 1983 returns have not yet been made. The last printout which I got for the year 1980 – I do not recall studying 1981 – revealed total assessable incomes, as I remember, of less than $500 million. The total assessable incomes of persons in Barbados known to the Inland Revenue Department in the year 1982, totalled no less than $742 825 552. That was from the total returns of 58 585 persons who pay. Statistics available to the Government indicate that there are another 40 000 people working, evidently, who do not make Income Tax returns.
3.20 p.m.

It has been my habit from time to time to give the numbers of persons earning high incomes in Barbados. In the past, the numbers have been so small that when you give them there is some danger of identification. I do not know whether it is purely a matter of high income or whether it is a matter of better work by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, but in 1982, there were 72 persons admitting to an income of over $100 000 a year, and it seems that many more employed persons are now working for this amount, since the self-employed now at that level – one accountant, a couple of lawyers, some doctors – amount only to nine persons.

I know people are interested in these figures. The honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) is always anxious to hear them. I do not know if he would be able to identify the one self-employed person who declared an income of exactly $200 000.

I mention that not to say that we have a lot of well-off people, but to say that in fact, we have very few well-off people. The distribution of income in Barbados continues to be one of the most satisfactory aspects of our social life. There can be very few countries with a per capita income of $US4 000, which is roughly what it was in 1983, a little less than that in 1982, in which there are only 72 people with incomes of over $US50 000. It is one of the best things of our society that however well-off they appear in the rhetoric not only of the less well-off but of some of the well-offs themselves, we are not a greedy country with people grasping at enormous incomes, grasping at the accumulation of wealth for its own sake and grasping at a standard of living far in excess of the standard of the great mass of our population.

Having dealt with these smaller issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should say that last year the national expenditure accounts showed that expenditure in this country reached $2 billion for the first time, US $1 billion. It was revised in 1982 to that figure, but the figure for 1983, expenditure on the Gross Domestic Product at market prices, reached $2.124 billion. Out of this, personal consumption expenditure, that is what Barbadians actually spent on themselves, was $1.424 billion during 1983. Government consumption expenditure also rose, but its percentage of GDP fell.

Now to the economy itself. We are still calculating the figures, but it seems that real output was more or less stationary during 1983. Of course, this represented an advance, since it fell during the years 1981 and 1982. It appears that, in nominal terms, GDP increased by just over 6 per cent, almost 7 per cent, but we are calculating the GDP deflater and, therefore, I do not wish to give a precise figure until the Budget.

Within the GDP, tourism and sugar production declined during the year, but I think it is known that output, in nominal terms in the manufacturing sector rose by 15 per cent. Indeed, non-traditional exports, that is exports excluding sugar, moved in front of tourism during 1983 – a most exceptional result, assisted by a 50 per cent increase in manufactured exports.

Non-sugar Agriculture grew by almost 20 per cent during 1983, and, aided by a 48 per cent increase in oil production, the sector of Mining and Quarrying grew, nominally, only one per cent, but 16 per cent in real terms, because, of course, the price of oil fell during the year.

Construction was down by very little during the year; it only fell by 1 per cent in real terms, compared to 11 per cent in the previous year. It probably will rise again during 1984. That is our intention. And to quantify what I mentioned earlier about the shortfall in Government Capital Expenditure, public sector building activity fell by 25 per cent.

I am just outlining a few of the economic indicators; the main body of them will come in the Economic Report. Indeed I am summarising most of the figures from a draft of the report, which I have before me, so I would not wish to anticipate it before I lay it in the House early next month.

Now the effect of recovery abroad, and recovery in the domestic economy, except for the sectors of Tourism

and Sugar and the sub-sectors of Retail Sales, has been accompanied by some improvement in the balance of payments position. At the end of last year, the final daily position of the Central Bank, the Central Bank's total external assets were $220 million, sufficient for 3.29 months of imports. During the year exports rose by 22 per cent while imports rose by 19.8 per cent. The Current Account deficit is now very small; it is less than 1 per cent of the GDP, and during the year this was amply covered by inflows of foreign capital.

We have not had any startling surge in the foreign reserves during 1983. Honourable Members opposite will assuredly give a great deal of attention to the debts. They will be pleased to know, I very much hope, that we have been spending these three months trying to pay back a great number of short term liabilities which have fallen due. I am happy to be able to report to the House that we have achieved this without any difficulty whatsoever in terms either of liquidity or availability of funds. 3.30 p.m.

We are even making arrangements to pay back debt to Trinidad in US dollars, rather than have any friction with the Trinidadians over trying to reduce the Barbados holdings in the CARICOM Multilateral Clearing Facility, although, in the case of Guyana, we have been able to finance our deficit with Guyana out of our holdings in CARICOM. At the moment, our deficit with Guyana is being paid for very roughly, by the interest which Guyana's debts to the CARICOM Facility should be paying, if they had the money. They are basically paying for those debts by exports of rice, lumber and other agricultural produce to Barbados.

Our position on March 16, in terms of foreign reserves, was that they are now at a record level of Bds $266.6 million. I very nearly said US dollars. I wish that I was in a position to say that. The position with the overseas banks is roughly in balance. They are bringing in money, and it is about balancing their liabilities. The Central Bank's assets on March 16 were $226 million, and within the last few weeks, they have looked really very much healthier. Every day we take in a couple of hundred thousand dollars in foreign currency from the banks.

But the situation, of course, is by no means a satisfactory one, because half of those reserves are still tied up in the CARICOM Multilateral Clearing Facility. And three months of imports, while a target for Barbados, is by no means a happy position to be in, since you are constantly on a knife's edge, hoping that there is no sudden catastrophe, such as the country experienced three years ago when the reserves declined very sharply, almost before they could be perceived, and again in 1976, just at election time.

It seems that election time is a bad time for Barbados' reserves. There was a severe collapse in 1976 and a moderate collapse in 1981. But I am sure that is only adventitious. Now that we have observed the phenomenon, I am confident that I will not, after the next election, be faced with the problems which the country has met in the last two. The reason why I will not be faced with them is that they would not arise, not that it would not be me dealing with them.

The question of debt is, I know, always a great favourite with critics, who can see little else in a Government's record to attack but the position of debt.

The total debt, as of last week, is $857 million, of which the domestic component is $509.3 million and the foreign component is $348.3 million. The debt has been analysed in some detail by the International Monetary Fund and other bodies that look at Barbados' external position. The debt service is reported by all concerned as being very modest. It is still less than 10 per cent. The level of foreign debt is also relatively modest at 14 per cent or 15 per cent of GDP, although it is higher than it was in the past.

I would most earnestly counsel all those who have to come to conclusions about the economic conditions of Barbados against scare tactics in respect of the National Debt. First of all, the domestic component of the National Debt is of little importance, except in relation to how a country organizes its domestic finances. If you owe debts to your own citizens, and in some cases to yourselves, they are debts which cannot possibly carry the same weight as debts which are owed abroad.

Out of the $509 million in domestic debt, $145 million is held by the National Insurance Corporation. And it is worth pointing out to honourable Members, and to the general public, that the National Insurance Corporation is now an integral part of the Government's financial system in a way that it was not six, eight or ten years ago.

The National Insurance Fund was set up to finance Social Security out of its income. This always meant that there would be a large amount of cash in the hands of the National Insurance Department, which would be deposited in banks or lent to the Government and, in effect, represent a form, and an important part, of the savings of the people of Barbados. This remains true. The $250 million or so which the National Insurance owes is a major component of investment funds available in this country.

To some extent, the Government has given up some of its revenues to allow this Fund to be built up and maintained at that level. If Income Tax had not been reduced and, as a corollary, what are popularly called "the levies" had never been imposed, the Government's current account surplus would perhaps be nearer $60

million than $30 million. At the same time, the National Insurance would not have $200 million in the Fund.

The way that Government's Capital Expenditure is funded fundamentally amounts to our borrowing the money from the National Insurance, paying them interest on it, and allowing them to continue to raise the money by the system of National Insurance subscriptions, National Insurance premiums and what is called "the levies". It is seen in its most direct form with the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Recent government theory over the last twenty years insists that there be a single fund for Government's expenditure, that all funds be mixed together, and that all expenditures be inchoate – they would just be financed equally from a Consolidated Fund. We have departed from that principle in the case of transport funding.

We have directly charged a part of the cost of modernizing our transport system on to the income of persons who use that system. Put this way, one will immediately recognize that, as honourable Members have often said, the Transport Levy is only another form of taxation. But it also has to be recognized that we inherited an element of taxation in the entire National Insurance system, and that this element continues. The difference between the use of the funds is that if the Government collected the money directly for itself, we could spend it directly. But the National Insurance collects it and lends it to the Government, the Government pays interest, and therefore the form of financing is more circuitous.

This was most directly seen when the National Insurance building was built. Many people thought that the National Insurance building was to be built by the National Insurance Corporation out of its share capital, and that it would own the building. I think that the Minister responsible for National Insurance at the time – I think it was the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) – took a very correct decision, which was to treat the National Insurance Fund as a continuous cash flow and to lend the money to the Government, maintaining the income of the National Insurance Fund without committing the capital directly to bricks and mortar in Fairchild Street.

3.40 p.m.

That is the present system. We borrowed $145 million from the National Insurance during the year. We effectively will spend some $120 million of it on capital works. I just thought I would give this explanation as an indication of the changed nature of Government financing in the circumstances of the present National Insurance Fund.

I have given a brief outline of the general economic position during 1983, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will now turn, also on this occasion comparatively briefly, to the Estimates.

Our view of Government's finances during the forthcoming year has had to be informed by a number of factors. First of all, with international economic recovery, can we afford some of the reflation in the Barbados economy? Can we take positive steps to bring down unemployment, to end restraints in Government spending, particularly in capital development, but also, to some extent, on wages in the public sector and other current expenditure? If we do this, will we be endagering the fragile recovery of Government finances and the balance of payments? During 1983, the balance of payments was in surplus of $42 million. Should we aim at building a similar surplus during the year, or, to some extent, can we aim at allowing economic activity to continue with pressures on the balance of payments, relying on recovery of sugar and tourism, which we did not have in 1983, to cushion us during 1984?

The Government has decided to take the view of limited economic expansion in 1984–'85, with prospects of further expansion in 1985–86. The experience of past years will ensure that the hand is kept on the break at all times, so that any dangers to our foreign payments position can be recognised at an early stage and immediately corrected. It is within those parameters we have approached the Estimates.

At all times the Government intends to rein in its Current Expenditure with as tight a hand as possible. We do not think that in 1984–85 it would be appropriate to take the same view of public sector wage increases as was taken in 1982–83. While the increase at the bottom – for public servants, with regrading, was of the order of 20 per cent, by the time it reached the level of salaries of the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers, and Prime Ministers, the percentage increase was only 1.8 per cent, 2.3 per cent and 3.1 per cent. Can we allow this to continue?

We have heard that in the private sector, the number of persons earning substantial incomes has risen. Will it be reasonable any longer to expect the Public Service to go through yet another period of restraint? We discovered, for example, that the judges' salaries have virtually not been raised since 1980. Indeed, I believe that the Act shows they have not been raised since 1978, but I do not think that there have been adjustments since then. Is it reasonable to ask Her Majesty's judges in Barbados to continue with these incomes? Is it reasonable to ask professional persons in the Public Service, technical officers of the Ministry of Transport and Works, Housing, and Health, to earn salaries less than half in some cases, of the salaries which prevail in the private sector?

These are the factors which have informed our approach to the negotiations, and this is the reason why I said that the projected excess of current revenue over current expenditure can confidently be expected to be entirely absorbed in a public sector wage settlement.

In the rest of the current side of public expenditure, this being so, can the Government afford any new programmes on the current side which do not have a productive element to them? The answer to that is "In 1984–85, quite clearly, no!" Perusal of the Estimates will not reveal any great expansion of the current side of the programmes in departments now being carried on by the Government.

The National Health Service will be introduced during this financial year, and in the Budget I will make certain announcements as to the scheduling of its expenditures and the proposals for financing it. I will therefore not dwell on it at this time. But it is, virtually, the only major programme of addition to Current Expenditure which the Government will be expecting to undergo during the financial year. Pensions, of course, will go up, along with salaries, but we are not expecting any startling increase, except in the one area of Defence and Security to which I will now advert.

Total expenditure in the Barbados Defence Force on the current side is projected to rise from $12 million to $16 million during the ensuing year. I am currently considering some reduction in that sum, because that sum contained amounts relating to the operation in Grenada, amounts which, effectively, were advanced by the Defence Force on account of other countries, and which may, in the next day or two, be so recouped as to allow me to make some reduction. But we cannot operate on the basis of that increase.

In bringing about the increase, I am going to plead, in aid, the argument of the Leader of the Opposition on the last occasion when I heard him speak on Defence in here. The Leader of the Opposition then very cogently pointed out that we have spent a great deal of money, $20 million or whatever it was, on buying boats for the Coast Guard. He then asked: What was the point of having boats if you had no money to fuel them to go to sea, to carry out programmes of training, or to do anything else except stay tied up in the careenage? The honourable Member's argument was cogent then – and it is cogent now.

The Coast Guard, undoubtedly, has suffered severely, not only from a shortage of money for operating expenses, but shortage of actual bodies. There are not enough people in the Coast Guard to carry out adequate programmes of crewing and manning the ships which we have bought, which are themselves by no means excessive for Barbadian needs.

3.50 p.m.

We also have a commitment to the Regional defence system. The Trident is, fundamentally, the only vessel of medium size which is adequate for a cruise around the entire regional defence area. I am informed that it takes $20 000 in fuel alone for the Trident to steam to Antigua on a training cruise, dropping off Dominicans and Antiguans on the way, cruise back down to St. Vincent, dropping off the St. Lucians and the Vincentians, which is the system it uses, and come back to Barbados.

We do not have the opportunity of firing the guns, because the shells will cost $75 a time. Recent events have made it easier to contemplate training operations, including the firing of the guns, because, fortunately, of people for whom $75 a time in ammunition, who fire off so many hundred rounds a minute, is not the consideration that it is in Barbados. I am very happy to say that in the recent budget estimates – I had to face other budget estimates – at the regional security service, the other Prime Ministers and I were able to pass a budget which allowed for substantial training on the Coast Guard aspect without actually having to buy any of the ammunition oneself. But these things do involve other expenditure, all of which cannot be met from other sources.

I should say that there is some expectation of revenue to balance some of the increased defence expenditure. I am not in a position to make any announcement about it at the moment, but negotiations are underway, involved very closely in the whole structure of the regional defence organisation, and I am not talking about anything new. I am not talking about the prospective Caribbean Defence Force, I am talking about what we have. I am not in a position to make any announcement, but I just say there is an expectation.

I have spoken about the Coast Guard. It is necessary to allocate some money to allow the ships to go to sea to carry out training. It is also necessary to employ more people in the Coast Guard. People seem to forget that the Defence Force is a form of employment as well as an expenditure of dollars and cents. They seem to forget the people are being employed, are being fed and are supporting families out of the Defence Force salaries.

Again, to return to all the layoffs in Government, the persons who are being given a livelihood by the Defence Force so far exceed all the layoffs in Government that there is a clear net gain in employment.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I hear honourable Members saying tell them the size of the troops. I honestly do not know. I do know that the reserve was largely embodied to carry out the Grenada operation, and that therefore some of the expenses naturally are related

to increasing the size of the force, because the troops in Grenada will have to be there for virtually the whole of this financial year. I am not giving a terminal date, because we do not know the terminal date, but we are making a commitment to maintain the Caribbean Peace-keeping Force.

We have responsibility for the police side of it and the Jamaicans carry the responsibility for the military side. We, effectively, pay for all the Caribbean police in Grenada and receive reimbursements in due course. The Jamaicans will pay unspecified, and still being negotiated, amounts to the military side, but we, of course, still have to pay our soldiers who are in Grenada, and pay them an allowance by the day as well. All of these matters naturally add up to expenditure, and the expenditure has to be voted, whatever revenue may become available to meet it in due course.

To return to the reason for the expansion of defence expenditure, there is no point having a Defence Force with so few people in it that you cannot train units for the duties which they are naturally to be called on to carry out. It is all very well to talk of going to Grenada when there are so many C. 130s that they disturb the slumber of the Leader of the Opposition in his happy home on Enterprise Road in the early hours of the morning, and therefore they are there available so they can carry the entire Defence Force to Grenada in a matter of an hour and a half.

With that kind of assistance, you do not have a great deal of trouble putting troops into a trouble spot. If we have to rely on our own resources, it would cost an enormous amount more, and the troop build up will naturally have been that much slower. We therefore have to contemplate some general increase in numbers for the sake of the efficiency of the Force.

I can plead that we are taking on as many people in the Coast Guard as are being laid off at Sanitation, which is broadly speaking, true, but that is really not the way to look at it. We are taking on as many people as are necessary for an efficient Defence Force. In other words, this year's increase is by way of a regrading to bring the Force up to strength. Next year's increase will be a matter of natural increase only, and not any surge in respect of Current Expenditure.

I have dealt with the increases in Current Expenditure. The main increases are coming in Capital Expenditure. We are increasing defence expenditure by $4 million, but we are increasing expenditure on agriculture by $7½ million. We are decreasing expenditure on defence on capital by a small amount, it is about level, but we are increasing expenditure on the Ministry of Transport and Works by $21 million, mainly on the roads. In Education we are increasing expenditure by $3 million. Therefore, the expenditure on social services – on the Current side, the National Health Service; on the Capital side, the increase in the Education vote, and, to some extent, on the building and on the completion of the polytechnics – and on the production side, the increase in MTW and agricultural expenditure, show where the real thrust of the Government is going. In MTW there will be a great number of new projects, which are all set out at pages 130 and 133 in the Estimates.

For the interest of the Leader of the Opposition, the former Minister of Finance, I will say that the MTW achieved something which I am sure they would never have achieved in his time, and which I was surprised to discover they have achieved in my time.

Although they are governed by a committee that includes the Barbados Workers Union and other persons of strict financial discipline, I observed that their access to the Transport Levy is such that they seem to use the Transport Levy and the Consolidated Fund as alternatives. When they cannot get an allocation of funds out of the Ministry of Finance, they summon a meeting of the Transport Levy Board and get $2½ million out of it to do more work in Bridge Road or build a roundabout.

It took me a great deal of trouble with them before I could really get to the bottom of how they had managed to carry on work at MTW for five months without getting one cent out of the Ministry of Finance. I discovered that there are two sets of allocations.

But we think that we have them under reasonable control, because this is basically all project financing. And the $32 million that is voted for them will have to be increased by another $7 million, estimated to be spent out of the Transport Levy Fund on the roads during the year.

4.00 p.m.

The projects include $9½ million on the Spring Garden to the airport road, to be spent during the forthcoming financial year, with construction starting in November. Stage 1, 140 new jobs. Stage 2, 60 new jobs. Stage 3, 95 new jobs. That is 295 people in all to be employed on the new industrial access road. The Northern Access Road, this is the road from Checker Hall to the Cement Plant, will create 140 jobs, also during this financial year.

Only $1 million is voted for bridges, and that is because the Transport Levy Fund is carrying the cost of replacing the Bridge at Bridge Road. There is $1½ million voted from the Consolidated Fund for private, tenantry and subsidiary roads, and I believe, perhaps as much as $2½ million from the Transport Levy Fund for the roads in Fairfield, Black Rock.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of information to the honourable Member, Sir! As I was born in the district, I would like to inform the honourable Member that the cement plant is in Checker Hall, and the road he was referring to was probably one from St. Andrew to the cement plant, because there is no way that a road in Checker Hall could create 140 jobs.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. ADAMS: I thank the honourable Member. He is quite correct. It is a new road from Checker Hall to Greenland. In fact, the plan which has been adopted involved an entirely new road from Greenland to Farley Hill, which will probably cost a lot of money. It probably will be a limited access road, but a major industrial and very necessary road.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) has indicated that he is not in a position to say how much will be allocated for private, tenantry and subsidiary roads. That is a matter for decision, ultimately, of the Transport Levy Fund Committee, but I am sure that it will be no less than the $1½ million voted from the Consolidated Fund. I am equally sure that many of the roads in St. Michael, northern, western, central and eastern and south-eastern, if there are any more that need doing, will be among the roads that will be dealt with, as well as country roads.

We are voting $1 350 000 for car parks and bus stands. This is an increase of over $1 million, which regrets the fact that a new Fairchild Street bus stand will be started during the financial year.

The Speightstown By-Pass Road will attract $1 million.

The World Bank Highway Rehabilitation Scheme, which I very much hope we can debate in the House, will attract the expenditure of $3 million during the year. In all, that is a US$5 million scheme to carry out highway rehabilitation all over Barbados, a revamping of the methods and renewal of the roads on a basis superior to that which we have enjoyed so far. This really will be a case where technical advice from overseas has to be sought, and will be taken, as to whether we are doing the right things in highway rehabilitation.

I look forward to seeing the list of priorities. I think that there are 36 highways that I have seen in all which are scheduled for rehabilitation. This is for major roads in Barbados – we are seeing one being done now, the road from the airport to St. Philip – the highways which really need an entirely new look.

I hope we have the chance to debate this in the House. Perhaps there will not be enough time in the Estimates, but I think all honourable Members have ideas about road systems in Barbados that deserve attention.

Some $2 million is voted for highway improvements, which will include roundabouts. This is a new specific Head under the Capital Vote.

The next roundabout to be built will be built at the junction of Collymore Rock, Culloden Road and Pine Road. It will be a major roundabout. The roads will be reshaped, and I have asked the MTW to prepare a plan for upgrading Collymore Rock in a really major way, making it a dual carriageway, to accommodate the traffic from the new Airport Access Road, which will also be a Highway 7 by-pass road.

The new Airport Access Road will pick up traffic at Top Rock and carry it up to Graeme Hall in a dual carriageway, and then from Graeme Hall to Rendezvous, also in a dual carriageway. A little section of Wildey will be expanded. So when you come to Highway 7, instead of having to go through Worthing and Hastings to get to Bridgetown, you will be able to turn up on Collymore Rock and go straight through on the dual carriageway to the Cable and Wireless junction.

I expect that Collymore Rock will be quite unable to take the traffic that will be through on to that road, Highway 6, which, I think, will become the most important of the arteries serving Bridgetown in terms of traffic. We are therefore planning to widen lower Collymore Rock and, ultimately, upper Collymore Rock for this purpose. Those improvements are all voted for in Subhead 15, Ministry of Transport and Works.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) is thanking us for what we are doing for his constituency. I hope that he is not going to claim on this occasion that it was his idea. As I saw the surprise come over his face, I realize that he is one of those people who believe that you much punish your enemies. He is so surprised in seeing the philosophy of the Minister of Transport and Works, which, obviously, is to love thine enemy – and we all know him to be a good Christian – that he is expressing his thanks for the road works in this way.

But, obviously nobody is thinking of a constituency. I do not know through which constituencies the roads are running. If you are planning to bring Barbados into the 21st century as a country through which people can drive freely on the roads without potholes, and where the roads can serve an economic purpose, you cannot mind whose constituency you are dealing with – you just have to build the roads. If it is a benefit, it is a

benefit. If it is not a benefit, it is not a benefit. That is all that we can look at when we are dealing with these matters.
4.10 p.m.

Under Agriculture, the principal votes will be found in green pages 43 to 50 in the Estimates. During 1983, there was some shortfall in livestock rearing in Barbados. We are accordingly offering some increase in the Capital Vote for various aspects of livestock research and development.

Crop research and development is also coming in for substantial increases in the area of fertilisation and irrigation. The Rural Development Project is coming more on stream, and the total amount being spent on crop research and development is moving from $260 000 to $2¾ million.

The ADC is being given a grant of approximately $800 000 more than last year. The efficiency of the ADC, I may say, appears to have increased a lot. Perhaps that is one way of looking at it. An unkind way of looking at it might be to say that the efficiency of other plantations in the country is now at the same level as the ADC. You can measure which has increased and which has decreased.

The handling of the ADC shows no marked difference in management from plantations in private management. Perhaps it is a good thing. Sometimes solutions that seem unorthodox, and indeed undesirable, may turn out to be not such bad ideas after all. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition call for the exchange of persons between the private and public sectors, and heard him speak of the possible cross-fertilisation of ideas. Where better to try them out than in the Agricultural Development Corporation.

The Scotland District Soil Conservation Project is being given an additional $1½ million, but this is because the Scotland District scheme is going to be expanded greatly during the year.

The Fisheries Development Project will show the largest increase of all, $2.1 million up from $200 000. We have very nearly come to agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank on the financing of the Bridgetown Fishing Harbour. We got it down to a manageable size when the consultants were told that they could not have over US $30 million for the scheme – that US $13 million was nearer the mark. I am very glad to say that it only took them a week to understand that it was US $13 million or nothing, and the scheme was scaled down very satisfactorily. Subject to one or two details relating to economic return, the Ministry is in the process, we hope, of concluding the agreement.

During the year we expect that Speightstown and Tent Bay will have their facilities commenced, and we confidently expect that the ring of fishing harbours will be a reality by the end of 1985 or early 1986.

I have dealt with perhaps the biggest of the new spenders. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is in a special position. Examination of the Estimates may suggest that there is less housing going on in Barbados than formerly. There is less housing being undertaken by the Ministry of Housing and Lands than formerly because we intend to give the new initiatives which we have taken to allow people to borrow money and have access to funds to do their own housing, rather than spending money directly from Government sources in any commercial programmes particularly, or in any large scale programmes of housing, sometimes perhaps for housing's own sake rather than in response to demand.

The National Housing Corporation has been given $9.1 million, of which $6.5 million will be capital expenditure. The first of the new developments which will be financed from the capital expenditure will be construction of 34 units of a high rise apartment building in Martindales Road, which will start early in the financial year.

I know that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central considers that this is a device to fill his constituency with persons who are hostile to him. Let me tell him that the Government does not mean to go and seek out persons who are hostile to him, that his own efforts in that direction have succeeded in filling up his constituency with persons hostile to him. We do not have to do anything special to add to them.

But just to set his mind at rest, there are people in the inner ring of Bridgetown who need rehousing. It is from this inner ring that I anticipate that many, if not most, of the units in the Campion Land and Martindales Road scheme, and in the Church Village scheme, when it is built, and indeed in St. Cecilia's, will be drawn. The government does not intend to attempt the impossible, which is to control a housing area politically, by choosing the people whom you will put into it.

All honourable Members are aware of the fact that the best laid schemes O' mice an' men Gang aft a-gley. That is from Robert Burns. You can try to fill up a housing area with your own people and you can fail dismally, and you can fill it up with your own people at one time, and you can find that when you have a candidate of the attractiveness of the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson), even the walls of Deacons Farm fall to the blasts of the trumpets, for as I recall it, Frank Walcott was defeated even in the housing areas in St. Michael West in 1976.

I can say very little more about housing. The policy is really contained in speeches that have been made in here on countless occasions in the past.

Now to the Ministry of Finance. It seems to be a matter of some interest that the Ministry of Finance customarily has the largest allocations of Capital Expenditure. That is also true on this occasion – I had forgotten what massive sums we have to vote – and I had better give some explanation of the reasons for that.
4.20 p.m.

The Government carries out a number of its productive enterprises by means of corporations, which are structured as entirely private companies and which may not be entirely Government-owned. In some cases, they are wholly Government-owned; in other cases, they are not wholly Government-owned. The cement plant is owned jointly by the Governments of Barbados and of Trinidad and Tobago. Caribbean Airways is now owned entirely by the Government of Barbados. The new external communications company will be owned by the Government and other shareholders – we will only be a minority shareholder. Aero Services Limited, the actual operating company is owned wholly by the Government I believe, the actual operating company. The West Indies Shipping Corporation is owned by all the Governments of the Caribbean. The Barbados National Oil Company is wholly-owned by the Government, and so on.

Investments which allow those companies to have a capital structure to carry out development are made through the Ministry of Finance. That is why the sum which will be over $60 million in total, has to be voted for capital under the Ministry of Finance. It stands in the printed Estimates as $59 million; some statutory, and some of it not statutory. The statutory portion of the Government's investment in the IMF and so on and so forth, all has to be voted. The rest is separate.

But these are the monies which we put into the cement plant to enable it to be built. I have an answer to be given about the cement plant. I propose to give it tomorrow, so I would not anticipate.

During the year, we can expect to have to put money into Caribbean Airways. We will have to move in $2 million for that. We have to move in $3.6 million for the external telecommunications company. We will be putting money into a broiler breeder project, which the Minister of Agriculture will be able to handle if he is questioned about it. Money, perhaps very little on this occasion, will have to be put into the Barbados National Oil Company and so on. This is where the bulk of the Ministry of Finance's expenditure comes from.

We have also reclassified loans to agencies, Loans and Advances, which is now the biggest single item in the Capital Estimates. Loans and Advances will have moved from $14 million to $33 million. Some funds we put into Government enterprises by way of equity, some funds we put in by way of loans, but there is a very important caveat to be mentioned under that figure of $33 million, which is Subhead 10 of Head 73.

For many years, the Waterworks had what is called a Stores Account. Waterworks piping and other equipment used to be bought and it went into Stores generally. We now find ourselves with a purely accounting problem of how to account for the $13 million, I think that was the total, of Waterworks stores which remained on what is known as "a below the line account" in the Waterworks account, and which were not cleared off when the Water Authority was set up. We therefore have had to vote $10 million to cover the writing off of these stores to reflect the settling of the accounting system.

It really does not mean that any money will be spent. The money was spent in previous years, but it has never been put through the Estimates in the way that it should have been. Some of it has been financed by Canadian loans, some of it has been financed by votes in the Current Estimates, I dare say, but it was not properly accounted for on the transfer. I think there may be one or two other write-offs that have to be carried out under Loans and Advances.

We are making a loan to the Waterworks, and the Waterworks will repay the Government out of the continuing programme of Canadian aid which it receives. We are making a loan to the Waterworks to enable them to buy Canadian waterworks equipment; the Canadians will then reimburse the Waterworks and they will reimburse us. It sounds complicated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but so many of these accounting matters often are.

But $10 million of that, anyhow, does not represent actual expenditure. It represents money that was spent at some time in the past and, therefore, will be a book entry only. It will not represent any cash flow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is always a danger when dealing with Capital Estimates that one can anticipate individual Heads too much, and I fear this is a danger into which I occasionally fall. It would be possible to go right through the Estimates and pick out every pavilion, every computer, every statue, and discuss them at length. I think, however, that more properly belongs to the discussion of individual items.

I have necessarily skipped over a number of areas. There are a number of subheads dealing with the Energy Programme of the Ministry of Finance. The Wind Power Pilot Scheme will be coming in. During the year.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Since that was a pilot plan it should be a capital by now.)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: ..... we will be building our windmill.

To turn to Defence and Security again, there is a lot of reconstruction needed. The Drill Hall and parts of the Garrison are falling down. Government House, Marine House and Parliament need, in my opinion, not the $4½ million that we are voting for them. I believe the three probably need $8 million or $9 million spending on them, if they are not to get into a bad state. We will be moving in $2½ million for Parliament. Work will be done at Government House. I have already announced in the House that we will be moving back the wall at Government House so as to give a pavement for the children from Springer Memorial to be able to walk down, as well as carrying out substantial repairs to the roof. The electrical system at Marine House is a serious fire hazard. The long saga of Ilaro Court will be taking on a new turn during the year.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: No, no. The Prime Minister would like to move into Ilaro Court next month. We have been waiting eight months now for a bath in the master bedroom.

The development of Ilaro Court will move from development of the house, which is nearly complete, to development of the grounds of Ilaro Court and Sherbourne and the adjacent St. Barnabas Housing Area, where there are various plans being discussed. There is enough land for a playing field and an interesting area for a park. There is some land on which the St. Barnabas Landing Scheme itself can be expanded. So perhaps funds voted for Ilaro Court will be used in the development of what, technically, is within Ilaro Court, but which really has nothing to do with the house. That will be part of the playing development to the east.

Aside.

(Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Have you talked to your MP already?)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: He is not my MP yet. He is my prospective MP.

(Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Prospective?)

4.30 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The Chairman is giving me adequate service for now, and I have no doubt that the honourable Member for St. Michael East (Dr. D. G. Blackman) will give me more than adequate service. He very quickly built a road behind Ilaro Court at an early stage.

I have no doubt that we will put together a very nice package for the residents of the district. The mistake will be to think, if you see one million dollars voted for Ilaro Court, that, it has anything to do with the comfort of the Prime Minister's residence. It really has to do with the playing field, a park, and the laying out of some lots of land, which belong to Ilaro Court and Sherbourne, for general social purposes. Eventually that will be a new subhead altogether, but at the moment the work is being done out of the Ilaro Court vote. That is the present situation.

I could go through all these, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the one that is most important to touch on is Parliament, but we will have an opportunity, hopefully tonight, to reach that particular Head, and it will more properly be dealt with there.

I therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now move that the Appropriation Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to second that motion and reserve my right to speak.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG and Dr. R. C. HAYNES stood.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, it is now 4.30 p.m. and I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for 15 minutes.

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

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

4.35 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very important in responding to the presentation of the Appropriation Bill for the year ending March 1985, to examine with some critical faculty, the background against which this Bill is brought before Parliament. The presentation by the right honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has been largely

of an apologetic, low-keyed, and somewhat depressed note. I am quire sure.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): On a point of order, Sir: I wonder if the honourable Member could indicate very early if he is prepared to say anything worthwhile, so I can decide whether I can go and have a cup of tea or stay here and take a few notes. I would like to stay, but I do not know if it is worthwhile listening to him.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I do not think that listening to any matter would be of any value to the honourable Member, so he can go and drink a gallon of tea as far as I am concerned.

To continue, Sir, the background against which this Bill has been presented to Parliament is a rather grim one. I have a particular difficulty as to whether, as one is required to do, to focus principally on the Schedule to the Bill and its relationship to the Bill, namely the Estimates, or whether to look at documents, which I will not make documents of the House, and which I will not read from, such as the Barbados Economic Memorandum of the World Bank, published on January 16, 1984, where the data base differs very significantly from that in the Estimates, and which was compiled in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund, or whether to look at the series of three-monthly reports by the International Monetary Fund and use the data base from that source. However, I believe that it is important, from a parliamentary point of view, to concentrate on what is before us, as there will be adequate time during the Budget Debate to present a more realistic picture to the people of Barbados.

This country has witnessed two years of serious decline in output. The honourable Minister, in giving his macro-economic data, has suggested that, after appropriate corrections, the last year will probably show zero growth or thereabouts, but he could not give a definite figure. We have warned him again and again that the kind of reflation pre-election exercise which he went through in 1981 would land this country in its present predicament, and I am pleased today to hear him on the floor of this House give a guarded apology to the nation and indeed a vague assurance that we would not see that kind of expansionary programme, fuelled by borrowing and by printed money, again.

We notice that the inflation rate in Barbados has dropped. I do not agree that the inflation rate has dropped to the level which he has indicated, because the other related parameters would indicate that the rate was higher than reported in recent years, so when it falls, the rate would also be higher than what he has indicated. It is important to recognise that that fall in the inflation rate in this country is a direct consequence of contraction of the economy, coupled with an appreciation of the Barbados dollar, linked, as it is, to the United States dollar. In other words, what I am saying is that it cannot be a matter of credit to the Government if it can only control the rate of inflation by inducing serious contraction and recessionary trends in the economy and rely almost exclusively on matters external to Barbados, namely the variations in relative values of currencies external to Barbados.

4.55 p.m.

That fall in inflation does not necessarily reflect the steep price increases which have afflicted this community in the face of a policy of wages suppression, which has dominated the thinking of this particular Administration. However, that combination has had its effect in reducing the consumption levels in the society, and in a society where consumption levels are perhaps a true index of the standard of living obtained, then one will recognise that there has been a widespread and severe reduction in the standard of living of the overwhelming majority of the citizens of this country, and in particular wage earners in Barbados.

We notice that there has been some growth in the assessable incomes of Barbadians. The Prime Minister puts that figure at some $742 million in 1982. I think that was the year he mentioned. What he did not say was that during that period there was almost a threefold increase in taxes extracted from incomes, in one way or another. The net effect of this would be a reduction in the real incomes of all categories of persons in Barbados.

We do have some very serious problems in this country. In every single sector of the economy and in every single aspect of social life there have been serious failures. If we were to look, first of all, at the political directorate of this country, we find it not only severely divided, but we hear words of cannibalism being used by its membership in terms of their attitudes to each other.

When we look at the moral profile of the Barbados Labour Party today, we find that the dominant factor in the governance of its affairs is widespread corruption at all levels. This is reflected in many areas of activity adverted to by Members on that side, who specifically and publicly adverted to the corruption in housing, and the corruption in other statutory boards. These are not charges made by us – these are charges made by the other side about members of their own party.

The Government is quite clearly not only crippled, but totally disabled, morally and mentally bankrupt, and indeed quite unable to tell the truth, and only the truth, on any particular matter facing the nation.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member is moving

from the general allegation, which does not impute bad motives, to the particular, in which his castigation is of the Government, not of the general party, in his suggestion that there is moral bankruptcy and corruption in the Government. I submit that that is a different kettle of fish than talking in general about members of the party, and that the honourable Member is unparliamentary.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I appeal to you, Sir, not to ask him to withdraw the remarks.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: At this point in time I will not ask the honourable Member to withdraw, because I feel that when he says 'the Government', he is embracing a large number of persons without specifically identifying a particular person.

As I have said before, if any Member seeks to open up a debate, he should be prepared to take the response. It is therefore left to Members to determine how best they are going to conduct themselves.

I will give equal time to either side of the House to defend any statement they feel offends their own dignity while we are in here.

The honourable Member may continue.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much. I can defend myself at all times, and I welcome assault.

To continue, the Government has clearly, as reflected in this Bill, in terms of the allocation of the resources available to it, totally surrendered its sovereignty in the allocation of the resources of this country. Indeed, in respect of several events which have occurred in Barbados, one doubts very much whether they are any longer in a position even to defend the sovereignty of this nation not only in the management of its financial affairs, but also in the ordering of its social affairs.

This sort of economic blanket of depression which has been foisted on this nation has been reflected in the Public Service of Barbados, which has been largely debilitated by widespread and unwarranted political interference. The net fallout from a crippled directorate, which has so depressed the Public Service, and has so interfered with the functioning of the institutional framework of the public sector, is that the people of Barbados today are more depressed than at any time in the history of Barbados that I am familiar with.

One hears talk from time to time that the kind of hopelessness which people feel at the moment is very similar to what existed in this country in the 1930s. It is a serious matter when people cannot believe or trust those charged with the responsibility of running the affairs of the country for the time being. It is a serious matter when this country is placed in an IMF programme, and when you have an Appropriation Bill before you which reflects the joint approach of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, when the predictable negative fallout of that programme has now become apparent. Yet, this Government not only sought to deny that it had entered into such a programme, but has failed miserably even to tell this country the fact that this Appropriation Bill is as it is today because the Government is coming to the end of one standby programme and now has to start to prepare itself to enter into another.

The layoffs in the public sector, which took place in ones, twos, threes and fours, with galloping pace over the past few months have seen people go off in dozens, thirties, forties, fifties and now in hundreds as we approach the closing period of the standby arrangement. But that is the sort of thing you can expect from a Government which is not prepared to come to the country and tell the truth, and the whole truth, about everything being done in relation to the public affairs of this country.
5.05 p.m.

Against this background, of wages suppression, we have had the most inordinate increases in prices in Barbados in the past few years. Just speak to those people who go to the supermarkets and you will see how the price of food has escalated. Look at the cost of shelter. Look at the cost of basic essentials of life. Look at the cost of public utilities, not only to the Government, which I shall deal with later, as this Appropriation Bill contains a considerable amount under the various Heads relating to public utilities, but also in relation to the household expenditures in this area and so on.

One would have thought that an Appropriation Bill of this kind would have addressed itself to the most pressing problems facing this country today, that is, to put a stop to job losses in Barbados. The Government's answer is to attempt a reflationary public sector programme, which will be financed almost totally by borrowings internally and externally, and which, in the long run, is going to cause further damage to the external position of this country.

A second major problem which this Appropriation Bill does not address is the serious problem of housing facing this nation at the moment. There has been no adequate allocation of funds for a public sector housing programme, which is absolutely essential to meet the needs of the lowest income groups in Barbados.

We have seen the very serious harassment of persons already in existing housing units, and the way in which thy have been publicly humiliated before the television screens of this country. We have also seen the progressive

increases in rentals. Yet, we are not seeing any serious attempt by the Government, through the allocation of resources in this Appropriation Bill, in the area of housing.

There are many other serious areas. For example, nowhere in these Estimates can you find any reflection of transfers of institutions for lending for housing. I speak specifically of mortgages for middle and other low-income groups in Barbados.

The mortgage market in this country has been wiped out as the Government has progressively entered into the money market to borrow to finance the fiscal deficit, seriously damaging the liquidity within the banking system, particularly in relation to long-term financing, which is necessary for housing. One would have thought that one would have been able to pick up in this Appropriation Bill some evidence of transfers to agencies like the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company to reflect the need in that area.

When one looks at the Estimates and looks very carefully at the pattern of indirect taxes in relating to this year's revenue as projected in the Appropriation Bill, what you will find is that there is going to be a deliberate attempt to maintain that level of taxation. And we all know that one of the major factors in relation to housing, apart from such inputs as the absence of mortgage money, Government financing, lending from private banking institutions at reasonable interest rates and bridging loans, is the fact that, and this is very important, the cost of building has escalated in Barbados to a point that makes it very difficult for people either to repair their homes, maintain their homes or to even seek to acquire a home – even if they can get financing of the kind which I have adverted to. So one can confidently anticipate that the cost factors in housing, accentuated considerably by the indirect taxes placed on building materials, will be sustained through the next year.

The tragedy is that housing, of course, constitutes an area which would be of importance to a Government which has the authority to allocate resources within the economy. It would be critical to them, because they would recognize that housing has an impact on employment, major impacts on health and education, and a very limited impact, strangely enough, on the balance of payments position in this country.

If a proper programme of housing, which should be an important feature of any Appropriation Bill in 1984 was considered, I would have thought that housing would have been given the very highest priority in terms of capital expenditure within the context of these Estimates. That is the kind of expenditure that is job creating, that impinges on the social services positively, and has a limited impact on the balance of payments which is a major obsession, not only to the Minister of Finance, but, of course, his economic directorate, that is the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Next, Sir, one would have thought that one would have seen in these Estimates a serious attempt to deal with the questions of transport in Barbados.

We have complained again and again about the fact that Parliament has absolutely no control over the Transport Levy. It is important that the public should know that there is no public accountability, as far as this Parliament is concerned, in respect of those taxes which are collected and spent in respect of the Transport Levy. Even more important is that I think it is very wrong for this Government to be making extensive use of suppliers' credits for what appears to be a capitalization of the Transport Board through the use of the Transport Levy, giving rise to a situation where, based on current and future collections, substantial liabilities of a capital nature are being generated against that Transport Levy.
5.15 p.m.

Those liabilities are being generated on a form of equipment which has an amortisation period of only seven years at the most when you look at the amount of potholes in the roads. As a result, a very serious situation can develop, in which the Transport Levy can be in serious trouble, and which can bound a future Administration to meet these commitments from the Consolidated Fund of this country. The crunch will come within five to seven years from now, because of the nature of the purchases of buses and chassis which have a life-span of some five to seven years.

We have heard all sorts of statements by the Minister of Finance that at long last the Government is serious about repairing the roads of Barbados. What they have done, and their concept of a capital programme, is nothing other than a crash programme except that it involves big money and a large amount of borrowed money. They have spent millions upon millions of borrowed money on new roads, whilst at the same time they have allowed the roads in Barbados to fall into such a state of disrepair that, as they proudly announced today, they are now seeking a World Bank Loan to deal with the problem of rehabilitation of roads.

Two years ago I made a very pertinent point in this House. The point arose out of a World Bank study, I did not originate it. I am no expert on roads, I am no road engineer, but there are people around the world who spend a lot of time studying road development, road maintenance and road rehabilitation, and the World Bank itself has always made the point that developing countries like Barbados find themselves in a situation where, because of easy access to funding, they concentrate on building high prestige projects, like new roads, whilst they allow the capital assets which have developed over the years to

go to pot, so to speak, represented in the form of serious potholes in the roads and serious defects in the drainage system.

That report said several important things, and it is very interesting to see what has emerged over the past two years in the context of the report. First, it emphasised that, above all, you must maintain a maintenance programme. It is because of the absence of a maintenance programme, which is cheap compared with any other form of programme, that you find yourself now in a situation where you have to go into a more expensive rehabilitation programme – again with borrowed money.

This is a serious matter. The people of Barbados and the commercial sector have been complaining about roads. The roads have been causing serious problems to motor vehicles. The roads have become major health hazards, in the sense that, in many instances, they are possible sources of accidents, and when the rain falls, serious sources of embarrassment to people who, when they drive along the road and do not notice the potholes, splash five or six people and have to call out from their cars and try to apologise.

They allowed this to develop in Barbados. But now they are coming to tell you that, as a kind of miracle, and, as evidence of a programme of capital development, they are going to repair the roads that they have allowed to fall into disrepair: And they are compounding it by saying they are borrowing money, apart from the money in the Appropriation Bill, in order to make sure that you have a rehabilitation programme, a programme which should never have been necessary in Barbados.

The Democratic Labour Party has always had an effective road maintenance programme. It was a road maintenance programme that took account of the labour needs of the private sector and the public sector, at different times of the year, thus maintaining continuous employment on a year-round basis. It also was a programme which was based on a proper assessment of the capital stock – a valuation of the capital stock of the roads in Barbados with the percentage factor required for maintenance applied to that. That is what you found in the Estimates presented to this Parliament year after year, a sound programme internationally-approved and well-recognised by every single agency responsible for road maintenance and road development in any country.

They have put up the bus fares as a cost factor in that area, and they have increased the subsidies, but because of widespread corruption at the Transport Board there will still be further losses. Unless there is a serious look at the management structure of the Transport Board, if you put up the bus fares to $10 and you give $50 million as subsidy a year, all that is going to happen is that you are going to lose more and more money. If you have a badly organised operation, then pouring more money into it does not help, because it is like a sieve, and more money will just past through the sieve. It is as simple and straightforward as that.

These Estimates also indicate another very serious trend in Barbados, which, in my view, is undermining the social cohesiveness of this country. As a continuing trend in this Appropriation Bill, you can see a gradual withdrawal of subsidies from households and a gradual reduction in the amount of money made available to the disadvantaged in this society.

One way in which this is done is by a drastic reduction in what they call "transfers to the non-financial public sector". In Barbados, that, in general terms, means the statutory boards. In other words, you will find a substantial reduction in transfers from the Consolidated Fund to the statutory boards, and one major thing begins to happen. Because of the limitation of credit and access by the statutory boards to the financial system, where credit is limited because of the present arrangements in which we have ourselves, and because of a reduction in transfers, then the next thing you find is serious employment losses in all the statutory boards in Barbados.

It is not accidental that these people are sent home. They are sent home because of a particular pattern of policy, and this policy will continue into 1984. I have promised that I will not read from, because I do not wish to make them documents of the House until Budget time, either the IMF reports on the three-monthly basis, or from the World Bank Report. I have them, but I am not going to read from them, but I think the time will come, when there is maximum exposure, when the whole thing should be exposed to the public. But I am not going to do it today.

5.25 p.m.

The chaos is a consequence of two things; mismanagement and corruption, these are factors which I gather was ventilated at the last Barbados Labour Party Conference, unless the Leader of the Government is going to be contradicted. So, therefore, it is absolutely important that we abandon this system of funding.

The Minister of Finance, in presenting his particular side of the story, talked about modern methods of separate funding, a departure from the norm where funds are paid into a Consolidated Fund. I want to deal with that.

That system has been recognized and admitted as the most effective source of corruption in the management of public affairs. In a neighbouring island where, for many years, because of their excessive earnings of foreign exchange, a considerable amount of money was funded outside of the Consolidated Fund, we all know that that

was the area which saw a massive growth of corruption in that particular country – to a point where it is hardly reversible, even in difficult times.

This question of collecting money from people and funding it represents no improvement whatsoever in public financing. In fact, in the "Parliamentarian" about a year ago, the methods of accountability in public financing of that country to which I am referring was brought under scrutiny, and a finger was placed directly on that particular aspect of financing.

We on this side totally reject that kind of funding through levies outside the orbit of Parliament as being anything new. It has been going on for years in many countries, and it has been a major source of corruption in those areas.

There is another factor, which I shall illustrate in detail later. Some time ago I said that the taxable capacity of this country is almost exhausted. Now, I am saying that one of the problems facing Barbados today, and Barbadians, as individuals, as businessmen or as corporate units, is that they are so destroyed by taxation that individual and corporate efforts have been severely undermined, and the transfers which take place from the private sector to the public sector have gone down the drain. And when I tell this Honourable House later the amount of money that they on the other side have spent in the past few years, even they on that side are going to be shocked.

I cannot see this Appropriation Bill being anything other than a continuation of what was happening in Barbados over the past year, that is, maximization of taxation effort whilst, at the same time, reducing Government expenditure, which is most easily reduced by sending home people.

But, Sir, it is not only the public sector where you have this problem. The tourist sector in Barbados is in total disarray. Let us face it. From 1981 there have been four successive seasons which has seen a decline in the tourist industry.

(Aside: That is not true.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The decline started in 1981, continued in 1982 and 1983, and in 1984 now there is considerable evidence that there will be continuing decline, or at least a failure to get back to the 1979–80 period.

I do not propose to go into all the details – I have set that out before, and that is a Budgetary matter, which I will deal with then – but one would have anticipated that, in an important sector like tourism, an Appropriation Bill of this kind, when dealing with the social and economic services, would have made a more significant allocation to the tourist sector. I deeply regret that despite all the talk one hears about tourism, its importance to the economy, the multiplying effect it has right through the economy and the spread of the tourist dollar through the economy, yet the Government cannot find it possible to give a clear signal to the hotel industry that it is reducing the burdens it has imposed on it, because the projections that I see here for taxation from that sector are roughly the same as last year, or indeed, any clear signal that they intend to transfer any additional resources for the development of the tourist sector in Barbados. How do you expect it to recover when you, the honourable Deputy Prime Minister of this country, have sat down here and presided over the decline of the tourist industry; when you – I am addressing him through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, – sat down there ...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member must address the Chair.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sorry.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the honourable Member wants to address the Minister of Tourism, I think he can find a different forum.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am trying to draw to the attention of the honourable Deputy Prime Minister is that he has held that Ministry during a period of serious decline in tourism. He knows the nature of the tourist plant in Barbados. He knows that occupancy rates have been down. He knows about the debt equity structure of the hotel industry. He knows the composition of Barbadian ownership. He knows that the Barbadians in the hotel industry have no capital reserves. That is a matter of fact. The people who ventured into the hotel industry have been largely poor people, without any significant reverses behind them.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Do you say that about Oscar, your friend?)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am going to deal with you now.

It is very important that Government should be giving a clear signal to the small hoteliers in Barbados, and to the hoteliers of intermediate size, through this Appropriation Bill that they would be doing something about their problems.

The honourable Member must know that there is no hotel industry which could go through three years of decline, bearing in mind the recurrent nature of expenditures in the hotel plant. Every two or three years there are major expenditures on refurbishing. He knows the importance of the need to maintain plant.

The point I am trying to make is that the money allocated within the Estimates does not even give a signal to anyone in the tourist industry that the Government cares anything about it. It is totally bankrupt of ideas, bankrupt of money, at a public level, I mean – I am not talking about the Swiss accounts – and would be seeking, no doubt, to borrow more and more money.

I go now to the manufacturing sector. When you look at the allocations within this Appropriation Bill, they do not even speak to the problems in that sector.

You heard a major apology from the Minister of Finance and Planning, who told us that there has been a major upturn in manufacturing in Barbados. He did not tell us that that was largely in the area of the enclave industries. He did not tell us that there are very, very serious problems in the non-enclave sector of the manufacturing industry. And there is nothing inside here which would suggest that there is any prospect of the Government paying any particular attention to this sector in this particular year.

The employment losses in the manufacturing sector have been appalling, absolutely appalling. The honourable Minister of Tourism actually went on the television of this country sometime in November and contradicted the manufacturers, when he said there were only a few job losses in the manufacturing sector. But by January of this year, when the employment figures were produced, which showed that the unemployment was higher than it was in 1976, there was an accompanying note saying that the major loss in employment was in the manufacturing sector. It cannot be in the enclave manufacturing sector – it would have to be in the non-enclave manufacturing sector.

5.35 p.m.

The sugar industry, as we all know, is bankrupt. There is no point in messing around with words, it is bankrupt, and its survival depends entirely on the price support mechanisms which ultimately are the responsibilities of the taxpayers. That is the situation.

There is nothing in these Estimates here, apart from damaging charges, a wide range of charges, shocking increases in charges that I can see going right through the Estimates in the non-tax revenue sections, which will certainly be a major disincentive to agricultural diversification in this country. It is a very serious matter, but it is against this kind of background that we have an Appropriation Bill clearly based on a fundamental principle that you collect as much money and you spend as little as possible.

You talked about surplus on Current Account. The surplus on Current Account which you got last year was by sending home people; and immediately after the Estimates were concluded, you sent out a letter to all departments cutting back on approved expenditure. Everybody knows that, we all saw the circulars, so what are you worried about? That is how you got the projected surplus, if it turns out to be a surplus. What is worse is that in the surplus projected for this year, there is a note there which shows you how some $12 million have already been removed from Personal Emoluments. I will come back to that later.

In this Appropriation Bill there is a continuing cost to the taxpayers of this country which is energy-related, and that comes under utilities. I will deal with that at the appropriate time. There can be no doubt in my mind that this Government probably would have borrowed about $100 million less in the past two years if they had an appropriate energy policy. There can be no doubt in my mind that a lot of the money that they have spent in various sectors of energy, whilst imposing taxation on the people of Barbados, could have been saved. There is no doubt in my mind that, with an appropriate policy, the total energy bill in Barbados could have been reduced by about 25 per cent in 1984.

It is not fiction. If you take diesel, gasoline, the cost of electricity, and other major factors, there could have been about a 20 per cent to 25 per cent reduction of cost of energy in Barbados. That alone would have been a major tonic to every single sector in Barbados: households, statutory boards, the hotel sector, and it would have meant a drastic reduction of Government expenditure on utilities. Let me tell you this. A 25 per cent reduction in energy costs will make a significant difference to the viability of hotels in Barbados, despite all the difficulties that they face. I believe Senator David Seale recently pointed out in the Other Place that a hotel just had a water bill for $90 000, and you can assume that about 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the cost of that water bill is related to electricity.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We will not talk about the reasons for those high energy prices, because I intend to deal with that extensively as a Budgetary matter this year, to point out to the people the extent to which they have been mismanaged in such a vital area of national activity.

I said earlier that this Appropriation Bill is rooted in a fiscal programme which has absolutely nothing to do with economic growth, nothing to do with social development and nothing to do with the equitable distribution of the resources of the country, but is purely rooted in the need to demonstrate to your creditors that you have the capacity to repay them, to demonstrate to them that you have a surplus on Current Account in order that you may

generate a level of credit-worthiness in relation to the money markets of the world. Would you believe that by the end of 1985 this honourable gentleman would have increased the National Debt of Barbados by more than $1 billion since they took office in September 2, 1976? By more than $1 billion!

Asides

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You can say whatever you feel is the National Debt. What I know is that I can look at the fiscal deficits that have to be financed from year to year, add up those deficits and I know that has to be financed by borrowings. It is as simple and straightforward as that.

You would have increased the national debt by $1 billion. That is the public debt and the public guaranteed debt. On top of that, they are extracting three times as much money from the people of Barbados in taxation this year as the Democratic Labour Party extracted in 1975–76. On top of that, there can be no doubt that their policies have seriously compromised the productivity in the private sector, and that public sector productivity has seriously declined over the years as they come in here week after week and moan and groan that they cannot get the public sector to perform. I am just reflecting on statements that I have heard from Minister after Minister on the floor of this House. I am doing nothing more than that.

By 1985 they have borrowed over $1 billion. That is one thousand million dollars more than the Democratic Labour Party would have borrowed. Between the discovery of Barbados and March, 1976, the total amount of borrowings in this country was $211 million. Between September 2, 1976, and the end of this financial year, they would have borrowed over one billion dollars, and they would have contracted considerably more borrowings by the system of guaranteeing debts – that is allowing the lender to lend the money to a totally-owned subsidiary of Government and Government guaranteeing the loan. That is the public guaranteed debt, which would be additional to all of that money.
5.45 p.m.

Let us be reasonable. Do you feel that at the end of a few years, when you have borrowed a billion dollars – and I will soon tell you how much tax you have raised – that you should be in a situation where your unemployment level is higher than it was when your public debt was $211 million? Should there be any atmosphere of depression in Barbados today? Let us face it – the money must have been misused.

They talk of capital formation. Capital formation what? Capital formation is something that is useful and productive. There should be a proper balance between capital formation that brings long term benefits, and capital formation is productive in the short and medium term. You should not be in this mess.

I am going to be very specific now. In this year, 1984–85, they intend to raise $596 million. Did you hear that figure? And they intend to borrow another $180 million. Also, under the National Insurance levy system they will be getting another $128 million – $64 million contributed by the employees, $64 million contributed by the employers. Yet, they are sending home people. What are they doing with the money? What is happening to it?

In 1975–76, $203 million was the total revenue of this country. The gap between expenditure, Current and Capital, in the seven year period preceding 1976 averaged some $30 million a year. We were borrowing at the rate of $30 million a year and generating a desirable level of satisfaction in Barbados. Indeed, it was during that period that the economy of this country was totally transformed. The whole industrial base of Barbados was transformed, in terms of diversification from agriculture and commerce, with a widening of commerce and banking that was available to the total community, into the hotel industry and into manufacturing.

All that took place during the period when the public debt of Barbados increased by only $150 million. They borrowed a billion, and what has happened? This is why they cannot be believed, because each year they were telling the people of Barbados that they were reducing the tax burden on them. The people were given all sorts of fancy presentations, tax credits, this and that, when in point of fact the tax yield has increased by over 300 per cent, and I will demonstrate from these Estimates how this envelops the individual in such a way that he cannot escape at any point in time.

This year there will be $596 million in taxation, $128 million under the National Insurance scheme, and, on top of that, they will be borrowing $180 million, because there will be no surplus on Current Account by the time they get through a wages settlement and apply the $12 million that has been taken out this year out of statutory emoluments.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would not like to interrupt the honourable Member, but it seems to me the honourable Member is repeating himself.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, Sir. I am going down the line.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hear an aside that the honourable Member is summing up. Is that correct?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, Sir. I am the opening batsman. I am just warming up. I will continue.

It is important to look at how Government is going to raise its revenue in relation to this Appropriation Bill. Income Tax, $127 million. They intend to extract that amount in the form of Income Tax from the people of Barbados this year. Therefore, you can be quite sure that any increases in salaries which would be given to the public servants in Barbados will be wiped out largely by taxation. Get that straight. Also, get it straight that with no indication that there will be a relaxation in credit, when these tax impositions are heaped on to the wages increases, then the position of the public sector workers will not be significantly improved in any way.

I am just showing how this Government has really brutalised and broken the back of every single citizen in this country. That is Income Tax. Think not of the levies of which we talked today, on top of that Income Tax.

Now, look where the next big increase is coming – on property taxes. The projections in this Appropriation Bill certainly indicates that there is going to be either a significant increase in property taxes this year or in tax harassment, one or the other. How are you going to increase land taxes by $6 million? Either the bill is wrong, or I am wrong. How you are going to get this $6 million more without increasing taxes I do not know, but that is what is inside there. That is all I can say. There is $6 million more in the Estimates for land taxes, so you get less by the time you get the money in your pocket.

And now they have gone for your homes. Earlier, I spoke of people in need of homes, but those already with homes are now faced with the problems of ever escalating taxation. But, again, that is a matter I will deal with in more detail at an appropriate time.

When the people now go out to spend that money, do you know what they will be doing to them this year arising out of the Appropriation Bill? They are planning to take $99 million from the people of Barbados through consumption taxes. That is a very serious thing. On top of that, import duties, another $99 million, and stamp duties are going up to $28.5 million.

When those stamp duties were introduced in here two years ago, when I said that they would yield approximately $9 million to every one per cent or thereabout, I was told that was not true because of the large amount of capital and intermediate goods that would be exempt from these duties. The fact is, I have turned out to be right, and it is turning out to be $28.5 million. Do you know what that means to the poor man, Sir? He is paying stamp duties, consumption taxes, import duties, the levies and Income Tax – and all his money has gone straight back to the Government. That is what is happening.

5.55 p.m.

You can expect during 1984 that that vicious cycle of taxes, leading to higher prices, would destroy any sort of increase which the people of Barbados would get as a result of any settlement. It is a major trick.

That is just a macroscopic view of how they plan to raise the revenue and place the total burden of revenue on the wage earners in Barbados. It is a very serious matter.

Now, Sir, look how they plan to spend it? I was shocked, but not surprised, Mr. Deputy Speaker – it is a curious state to be in – shocked, but not surprised – to discover that this year Barbadians will be paying $106 million on charges of debt – in a year when there has been some reduction in the Treasury Bill rate and interest rates. I was equally shocked when I recognized that in the past seven years, they would have spent $576 million on debt service, more than this year's revenue. That is the kind of situation they have in this country. In other words, what I am trying to tell you is, that of the $596 million which they propose to raise, the first $106 million has to go towards the service of debt.

Did you know that there was a time when this country prospered and debt service was only $20.5 million, and has never exceeded $21.5 million? That was under the Democratic Labour Party? It never exceeded 10 per cent of revenue, but now it is well over 20 per cent of revenue, revenue collected through harassment of the people of Barbados. It is a very unwise policy in Barbados to be effecting such substantial transfers from the private sector to the public sector and then, as the honourable Minister of Finance confessed, for there to be a reduction in the output in the private sector in Barbados.

On top of that, they will be spending some $24 million on Defence and Security on Capital and Current Account. And when you add charges of debt of $106 million, plus Defence and Security, $130 million, do you realize that that is more than the total income tax in Barbados?

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Believe it or not. By the time you have met your debt service payments and you have paid for Defence and Security, that will wipe out more than your Income Tax in Barbados. So after all the tax harassment that people have to go through in Barbados, all the extraction of income from them at unreasonable levels, all the money is taken in one hand, some handed over to Defence and Security and the rest handed over to the lending institutions. That is the kind of situation that we have.

The gamblers can survive. The poker players can survive. The big guys, who have the small casinos unlawfully in Barbados, can survive. They can all survive, but those who earn an honest living, and have to go to work seven days a week, will find it very difficult to survive under those circumstances.

As if to add insult to injury, this Appropriation Bill shows a reduction in the spending under Health Services for this country. We have already had a collapse of the polyclinic service. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is in a state of chaos. They are now trying to borrow money from the United States, as part of a deal over Grenada, to set up a separate Casualty Department, something we had indicated ten years ago.

They have put up every single charge at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The private rooms have gone up. X-Rays have gone up. Drugs have gone up. No one ever paid for any drugs anywhere in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital until you all came into power.

(Certain remarks made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central at this point were ordered expunged from the Records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER).

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Standing Order 33(6) demands that, when speaking, a Member must be heard in silence. Please continue.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We have a situation where the operating theatres in the hospital function only at about 50 per cent capacity or less, sometimes because of the lack of linen, sometimes because of the lack of air-conditioning, sometimes because the operating theatres have collapsed, sometimes because of problems in the Sterilising Department. Every day there is one problem or another.

You have a situation where people requiring elective surgery in Barbados have to wait years for that surgery. You have a situation where essential drugs cannot be obtained in the public institutions of Barbados. You have a situation where, having introduced a generic drug regime in Barbados, our citizens are being given substandard drugs and, in many instances, the drugs are not available at the dispensaries in this country. You have a situation where that kind of centralization of purchasing has led, to my certain knowledge, to extensive corruption. You have a situation where a considerable amount of money, instead of going to the purchase of drugs, has gone into the overhead administration of a scheme, which was started by the honourable Member for the City (Hon. Miss B. A. Miller) and which the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) tried his best with, and now it is being destroyed by another person.

6.05 p.m.

Now, Sir, what is perhaps a major fraud being perpetrated upon the people of Barbados by a political party is that we have the Barbados Labour Party now trumpeting that they are going to introduce a national health service in Barbados. By the end of August this year, they will have extracted $36 million from the people of Barbados in the form of a health levy, and have not spent a single cent of it, apart from on the bad drugs that they are buying in Barbados, and are now telling you that they are giving you a free health service. You have prepaid $36 million, they have given you some bad drugs over an 18-month period; they should have the $36 million or thereabouts in that account, and they tell you they are giving you a free medical health service.

Apart from that, they have put up the price of everything in the area of health – and withdrawn essential services from the people of Barbados. A reduction in the vote from the Consolidated Fund in relation to Health indicates that all those services, which are dependent on a vote from the Consolidated Fund, will be further undermined during this financial year.

What we are going to see in Barbados is an attempt to introduce a politically-determined aspect of a health service already paid for to the tune of $36 million by the people. They will probably spend maybe $3 million, $4 million or $5 million on a few doctors and say that they are giving you a free health service. That is the free health service they are giving you. And what is worse, is that the moment you reduce expenditure from the Consolidated Fund, and you do not transfer a considerable amount of funds from the Health Levy Fund in order to support the ancillary services and the consequential expenditure which stems from the visit to a doctor, you are going to find a further undermining of the health services. I will explain that a bit. There is always a lot of talk in Barbados about doctors' fees. He said they are the highest in the world. If the honourable Member seriously believes that, that is his problem. I am not getting into that, because the problem is that the people of Barbados would know what fees doctors charge.

For someone like me, with 25 000 families in this country having attended me privately, every household in Barbados would know what I have charged them over the past seventeen years. It is as simple and straightforward as that, so I do not care what you say. There is not a household or family in this country that would not have attended my office at some time in the past seventeen years.

I have dealt with the area of housing already, and I do not propose to repeat that. In the area of Community Services, what we are seeing here is an attempt to purchase the votes of people with their own money. That is going to be the pattern between now and an election. It was done before and they will do it again, but the people will be alerted this time, so any increase

in expenditure that you will see in that area would be simply related to politically-determined expenditures.

Whilst the Regional Defence Force can have access to the taxpayers of Barbados, the Police Force of Barbados, which is of critical importance for the prevention of crime and the maintenance of peace in this country, has hardly been given any increased allocation. I am just showing the priorities of these people in the Barbados Labour Party, who are completely and totally confused. Can you imagine they doing that at this point in time, with people going home every day and joining the list of the unemployed, with prices rising every day. Can you imagine such unbalanced spending while we have a situation where, as I was told by a police officer at a police station recently, he was shocked when he came across two cases of house-breaking, and all the person did when he broke into the house was to warm up some food and eat it and go back out – a very unusual thing in Barbados?

The pensioners in Barbados can hardly expect very much this year. What little increase they are going to get will be taken back from them. You will not get enough to compensate for the $6 million in taxes which the Public Utilities Board imposed on you in the public utilities decision this year. Old people are drinking tea and eating biscuits five days a week.

If you were to look at the furniture auction sales in Barbados today, you will find a very interesting thing. You will see a lot of very interesting pieces of furniture in these sales – antiques. Do you know whom they come from? They come from retired public servants, retired teachers and such people, who are selling their furniture at auction in order to pay their electricity and gas bills. That is a fact. Pensioners are selling their last remaining assets in order to cope with life – and hoping that death will not be too far off, or that the Barbados Labour Party is turned out of power.

All the indicators would show that any Appropriation Bill for the year 1984–85 should make a substantial increase in allocation to the Ministry of Education. That is not there.

I will always make a plea for the honourable Member for the City. She remains silent when the truth is being told, she is never rude when the truth is being told. It is only when you say something that she does not believe is true that she will interrupt, and you will notice that she has not interrupted me during my entire speech.

Do you think that a whole building in Queens College should be collapsing when they bought a piece of furniture for $10 000 for the Defence Force? Do you think it is fair to take a Minister of the calibre of the Minister of Education, put her to preside over a Ministry, which is subject to the directives laid down by the International Monetary Fund, and which is now putting charges on all sorts of things, such as text books, when these things were free before?
6.15 p.m.

(Aside: Billie, do not interrupt him. Leave him alone to tell lies.)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Textbook Loan Scheme was introduced by the Democratic Labour Party, and the rental was introduced by the Democratic Labour Party.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: To continue, Sir. I do not want to speak of delicate legal matters. The honourable Member is a lawyer, and I am not, and I can get tripped up on this one – although I gather that she has been tripped up. I am not getting into that area, but I gather no writ has been filed before the Court. I do not know.

The morale in the teaching service in Barbados today is at its lowest. It is not the fault of the Minister. The honourable Minister of Finance is to be blamed for the run down of the services in this country. The Ministers who are responsible for the social services have an exceedingly difficult time. I am a very fair and honest man, and I am not going to go attacking the Minister of Education when, in fact, I should be directing my attack on the honourable Member for St. Thomas. I am sure that he would have been the person who would have given her the wrong advice, in the absence of the Attorney-General, on that particular matter.

At almost every school in Barbados, the physical plant is being run down. For the first time in the history of Barbados, we are committed to a concept now of borrowing money to build schools. All the schools in Barbados used to be built out of the Consolidated Fund, but all of a sudden now, we are borrowing money in order to build schools. Their total concept of the development process is to borrow money at the highest interest rates, it would seem to me, in order to put it into bricks and mortar. That is the development plan of the Barbados Labour Party. It has nothing to do with human resource development.

I heard the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) saying that not enough engineers are entering the system. You would not think that he was an architect, a member of a Government that actually set up a programme that cut back on training in every single aspect of the Public Service.

He now complains that, as a consequence of his short-sightedness, he cannot get professional people. When he has professional people, he would not pay them enough money – he subjects them to the greatest

oppression. Then, the Barbados Labour Party comes out cursing all the professionals in the country because they would not indulge in unprofessional conduct at their behest. That is the problem.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Because they charge too much money and rob the public.)

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: And do bad work too.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: As Executor, I just settled a bill that you charged for $25 000 years ago for one transaction.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That was good work son.)

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Do not mind him. Nobody would trust him with anybody's money.)

Laughter.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall continue. There is no question that all the public institutions in this country are under serious stress. I would urge the Minister to seriously examine the direction in which that Ministry is heading. I am telling you that there is serious discontent among headmasters and schoolteachers in Barbados, and that this is now permeating as far down as the pupils in the schools. The parents are also seriously concerned about the total confusion that exists in the area of education.

I honestly believe that it is a summation of years of deprivation in terms of allocation of resources to the Education Ministers in this country. But the Member for St. Thomas does not care. Why would he worry about education, why worry about health, why worry about the human resource problems? All he is concerned about now – poor fellow, he finds it very difficult to sleep at night, particularly coming to the end of a stand-by arrangement – is to be able to show a surplus on Current Account and to find some access to borrow some money, while hoping, probably, to get out of the Government as soon as possible and pass on the problems to another Administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have already expressed my concern about the allocations to transport and roads. I also talked about the question of salaries. Two years ago, almost to the day it was on April 2, 1982 – I urged upon the present Minister of Finance the need to increase the purchasing power of this community by about 20 per cent in order to maintain the viability of the private sector. He considered it an outrageous suggestion. On the floor of this House today, he has virtually admitted that the only solution to the serious depression facing this country is to borrow money and to find some means of increasing the purchasing power of the community for a temporary period. This is another major area where I have been proved to be correct, as I have been proved to be correct in every single pronouncement on this economy since 1981.

I was deemed in September, 1981 to be an economic Chaldean. It was not a matter of being an economic Chaldean, it was a matter of having some kind of commonsense and foresight. And it is not very often that I find myself in a position – I will tell the honest truth – to say something complimentary about the honourable Minister of Finance, but when he implicity said today that he would not be repeating in Barbados what happened in 1981, at least that was a statement which recognized the importance of what others and I have been saying all along.

I hope that you mean it, because I realize what you have been doing. It is just that I do not want to get into budgetary matters in any detail. He cannot have access to the Central Bank in the way that he used to have before going into the IMF. So this big song and dance that he was making about the use of NHS funds is really the alternative pathway. He is borrowing within the system, and knows that perfectly well. But what he has done is that he has totally destroyed the liquidity within the banking system.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You are repeating yourself now.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have not dealt with the area of NHS borrowing yet in my speech.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You said that he would have to borrow $1 billion.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I said that you will have borrowed $1 billion by the end of 1985. My words are very clear.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You are always predicting.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is not predicting. You are going to assume that if they put in $181 million deficit, that they are probably only going to spend about $150 million, and you add that on to all the other deficits and come up with a figure. It is simple and straightforward arithmetic. It is not economics, it is a matter of commonsense. The only way you could be wrong is if the Auditor-General is wrong, if the Accountant-General is wrong, and if all the Estimates in the preceding years were bogus – and that could never be the case in a place like Barbados. So you have to be right when you add them up.

Last year the deficit ran at $95 million. This year it is $181 million they are predicting, but I would say that it would probably be about $150 million. But it is absolutely essential that we establish a pattern of economic activity in Barbados which brings an end to this stop – go cycle, which has characterized the development programme of this particular Government.
6.25 p.m.

If you look very carefully at the deficits over the past seven years, and if you look at the Capital Expenditure pattern over the past seven years, you will see that, all of a sudden, they go into heavy expenditure, then they hold back, then they go forward, and then they hold back. As a matter of fact, the honourable Member for St. Thomas, recognising the need to get out of the bind in which he finds himself somehow, actually confessed on the floor of this House today that he has to have a controlled programme of Capital Expenditure. In other words, he would like to turn on the tax, but we know the IMF will be holding him back. Make no mistake about that.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation. Is the honourable Member, who is so well informed on all of these things, who has so many documents, not aware of the fact that IMF programme is at an end?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am fully aware of the running in year and the years after. You do not fool me with that. You fool other people with that. I know exactly what you have to do. You do not worry! When, in 1981, you put this country into a run-in programme with the mini-budget, you never told anybody that you were putting the country in that IMF programme – but you did.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have the alarming situation – and this one is a shocker, this one is an absolute shocker – that, by the end of this year, the Government would have collected $3.4 billion since it came into power, would have spent $4.3 billion and would have borrowed another $1 billion. What on earth have they done with the massive transfers from the private individuals of this country to the public sector? What have they done with the money that was borrowed?

That is the most severe condemnation of the present Administration. It is an indication of gross mismanagement, an indication of lack of concern for the public purse, and shows a total lack of control in the areas of public expenditure.

Yet, after all of that, you end up with a level of unemployment that is higher than in 1976. That is the record of your Government. Are you not ashamed? You have committed my children, my grandchildren and your grandchildren to servicing debts for the next thirty or forty years. You have thrown many parents out of a job, and you sit down and laugh at that? You ought to be ashamed! Something is desperately wrong, something just has to be wrong.

There is no way in this kind of economy that you should be spending $4.3 billion in a few years and end up in this kind of situation. But, of course, if you go and spend the kind of money that you are spending on the Central Bank building and then come and tell the people of this country that it has nothing to do with taxation, that the taxpayers are not going to have to pay for it, when you know perfectly well that what is going to happen is that as that loan is amortized over the years, the pre-appropriation profits of the Central Bank, which would normally be paid from the Consolidated Fund, would have to go to pay for the building and, therefore, additional taxation will have to be raised from another source, you will have that sort of situation.

If you double the cost of Heywoods, and you come to the people of Barbados and tell them that you can build a $70 million hotel project and that can be a viable proposition under any circumstances, unless you are selling dope and you set up casino gambling at the institution, then something has got to be wrong.

How, under any circumstances, are you going to build a hotel plant for $70 million? Let us assume that the average interest rate is 10 per cent. That is $7 million in interest. Do you know what kind of gross you would have to take even to service that loan? Probably $70 million a year just to service the loan, and that has nothing to do with the capital repayments. Do you think that Heywoods could ever generate sales of $70 million a year? Impossible!

You have the cement plant down there. I only hope that, eventually, we can get cement here at a reasonable price.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation, since I mentioned this matter: I was not aware of what the honourable Member was talking about – he has made the same speech now for five years on every topic – but did I hear him say something about a loan of $100 million to make cement?

There was not an aside.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We cannot hear asides. The honourable Member never made a statement about a figure.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: He said that it would take $70 million, not even dealing with capital repayments.

Asides

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I heard him say that if you borrow $100 million at 7 per cent, it would take $70 million to service the loan.

Do you not think that, as an act of kindness, you should ask the honourable Member to sit down.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member is clearly confusing himself. I dealt very clearly with the cost of the Heywoods project, and I pointed out that I cannot conceive of any circumstances where, following the business trends of Barbados, that hotel could ever generate sales that would pay for the hotel in the foreseeable future, in the next fifty or one hundred years.

There are just one or two other points to which I wish to refer arising out of the speech made by the honourable Minister of Finance. He adverted once or twice to the state of the construction industry. Surely he must recognise that the state of the construction industry is largely a consequence of the monetary and fiscal policies which he has imposed on the Government. If you do not have mortgage money, and if you do not have bridging finance, how on earth are you going to have a healthy construction industry? Most of the construction that would have taken place in Barbados would largely relate to major Government projects, or projects financed by Government guarantees, and a lot of the capital formation which will go into the estimation of the G.D.P. in Barbados will relate to that kind of project. So we will not be confused by any distortions in that particular area.

I think that the time has come for the Government to reflect on what it has done to this nation over the past seven and a half years that it has been in power; to recognise that there must be something fundamentally wrong with their development strategy if they could end up, seven years later, in the present situation in which they find themselves, after collecting so much revenue, spending so much money, and committing this country to so much debt. I would also urge the honourable Minister of Finance to take the appropriate steps to ensure that there is a re-direction of the resources of the country, because, in the final analysis, it is human resource related development in this country that is going to make the difference as to how we approach the next decade in Barbados.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

6.35 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): As usual, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member has exhibited his propensity to exaggerate, to concoct, to distort. If this were not Parliament, I would give the correct description to the honourable Member's speech.

I will take one point which I feel should be dealt with at the very outset. The words we have heard spoken fell from the lips of a person who was a member of a party which, in 1975, had unemployment in Barbados at 22 per cent. We are talking about a political party which, during its 15 years of power, was not able to make any impression at all upon the landscape of Barbados. We are contrasting that with a political party which, in a short period of eight years, has transformed the landscape of Barbados.

Take a drive around Barbados and you will see the sights to behold. Very soon, you will see the realisation of a project that was the dream of all Barbadians from the time there was a Barbados, and it took the Barbados Labour Party's courage to bring that dream to reality – you will see cement flowing from the Arawak Cement Plant. You do not realise these objectives, you do not bring into fruition these plans, if you are a coward, like the honourable Member who just sat down. The philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party is to talk about grand ideas. The philosophy of the Barbados Labour Party is to talk about, and to implement, grand ideas.

I am not ashamed of the fact that the Public Debt of Barbados has increased in the last eight years, because there can be no progress without investment. That Public Debt went into physical investment in Barbados. When I hear the honourable Member talk about a billion dollars in debt, let him not forget that you are talking about a billion dollar economy under the Barbados Labour Party. You are not talking about any nincompoop, shop-keeping economy like that under the Democratic Labour Party.

The Gross National Product of Barbados is over $2 billion. The debt service ratio of Barbados is less than 4 per cent on the export of goods and services. Check it out. You are trying to fool and to scare people. There is nothing that has increased in Barbados in the last eight years as much as medical fees.

The Member speaks for a political party, which, when they left power, was paying a maid in the Public Service less than $50 a week – and she was paying Income Tax. Contrast that with the minimum wage now of over $140 a week. That is where you want to keep the people, at $50. You do not want to put any money in their pockets, you do not want to spend any money in the Government programmes so they can be employed. You want all for the doctors, the rapists of the Public Treasury in Barbados. You want all for that narrow band of professional people.

The Barbados Labour Party knows that in our quest for equalisation and for distribution of income we shall incur the wrath of certain professional groups, whether it be doctors, lawyers, engineers or surveyors. The point is very clear. In Barbados, as a small country, the Labour Party will see that everybody has to pay his share of taxes, because we have built up a network of social security that is the envy of many countries. He is talking about a political party that never had the courage to introduce an unemployment scheme. When the 22 per cent were unemployed under the Democratic Labour Party, not one penny in unemployment benefits was there for them.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The noise is so loud I might have raised it on a point of privilege, but I am on a point of order. The honourable Member has now for the second time repeated a statement that the unemployment was 22 per cent.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As Your Honour wishes. I have not made the point.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Hon. H. B. St.JOHN: I am going to repeat, too, that the honourable Member is talking about a political party that had a cost of living increase of 42 per cent in 1975. I am also going to repeat that he is talking about a political party which caused 400-odd shops to go out of business under the administration of his colleague. The facts will be given to you, if you wish to distort for narrow political gains. You are talking about a political party that never had a non-traditional export of $150 million. The non-traditional exports are $540 million.

What you are talking about is an economy which has been structurally transformed to bring it from being in the back woods into that last part of this century. It has a base now that the capital investment has been put in, and every year from now on, God willing, and the international economy continuing to improve, we shall go from strength to strength. The exports will not be increasing by 50 per cent next year, they will be increasing by more, because cement will also be part of the exports. That capital investment has already been incurred.

You do not understand the meaning of investment. You think investment consists only of that little expenditure that takes place around Belleville, where you invest money next to the hospital. You think we are talking about that kind of investment. But no, we are talking about grander schemes.

Another myth is this question of lay-offs. When "Sleepy" Smith was Minister of Communications and Works, he laid off more people than during all the time of the Barbados Labour Party. As Minister of Communications and Works, "Sleepy" Smith laid of 479 people.

Disruption.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Please! Order! Order! Order!

Hon. H. B. St.JOHN: You can talk what you like, he was not building a road. The trouble and the Democratic Labour Party and Barbadians will have to face it at this particular period of time in our economic history, is that we cannot have our cake and eat it. We cannot have people being employed in the same numbers as before and, at the same time, have capital equipment being used on the projects. All over the world, if you are a Third World country you make the choice. Either you decide that you are not going to allow capital intensive equipment on construction sites, in agriculture and in other areas, or you tell yourself that it is better that you provide a social system to absorb any dislocation of labour, and you have the capital expenditure.

I remember the days when it was said that you would never see molasses shipped other than on lighters. People forget this!

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: It was Sir Grantley Adams who said that.)
6.45 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: He was wise enough to appreciate that changes have to come in a society. You know that, too. Barbados has to undergo changes if we are to compete with the rest of the world. We have to have mechanisation in the sugar industry, otherwise we cannot compete with the beet sugar industry, in which micro-processors are now being used in ploughing, planting and monitoring crops.

Throughout the economy in Barbados, structural changes are taking place, but when it took place in your time, when "Sleepy" Smith laid off 473 workers, there was no unemployment pay for people to get. At that time, Branford Taitt's cost of living was 42 per cent. They could not get any flying fish at eight for the dollar, or any yams, or any breadfruit, or any of the other food that we have had. The cost of living this year is less than 6 per cent, so do not let us talk all of this foolishness in here.

When we come to housing, the honourable Member ignores completely the whole thrust of the Government's

housing programme. The thrust is very simple – it has been repeatedly stated, and you will get more of it – and it is that in this day and age, you must have value for money.

We are convinced that we will get better housing with the taxpayers money if we contract the construction of houses. Now, tell me who the contractors will employ? Not the honourable Member, because he is unemployable in that area! It is his duty to distort, not to point out the truth. It is our duty to point out the truth, and there is more money in these Estimates for housing this year than there has been for a long period of time.

He is talking about capital borrowing. What about the money we borrowed from the United States Housing Credit Fund? What about the great revolution which is taking place in financial institutions in Barbados? The great revolution, and I know you are missing the point, is that the credit union movement in Barbados has made fantastic strides in the last three years. What we are witnessing is the birth of a set of institutions which, thank God, are all indigenous, and which are all being run by Barbadians. Let us hope that they continue to progress.

What we are witnessing is the birth of these institutions which are springing up their own management. They are not dependent on any directions from any headquarters. They are being run as a result of a specific enlightened programme by the Government. This Government was the one which gave the impetus to the credit union movement by, first of all, allowing credit union members to deduct their contributions – a vital stimulus, and, secondly, by making them eligible under the Housing Credit Fund. I am very pleased to see that it is now being increasingly recognised that the Labour Party has added another new institution to this area of housing, and that it is working.

As we progress in these Estimates, when we are finished with the honourable Member, everybody will come to the conclusion that he is bordering on – I would not say on what, because that would be unparliamentary, but I am sure that from his behaviour in here today, from his capacity to distort everything, everybody knows what he is bordering on.

Money has been appropriated for the promotion of various productive sectors in Barbados. We talk about tourism and we talk about sugar. Both of them are suffering from one thing, the high value of the Barbados dollar, and the honourable Member's party, through its advisor, Mr. Peter Morgan, has consistently advocated the devaluation of the Barbados dollar.

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

(Certain remarks made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central at this point were ordered expunged from the Record by the Deputy Speaker.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the honourable Member wishes to make a reply to any statement that is made by one side, there are procedures set out in the Standing Orders. That is not a point of order. A point of order deals with a breach of some rule of the House. The honourable Member has had his say for nearly two hours.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, surely a lie is a breach of the Standing Orders of the House.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: They have consistently advocated the devaluation of the Barbados dollar. As a solution to the problems of the tourist industry, they have consistently burnt down hotels in Barbados. That is the methodology of the Democratic Labour Party, and they not only carried that methodology to the tourist plant, but they also carried it to the manufacturing and distributing plant. Ask your friend, your former partner. Look at how many members of the Democratic Labour Party, by the visitation of God, have been relieved of their financial stringencies. Do you want to be nasty in here?

The position is very clear. A problem will arise periodically because of your exchange rate position, and you have to make a choice. You have to look at the position and say that the sugar and tourist industry may be affected by the high value of your dollar, but the cost of living and other areas of earning money have not been affected – and you ride out the storm, or you help those industries which have suffered. That is what we did. That is the origin of the price support scheme and of the increase in the period of repayment to the Barbados Development Bank from the hotel industry. Those are our methods of dealing with it. You can talk as much as you like, the Barbados Labour Party understands and appreciates the problem of competitiveness arising from a temporary exchange rate problem.

We now also have to deal with other areas, because it is very important that we corrrect these matters at an early stage. I look forward to the day when a debate can take place on the economy of Barbados, in which we look at the economy of Barbados in the context of its relationship with the international economy. In Holland tonight, the unemployment rate is over 20 per cent.
6.55 p.m.

Anybody who has been looking at the economies of other countries over the last year or two will understand that some new economic phenomena have arisen. One reason is that there is a real relationship between inflation and employment. Secondly, it is possible for your Gross

National Product to increase greatly, for your exports to increase, and at the same time your employment does not rise. If you are changing the structure of the economy, that can happen. Electronics in Barbados is now a very important component of our economy, but it is a capital intensive industry.

He talked about oil. I would never have thought that the honourable Member over there would have talked about oil in Barbados. They fought us tooth and nail when we had the courage to bring oil production in Barbados under national ownership. We have been trying for years to encourage the multi-national corporations to regard Barbados as a special area and to put investment in shallow drilling so that we can increase our national production. What has happened now? Part of the borrowing he talked about has gone to purchase the assets now owned by the National Petroleum Corporation. Part of the borrowing has gone to ensure that more wells have been drilled. We now have three times as much reserves as we had before. The production has gone from about 800, 900 or 1100 barrels a day to an average now of 1500 barrels a day. That is a Government of courage.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It is very amusing. He said it was always there. Why did you not get 1500 barrels a day when you were there? You know St. Lucy was always there, and had limestone there, too. Why did you not produce cement? You know down by the Spring Garden road? That land was always there. Why did you not build the Spring Garden Road? Do you know up by the airport? Land was always there. Why did you not build the airport building? Do you know where the polytechnic is? Why did you not build that? Do you know where all the schools are – Grace Hill, Montgomery, Eden Lodge? Why did you not build all of them? All that is the construction we undertook.

This is a Government of courage, a Government which has decided in its mind that it is willing to place money where its faith is. We know that you have to have investment in a developing country if your people are to be uplifted. That investment can either come from the private sector or the public sector, or both. In these economies, the public sector must lead, the private sector is not a leader. As you will learn, the present position of the unemployment is merely temporary, because we have come to the end of one cycle of great investment. As night follows day, there will be another cycle of investment. That cycle of investment will take place when we can persuade international institutions to lend us money on terms and conditions, as to interest and terms of repayment, which, in our opinion, will not place the economy of Barbados in danger. That will also come when we have a surplus on Current Account to help finance that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why the Barbados Labour Party Government can be proud of the fact that over the last eight years the standard of living of Barbados has increased beyond the dreams of many people in Barbados. That is why the old age pension has gone from $11 to nearly $40. That is why the lowest paid person in the Public Service has gone from less than $50 to over $140. That is why we have the social contentment that we have in Barbados and we are regarded as a model for other developing countries to follow.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for forty-five minutes for dinner.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I beg to second that.

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

7.05 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. When the suspension was taken, the honourable Member for St. Michael West was about to speak. I do not now see him in his place.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: It does not appear that any other honourable Member wishes to make a contribution.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there any other honourable Member who wishes to make a contribution to the debate? If not, the Right Honourable Prime Minister will make his reply on the Second Reading.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is really nothing to reply to. The Leader of the Opposition (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) has done us a great disservice today by not making the Second Reading speech on behalf of that side. I had looked forward to hearing him. He is always sensible at Estimates time. His great experience is harnessed to his intellectual powers at Estimates, and I have, for many years, told all who would listen that he is at his best at Estimates.

I told people to pay attention to what he had to say today, that it would be important and helpful. Instead, from the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) we had a farrago of untruths. We had the same recipe we have always had. It had in everything: the IMF, the printing of money, the suffering, the inflation. Never mind that it did not apply to Barbados, it was still repeated at an hour and a half's length.

I was reminded of nothing so much as of his attempt on a Voice of Barbados programme to repeat the same nonsense. The interviewer, Mr. David Ellis, had to interrupt him, and he told the Member "I do not recognize the country you are talking about to be Barbados, I thought you were referring to Haiti or some such", or some expression like that. He is simply not talking about Barbados at all.

He cannot be talking about Barbados in the face of statistics that show the level of declared personal earnings, what people declare that they have earned to the Inland Revenue, and in the face of the construction that has gone on in this country. Everywhere you go in this country, even in this time of recession, you see houses being built or people improving their houses. You see 40 000 Barbadians going abroad every year, some to other Caribbean islands, most to the United States. Every weekend the Commissioner for Inland Revenue is taking in $15 000 from the Coney Island and $600 000 a week is sold in "LET'S GO TO THE RACES" tickets. All of this is happening in this country of poor suffering people, whose standard of living has shown a decline during the time the Barbados Labour Party has been in power.

In this country of poor suffering people, in seven years the number of motor cars has gone from less than 20 000 to over 40 000, and there are 72 000 poor people paying telephone rates in this country. In this country our problems of imports relate to cosmetics, toys and, indeed, expensive garments. There are boutiques where the clientelle is Barbadian and the dresses are $150, $200, $250. Poor suffering people are going into those boutiques and paying $150, $200, $250 for dresses.

What can you say about a sickening speech such as the one we had to listen to? There are obviously pockets of poverty in Barbados, as there are all over the world. The Welfare Department used to have 11 000 people on its books when we came into power. I do not believe that they would have more than 5 000 or 6 000 adults now. There are still people that live in broken-down houses. Some of them are social cases – what they need is social education to make the best of the opportunities that are available. Some are cases of poverty – they cannot equate expenses to income.

The old people of this country enjoy a minimum pension of $32 a week, plus, in cases of real hardship, food stamps and payment for utilities. I wonder if the honourable Member realizes that the question of payment of utilities for old people is entirely a problem of the Barbados Labour Party, because the very poorest old people did not have electricity in their houses when we came to power. The question of paying an old age pensioner's electricity bill has never occupied the minds of anybody on that side. Old age pensioners only had kerosine lamps in their time.

But he comes into the House, in front of the Press, public gallery and other Members, and tries to paint a picture of Barbados that bears no relationship to anything except the sickened fevered imagination of a megalomaniac. The person who needs medical care is the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He is the stuff of which the politicians who destroy their countries are made. Scratch Idi Amin and Eric Gairy – and find Richie Haynes. He is the type who gets in charge of Third World, Second World and First World countries and destroys those countries. He is a sick fool.

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Jackass!)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, the language is getting out of hand. I do not want any of this language, neither do I want any retort of that nature, please.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: In a country as socially united as our diversity can permit, we are a very united country in many ways; we feel the same way about most things. The two political parties have no basic ideological differences. They both approach the problems of Barbados, especially the social problems, from the same standpoint. We have the same aims. Our country has not reached the stage yet where ideology need divide us. There are no currents of economic division, no elements of Marxist class war in our country that need to be represented by different interests in political life.

Some people try to get to power by offering and by doing good for others. There are such people in both parties. Those people aim to take the tide of history at an appropriate point and aim to lift Barbados and lift themselves on the shoulders, not on the backs, of Barbadians, into a position where they can give political guidance. I believe there are a lot of people in this country who are motivated to enter politics by service and not by ambition, by a sense that they have something to offer and not by a sense that they wish to dominate. And unfortunately, in Barbados, as in all countries from time to time, there are some people who seek to enter public life on the basis of exciting all that is worst in human nature. These are the people that pay Eric Sealy to abuse decent citizens. These are the people that seek to excite those residual hatreds that do exist under the bosoms of most of us. There is no better distinction of an approach to politics of which Barbadians can be proud, and an approach to politics of which Barbadians should be ashamed, than the speeches made by the Leader of the Opposition on the occasions of past Estimates and the speech made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central tonight. I am ashamed!

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

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

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

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.

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Head 28 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – was called.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $1 693 641 under Head 28 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Chairman, under this Head I take this opportunity to mention a number of problems in this department. The problems, which are mentioned annually in relation to the Registration Office, has got to be mentioned from time to time. The Registration Office is in a very overcrowded state. As a result of the adverse working conditions which exist there, work is very slow as a result, as is getting documentation out of the Registry.

I always hear the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) talking about microfilming and microfiching documents. It is about time that serious steps be taken towards ensuring that modern technology is brought into the process of recording documents in the Registry, having them available for copying and things of that sort.

I know that the problems of dealing with the rebuilding of courts and the whole context involving the Registration Office are matters the Government is still considering. But it still is necessary, despite the long term plans, to deal in the short term with the problems of accommodation. If the buildings in that complex are modified and rehabilitated so that they can be made comfortable for the people who work there, they can be used effectively later on for some other governmental purpose whenever the new complex is built. We wish to avoid having to talk perennially on the problems of the Registration Office, and eventually come to grips with the real problems of the Registry.

In relation to the Supreme Court, a short while ago there was a debate in this Honourable Chamber about the re-building of the courts. I will not dwell on that. The Right Honourable Member for St. Thomas (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams) and the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) expressed their views as to the need and the urgency of having the new Supreme Court built.

The same comments which I made about the Registration Office can be made about the Supreme Court building as well. Whilst we are delaying the whole problem of rejuvenating the courts and constructing a new building, the existing court buildings are in a very sorry state. I have even heard some people refer to the courts as the slum areas of the Service.

Obviously, the Supreme Court, courts in general, are not areas which have a great political content in them, and I know that Ministers of Finance are inclined not to pay much serious attention to the courts. But when one considers that a lot of ordinary people are in the courts day after day, in my view we should not regard the courts and the rebuilding of the courts, and any expenditure on an institution like the Supreme Court as a pure economic matter, and to compare that, for instance, with the building of a Central Bank, and say that the Central Bank is going to produce income but a court building will be used to house the courts and will not be producing income.

Certainly, the court buildings have become very run down in recent times. There was a fire in the court, which destroyed parts of the buildings in the Supreme Court complex. The buildings which housed the Civil Office for the Magistrate's Courts and part of the Marshals' Department no longer are there, and not available for use by those departments. The law library is also in a terrible state as a result of that fire.

I believe that even although a new building is planned for the future, immediate steps can be taken, as a matter of urgency, to deal with the problem of accommodation which exists now, and the structures which now exist in the Supreme Court complex should be rehabilitated. When the new Supreme Court Structure is established, I believe that the existing buildings will still be there and will be available for alternative useful purposes by the Government.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You are taking this into Head 75, Capital. Anyhow, go ahead.

Mr. M. A. KING: Head 28 still deals with the administration of justice.

Bearing in mind that in this day and age when we are talking about the preservation of old buildings, I

believe the existing building which houses the Supreme Court is a building of some historical value, and it is worth money spending on it to rehabilitate it and at least make it convenient and comfortable for those who have to work and function there.

8.10 p.m

Another point I would like to make in relation to the whole environment of the Supreme Court is that in the court complex itself it seems that the place is becoming more or less like an old car museum, because a lot of old vehicles have been seized by the Marshals' Department and are deposited in the Supreme Court yard. There can be no sales for them, because hardly anybody is interested in buying the old cars, and they sit there for years on end taking up a lot of valuable parking space, because parking space is at a premium these days. Meanwhile, people who have to work and function in the courts have little or no available space for parking.

I think that some serious consideration ought to be given to providing some kind of space outside of the court complex where people have to work, and to the disposal of those cars which have been seized by the Marshals' Department, and which seem to be no longer of any value, certainly cars which nobody seems to be interested in purchasing. I think that some consideration could be given to at least ameliorating some of the more unsavoury conditions under which people have to work in the court area, in the Supreme Court as well as in the Magistrates' Courts, and in the Registration Department.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Chairman, I would like to lend my voice in support of the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King) in regard to the conditions under which both those persons who work in the Registry and those who administer justice in this country function.

The only court, Supreme or otherwise, that I consider meets the standards of a court at all in Barbados is the court at Oistins. It is the only court of which I think the country can be proud.

As regards the Supreme Court, I quite honestly think it is a disgrace. There are probably very good reasons why the Government has shelved plans for the construction of the Hall of Justice. Be that as it may, I think the Government should spend some time and money on the rehabilitation of the Supreme Courts of this country. It is shameful for visitors who want to see the Supreme Court to be shown what we have as a Supreme Court.

I do not want to go into details about what I consider the defects in these courts, I think we have gone through this time and time again. I think we should spend a little more money in removing the shame from us as a nation by doing something positive about making the courts a place where justice can truly be dispensed. How justice is dispensed in this place is really beyond comprehension.

We recently had a fire at the Court Process Office, and I know that it will take some time before that department can function, in close proximity to the Registration Office. These are things which I think the Government should bear in mind and really do somethink to remedy the very depressing conditions that exist in the courts at this moment. As a matter of fact, I am not even so sure what the facilities are for the public.

Hundreds of people can be seen outside those courts on any given day. I am not so sure what facilities exist for those persons who would want to use them from time to time. We boast about ourselves and the progress we have made, but in this regard we have made absolutely no progress from the time we became an independent nation – even before that.

I would like to advert to Subhead 3 – Legal Affairs. The explanatory notes state that among the functions embraced by the Legal Division is the settlement of claims for negligent damage on the part of Government departments and employees. I have to raise here once more a matter which I raised before, the response to which has been positively negative as they say.

About two months ago, we voted some funds in this Chamber to make monies available for the settlement of a personal injury claim on bahalf of a young child who suffered the loss of the sight in one eye in a school in St. James. I took the opportunity then to raise the plight of another young student, of about the same age, who also suffered a similar fate, loss of the sight of any eye, through the negligence of a child in the classroom of one of the Government schools.

At the time when the honourable Minister was introducing the Resolution, he spoke about the love and humanity, and so on, of the Minister of Education at that particular time, and I asked that this humanity and love be extended to the child who had suffered a similar fate. To my horror, the same Government which showed such humanity to one child, in the case of a stone-throwing incident in a school yard, did the exact opposite to a child who suffered the loss of the sight of any eye in the classroom.

How the Government can discriminate between these two citizens is indeed beyond comprehension. (Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: The two cases are not on all fours).

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: The cases are on all fours. The fact is that at the time when the Resolution was brought here, there was no way that the claimant – and I call the person a claimant – could succeed in any action against the Government for any negligence. The same could also be true of the other child.

We heard the Prime Minister speak here of establishing an insurance scheme to cover cases of injury in respect of children who are injured. As a matter of fact he even extended it from home back to home – from home to school and from school back to home – and if I have to make this speech again, I will make it again.
8.20 p.m.

The Prime Minister has said that he wants school children covered, and yet when the opportunity arose for the Government to do something about a child who was injured in the classroom – he was not even on his way to school or from school – Government turned its back and said: 'We have nothing to do with you.' This is precisely what took place. How can they discriminate in this way? The Government has shown an indifference, a callousness towards the youngster who suffered injury in the classroom.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I must have order.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: It hurts them now to hear that they are callous. Let it hurt them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us have order, please. The honourable Member may continue, but do not keep repeating all the time.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: But it does not hurt them as much as it hurts the child who has lost the sight of his eye. I am amazed that the same Government which showed such sweet love, humanity, and so on for one child, can, at the same time, refuse to consider the plight of this other child, who suffered grievous injury.

The Government can, if they want to .....

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (City of Bridgetown): On a point of order. The honourable Member is the attorney-at-law for the family involved, and he is seeking to plead a case in this court that is more properly to be pleaded in another court. If, in his wisdom, he had not found it possible to advise his client that he should be pleading in another court, I do not know that this is the place for him now to come out with this sordid story.

It is not true that the two cases were not considered. They were considered at length. The honourable Member does not speak the truth when he says that the Government is callous about the injury done to the child who lost the sight of that eye, and he well knows this.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I am not privy to what goes on in Cabinet. I do not know, and I do not even want to know.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I just want to make a point. The Chair will not tolerate any undue interference when honourable Members are speaking. In the same way, if necessary, I will apply the rules where honourable Members seek in their debates to make constant repetition of statements relating to situations which have already been adverted to.

Please continue.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I raised the matter in here some three or four weeks ago, because at that time we were casting a vote for compensating an injured child. It has nothing to do with any legal representation. At that time the other child had, or could have had legal representation as well, so that is not the point. The point is that we were here – and I was part of it – casting a vote in order to give compensation to a child who had suffered some injury, we still have votes in the Estimates to pay for it, and I am amazed that even the newspapers of this country cannot even take up a case like this which shows how the Government can discriminate, for whatever reason between its own citizens.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Honourable Members must pay attention to the honourable Member's special pleading about the compensation for the child, but I would advise the honourable Member to look at the cases. A distinction can be made between no supervision as a result of which something happens, even though it might very well have happened had there been supervision, and the case where there is some supervision, but yet something occurs.

He is talking of a case which involved the throwing of a missile. You can have ten school teachers standing up and looking carefully at a school room, and one child can still throw a pencil and knock out another's eye. In such a case, I have never heard, not in any jurisdiction, that the owner of the school, the Government, is liable. There are cases which deal with these very points.

The honourable Member keeps returning to the pencil. He is much keener in looking after his client's interest than those who appeared for the child at St. John The Baptist; he pays careful attention, but the Government cannot be an insurer against all accidents that take place of their own accord. Government can be an insurer, but it cannot be an insurer without the risk being assessed by professional assessors of risks. I would really not like it to get about that, having helped one child who lost an

eye, the Government is somehow remiss in not helping another.

I do not know if there is any honourable Member of the House who is familiar with workmen's compensation practice – it was just dying out as most of us were coming to the Bar – but those of us who were familiar would recall that the one thing that an employer never had to insure workmen against was an assault by one workman against another, because that is not something within the ordinary contemplation of the workplace. The only people who have ever been held covered by workmen's compensation in the old days were pension wardens and persons in similar circumstances, prison wardens and wardens in reformed schools who were dealing with people, many of whom were psychopathic and liable to sudden attacks on others.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I hear the chief psychopath shouting from the bench. The honourable Member who has just sat down can do a little observation. Do not take advice – physicians cannot deal with their own cases. Observe carefully, look to the right and keep your ears open, listen and watch and you will discover many rich fields for psychopathic analysis.
8.30 p.m.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Only women look at my eyes. Why is the honourable member interesting himself in my eyes and nose? Women are to be interested in my eyes and nose, not the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes). Have a good look if you want to see. Excite yourself, son!

The Government is still pursuing the matter of the insurance, but I do want it to be understood that there are limits to what can be covered, and nobody, normally, insures against a result of criminal activity. That is why in Great Britain and other advanced countries there are special provisions now for persons who are the victims of criminal assaults and other criminal actions. They can specifically bring cases to get money out of a fund, which was established to help the victims of criminal accident. A woman who is raped in England can apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. I do not know what the rate is, there are not large amounts, but you can apply and you do get compensation from a Government fund for that purpose. In Barbados, I do not think we are well enough off to do that now. It may be that even in addition to any insurance against accidents the Government takes out to cover the school population, we will also have to look at the possibility of helping persons who are not the victims of accidents, but who are victims of a deliberate assault. But the law has always made a distinction between a deliberate assault and accident.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I am not going to add too much to that part of the debate. In response to what the honourable Member who has just sat down said, I think my colleague recognised that it is possible that the Government was not liable, so the point that the Prime Minister is making is not necessarily at odds with the point he is making. It is precisely because the Government might not have been liable at law that he was suggesting a humane approach to the issue, bearing in mind the particular injury which the particular child got, and the whole reasoning behind the establishment of the fund in England.

The fund of which the Prime Minister speaks, concerning compensation for being the victim of crime, is precisely to offer on behalf of the State some token compensation to the victims of certain crimes, and I think what the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) was suggesting, not in his capacity as a lawyer but in his capacity as a representative, is that where a child loses an eye, and especially where you are going to be compensating another child that has also lost an eye, consideration could have been given to perhaps an *ex gratia* payment. That would not require you to take liability, but would have demonstrated that you were concerned about the fact that this child lost its eye in a school, without dealing with a strict legal liability in terms of law. I think this is the point the honourable Member was making, that Government in its wisdom, and here it would have been exercising a lot of wisdom, could have offered the child some *ex gratia* payment as compensation.

I wish to raise two matters for the consideration of the Attorney-General under this Head. One concerns continuing to have the Vagrancy Act on the Statute Books in Barbados. I have come to the conclusion that in 1897, when the Vagrancy Act was passed, the social conditions in the country were entirely different from what exist now. Even into the 1930s and 1940s, persons from a certain socio-economic level in the community could have been considered as needing something such as a Vagrancy Act to deal with them; but in more recent times, Mr. Chairman, you would have noticed that there have been some very bad cases in the courts in which persons were charged under the Vagrancy Act. Fortunately, they were acquitted. One in particular, according to the report in the newspaper, was particularly bad.

I do not think that the Government ought to allow the temptation to charge a person under the Vagrancy Act to continue to exist in Barbados, in the last quarter of the 20th century. I should like the Attorney-General to indicate whether there is any intention on his part to repeal, or amend, or bring a new form of the Vagrancy Act. I am

suggesting that the Act should be repealed, because it serves no useful purpose in Barbados in the present day.

I also wish to take this opportunity to raise with him whether, in the context of Barbados signing and ratifying the American Convention on Human Rights, we ought not to have a Parole Act in Barbados, and whether he is not giving consideration to introducing at an early date a Parole Act similar, for example, to the one in existence in Jamaica.

I know that there has been a lot of talk recently about extension of the prisons and separating the prisoners at Glendairy – first offenders from the rest. Until that happens, you still have the phenomenon of the odd first offender having to go to Glendairy. But that is not the gravamen of my intervention at this time, I am suggesting that some provision ought to be available in our law for a person who is serving a custodial sentence to reap some tangible benefit by way of a reduction in sentence – by way of a parole. I believe that this recommendation has been made to the Government.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman: I intend fully to answer to the points raised by honourable Members, but they are making it a little bit difficult for me, because they started with Head 28 and they roamed through Police and Prisons – everything.

I will deal with the new Parole Act, I will tell you about separating first offenders from others, but I will deal with it as we are discussing the Prisons. Equally, I am quite prepared to deal with the points raised in relation to the police, but we cannot be dealing with Head 28, which is Legal Services, and cover all these areas.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that the Attorney-General is fully seized of what he has just said. Head 28 is precisely the area where we should be discussing new legislation. I am not discussing any police. If he does not wish to answer the question at this point, he can say so, but I do not think he should get up and give the impression that I am roaming all over the place when this is the specific Head – and he can look – which says that it "provides legal advice to the Government, drafting of new laws and updating of old editions." Where do you want me to ask you a question as to whether you are going to bring new Acts? I am not discussing the policy of a Parole Act. I am asking you if you do not consider that the time is ripe for you to have a Parole Act. Do not interfere with me tonight; I am trying very hard to keep the debate at a reasonable level. I did not hear anybody talk about the police. If you were listening, you would not have that problem.

8.40 p.m.

He was talking, and I am very offended that he should get up and say that. The Attorney-General was not listening. All I said was that there has been talk about separating old prisoners from first offenders. That was not the gravamen of my statement.

Notwithstanding that talk, I believe that provisions should be made for parole. I am asking him if he has given consideration to bringing a new Parole Act in the context of the American Convention on Human Rights which this Government ratified some time in 1978, which requires that the sentencing policy in the country should take account of that particular aspect of a custodial sentence. I raised the question of the Vagrancy Act in the same context. There are a few other bits of legislation which I would ask the honourable Attorney-General about, but I fear that he might be offended, so I will wait until we get to the particular Head and raise those questions.

Sir, I would like some guidance from you. They have called Head 28, which has Administration of Justice, Subhead 5 – Supreme Court, and also the Judiciary. Some of the aspects of what I would like to speak about may touch on the role of the judges, so I should like some guidance, before I am accused of going all over the place, to know whether this is the Head on which we can discuss certain aspects of the judges' work, or whether he want me to wait for the Head "Judiciary".

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You recommend "Judiciary". As Your Honour wishes. I will let the honourable Attorney-General respond if he wishes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before the Honourable Attorney-General responds, the honourable Member for St. Lucy may make his contribution.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE (St. Lucy): Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few points on this particular Head, and in making these points, I will start off with the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King).

He spoke about the condition of the law courts. He lives in Christ Church. Since this Government came to power, it has done more to the law courts in this country than the Democratic Labour Party did for the fifteen years they were in power.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Stop talking foolishness!)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

(Hon L. S. CRAIG: You are not qualified to criticize him.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order! I must not have interruptions of this nature.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, we built the Oistins Court, we improved the police station at Station Hill, in fact, I believe all the courts in this Island have been improved. Most of the police officers are very happy with the progress up to this time.

(Aside: Talk about Holetown!)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: The world was not made in a day. I believe that the Lord could have made the world in a day, but He took six long days to do it, and then He rested on the seventh day. But it seems to me that the members of the Democratic Labour Party would like to know that the Barbados Labour Party do everything at the same time.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) spoke about the child who lost an eye and who did not get compensation for his eye. He was a Minister in the last Government, and this is not the first child's eye that was knocked out or hurt, in that way, but they never thought of compensating anyone in those days.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Name one.)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Marvene Bowen from Half Moon Fort.

From 1961 to 1976 not one child was compensated by the members of the Democratic Labour Party. I believe that the honourable Minister used her discretion, and I have something to put to her. I have a little boy from Half Moon Fort again, hard luck for him. I am praying that that little boy will regain his sight, but I am sure that if he does not regain his sight, the Honourable Minister will take care of him. I am sure she will do that.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I am surprised to hear you say that.)

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member spoke about the courts. I am not one of those people in favour of making the law courts like the Marine Hotel. The courts are not for people to go there to live and the people who are interested in the law courts are the lawyers of this country. I always remember something that the late Sir Grantley Herbert Adams told a good friend of mine in the parish of St. Lucy. He said, "I always admire you in the court, son. You are a very clever chap. But let me give you a little advice. The law courts are made for two people, a lawyer and a fool. So if you are not the lawyer, you would understand who you are!

There are some lawyers in this country who would make a man spend $1 000 in order to get $50, which is very, very misleading. There are some lawyers who go into the court and use all kinds of strategies to delay a case so that they can be seen in the court advertising themselves, so as to make it appear that they get cases from time to time. I feel that these people should be fairer to their clients and try to advise people as much as possible to keep them out of the courts.

I do not want to say much on this one, but when I read the newspaper this morning and saw a case, which I am following very carefully, where a gentleman from Canada, I think he was a Canadian, came here and rented an apartment from someone, then stopped the cheque.....

(*Aside:* You cannot do that.)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: I am sorry, Sir. I shall not go any further on that, but I am going to follow that case.

But nowadays, Mr. Chairman when I see some lawyers who, because they may be brilliant, at times take advantage of ignorance to win cases, it really grieves me to see that sometimes you are right but, because there is a clever lawyer, you are given the wrong. That is the sort of thing that I would like to see the lawyers on that side address themselves to. It is not always money that you go after.

I have always admired the late Garfield Sargeant. Sometimes people went to him with dirty cases and he would say, "That could be my wife, I could be out of my house tonight and you could have gone and raped my wife. I am not taking those kinds of cases. Nowadays there are some Turks who are willing to catch at anything at all to try to give people the impression that they are good lawyers. I do not like that at all.

Mr. Chairman, I would commend the Minister of Legal Affairs. I think he is one of the best Ministers of Legal Affairs we have ever had in Barbados. I did not think that anyone would have said anything as far as this particular Head is concerned, because up to now things are progressing well.

Asides.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: I wonder why, whenever I have to say anything, the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) always tries to obstruct me. The more he tries to stop me, the more I am going to talk.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, talk. You must not say those things about Henry Forde.)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I would not say much more on this, but I will come a little later.

Thank you, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a few remarks under this Head.

The only comfort and security that people like myself feel in Barbados today is the fact that we have a legal system which has largely been uncontaminated by the schizoid hands of the political directorate of this country. I would like to see in these Estimates every attempt made to provide the best possible environment in which the legal officers can function in order to strengthen that arm of the Administration of this country and preserve its independence. The judiciary in this country has managed to maintain an element of independence of which I am very proud indeed, and I would like to see much more resources put behind those responsible for the administration of justice in this country.
8.50 p.m.

I feel that any citizen of Barbados who is faced with any problem and finds himself before the court, barring such chances as may occur in any judicial proceedings, he has a very reasonable chance of justice being meted out fairly to him. This is a very positive aspect of Barbadian life which I wish to see preserved, and I am absolutely sure that the judiciary of this country are of a quality which would defend and protect themselves against certain types of incursions.

I want to get on with Subhead 6 under – Head 28, and I want to deal specifically with the question of the issuing of Liquor Licenses. This is a very serious matter, because it seems to me to have elements of injustice in relation to this particular aspect of tax extraction in Barbados, and the point I wish to make is this. A lessee of premises – someone who has leased or rented a premise – may make a substantial capital investment and carry on a lawful business – no casinos, no gambling, no prostitution, none of those elements that attract certain people in public life in Barbados. When January 1 comes, or whenever it is, that person who has made an investment wants to continue his business. He therefore needs a liquor license. Now in order to obtain that liquor license.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Have you had one before?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, I never applied for one, nor have I had a liquor licence. In order to obtain that liquor license, he cannot in his own right, in the usual manner any longer go and apply to obtain the liquor licence. What he has to do is to carry a lot of other documentation, which might be totally unrelated to his business. For example, let us say that the landlord is delinquent in paying his property taxes, and, let us say, another person, who rents from him, has made an investment of $50 000 or $100 000. Comes the end of the year, the landlord has not paid the taxes – and the person who is renting the premises cannot obtain a license.

There has to be something wrong with that. It cannot be right, because what you are doing here is that, first of all, you are putting the tenant at the mercy of the landlord. The tenant may have signed a lawful lease, say, for three years, and during this period he expects to recover on his investment and make a profit.

Let us say that the landlord, for some reason or another, does not wish the tenant to continue, despite the fact that he has entered into a lease arrangement. Do you realize that the landlord can either refuse to pay the taxes or he can pay the taxes and refuse to allow the tenant to have access to the receipt, which would indicate that he did not pay the taxes. When the tenant goes to the Rates and Taxes Department, he is then told that he is not the landlord and therefore he is not entitled to a copy of the receipt, and then the question arises as to whether a photostat copy of the receipt will be acceptable in the magistrate's court as evidence that the tax has been paid. So it is really unfair to place that kind of burden on someone who has entered into a tenancy on a lawful basis, especially since the rights of tenants are protected.

There are laws in Barbados, as I understand it, which protect tenants. I have never been a tenant, except in the office in which I practice medicine, but I have been a landlord. But the point I am trying to make is that there are laws which protect the rights of tenants as far as I know. My recollection is that I have been advised that if you are a tenant and you are conducting a business, then the law goes so far as to indicate the amount of notice which the landlord has to give in the event that someone is conducting a business, as distinct from whether you are say just an ordinary tenant living in a house.

What protects the tenant now? It simply is not fair. Surely legally established lessee status is recognised in law in Barbados. It is an entity which has legal protection. It is an entity which can be filed, as far as I know, with the Registrar in this country to show that you have that legal right, and such a situation, where the lessee can establish his rights, can be contested in the court.

It would seem to me that the law, on the one hand, gives these clear rights to the lessee, then, on the other hand, you just bring in a piece of legislation which seems to remove from the lessee the security which the previous legislation in Barbados has always given to the lessee of property, and rightly so. This matter needs some kind of active attention.

I understand that the Government may have all sorts of problems in the collection of taxes which might be due to them, but I believe that some sort of sanction should be brought against the landlord rather than against a tenant, who is complying with all the provisions of the lease which he has signed, and which is a lawful lease, which is binding on both landlord and tenant.

The question also arises as to whether or not a situation cannot be established in law whereby, in the case of default by a landlord, rents payable by a willing and consenting tenant should not be applied against the arrears, or whether a situation cannot exist where the tenant or the lessee can obtain his license, but a levy on the rentals payable to the landlord established by the appropriate department of Government to ensure that that money which is payable to the landlord is paid to the Government, so that the tenant will be relieved of the harassment which has occurred in the present situation.

In many instances, we are talking about situations in which a lot of money is at stake. We are talking of situations where people may owe the Government thousands of dollars, and where people would have made investments in the region of $50 000 to $100 000 probably in the first year in which they have settled into their business arrangement.
9.00 p.m.

It is wrong and unjust to subject a person who is prepared to pay his rent, because of the delinquency of the landlord, to this kind of thing. I believe that what should be done is those circumstances is to somehow find some means – I do not know whether the correct word in law would be "attaching" the rent, but whatever you can do to get the rent payable not to the landlord, but to the Department of Government, whether it be the National Insurance Board or whether it be the Rates and Taxes Department, so that the money will be paid off and the tenant can continue his normal activity.

I will give you two examples, Sir. I know of two cases where businessmen have been doing well, they wished to continue their businesses, and the landlords were just being wicked. In one case, the tenant was the girlfriend of the landlord, – and they fell out. In the other case, the landlord thought that the tenant was doing good business and he could take over the business, although the tenant had already paid the lease well in advance.

Those tenants went so far as going to the Rates and Taxes Department and offering to pay the taxes, but the monies were not accepted. I know this for a fact, because I happened to be in the Rates and Taxes Department that day disputing the fact that I was not a non-national of Barbados and that the taxes charged to me were four times what they should be, 2 per cent instead of 0.5 per cent of the improved value. I went there to pay my taxes, in order to allow my tenant to go to the magistrate's court the following day in order to obtain a licence.

There is something wrong with the law in those circumstances and I would strongly suggest that we address ourselves to that problem, because we are undermining the lessor/lessee relationship. Indeed, in my judgment the whole thing strikes straight back to fundamental questions of justice. I think you will agree with me that this is a matter that needs to be dealt with.

Thank you very much.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has dealt with a legal affair, and I believe we can look forward to his introducing an amendment to the Landlord and Tenant Act.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) would set out to introduce an amendment.

I know of one of the cases he was speaking about quite well. The case was one involving a man called Castro of Castro's Bar and Restaurant which had machines in it. The honourable Member had rented the place to Castro. Now, the Member did not pay the taxes himself for a very long time, and when this came, Castro chased me down asking me how he could get out of this. He said the Member for St. Michael South Central was his landlord and was so hard that he was calling on him to pay the taxes for him so he could continue to rent the place. He and Castro went down to Rates and Taxes and there was sheer confusion down there between the landlord – the Member for St. Michael South Central – and Castro from Castro's Bar in Nelson Street.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman: that is totally untrue.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: It is untrue? It is untrue that you were the landlord for Castro's Bar and Restaurant on Nelson Street? Get up and deny on the floor of the House that you were the landlord for Castro's Bar and Restaurant on Nelson Street, which had gambling machines in it, that Castro had a liquor license and you did not pay the taxes, and when the time limit came Castro was running you down asking you please to give him the receipts. You told Castro he would have to pay the outstanding taxes, and that is why you and Castro found yourselves down at the Rates and Taxes Department. Deny that first.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am prepared to answer you.

Certain remarks made at this stage by Dr. R. C. HAYNES were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will now hear the honourable Attorney General.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There can be no point of order at this stage.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I just want the assurance that he is not winding up.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This is not a winding up.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, a number of points have been made and I want to reply to all of them at some length. I will start at the end.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) has on more than one occasion in this Chamber said that he was not the owner of premises at which gambling machines were operating.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: I draw to Your Honour's attention the long-standing parliamentary rule that if the Chair has ruled that a matter must be struck from the Record, that matter cannot be referred to in the debate. That is a long-standing matter. It is a fact that you can check with the Clerk at the Table.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I felt a little sorry for the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) today when he heard the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central say today he is not like the ones who do not pay in severance payment or National Insurance money.

9.10 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will both honourable Members take their seats? I will not have this in this Parliament.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I heard the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central say in here today that he was not like the other people, like the honourable Member for St. Michael West, who always....

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

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

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will entertain the point of order from the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You will recall, as you were in this Chamber, that I said my name appeared on a list of persons owing money to the National Insurance Fund, and I said that was incorrect because I sent some $2 600 to them for last year. I also said that I sent a further cheque this year and they told me they could not accept it because they could not guarantee that their record structure would be such as to guarantee it. That is all I said about that particular matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. Do not get unduly heated.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not getting unduly heated.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Leave him to me, Sir. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central can shout as much as he likes in here about lies. I have to say over and over again that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has such a distaste for the truth that if it was coming at him at 1000 miles an hour, he would be able to jump out of the road, so I do not know why he gets in here talking about lies or somebody telling lies.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has said on several occasions in this House and abroad – at public meetings – that he did not own any property which had any gambling machines on the premises. At the time when he was on a messianic tour across this country against gambling machines, every time he opened his mouth, he was talking about one-armed bandits, and he denied until tonight – he is now admitting – that he owns a property where everybody knows – I have been in there – that there are gambling machines.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us get on with Legal Affairs, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The property I am referring to tonight is located in Rockley – it has nothing to do with Nelson Street. That is the first thing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I just want to make it clear to the honourable Members..... Please. Bear with me, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am fed up with the lying in here. This lying has to stop.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members on both sides of the House must conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to good parliamentary behaviour.

Order, please!

Honourable Members, I want it to be understood clearly. I am prepared to listen to and entertain points of orders, but an honourable Member who wants to explain something he has said before – he can do it, but not on a point of order. Please do not let us have these inconsistencies.

We have had enough of this. Please carry on with Legal Affairs.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I will not be deflected from the point I am making. The honourable Member can behave as he feels in here, but he is going to listen to me, because I am going to make the point.

There is Castro's Bar and Fun Centre on Nelson Street with gambling machines in it, owned by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, and he has denied on numerous occasions that this is true.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Legal Affairs. Order, please. I am hearing the honourable Member for St. George South.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I am willing to match my credibility against that of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central anywhere in this country, any time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order. Legal Affairs. Please, cross talk is not allowed.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Now, Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member made a rambling submission. He certainly confused me and I am sure he confused himself. He has a way of getting into everything, whether he understands it or not. He made a long labyrinthine dissertation confusing himself over what is a lessee and a tenant. He has no idea what the difference is between the two. He uses the two interchangeably, talking foolishness about registering lessee rights in the Registration Office, all kinds of confusion that I have never heard anywhere before. If he would stick to what he knows – and that is not a lot – he would not run into all the trouble in which he finds himself.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like honourable Members to make it a little less difficult for the Hansard Reporters. It is grossly unfair to the staff of Parliament to have these sort of interruptions. Order, please, on both sides of the House.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of explanation: My colleague is wrong – I would just like to correct him. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said he would raise the rents at Castro's or they must give him a half share in the machines. After he did not get the half share, he raised the rent, and Castro was forced to leave. That is the position.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member, please take your seat.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, now listen. I believe that we have to have some sense of.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that you now report progress to His Honour, the Deputy Speaker.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I beg to move that you have an enema before coming to Parliament – that is what I beg to move!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Two Honourable Members are on their feet.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that you do now report progress.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: He cannot do that. I am on a point of order.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second the motion.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I want to speak on the motion that was just made.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two honourable Members are on their feet.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have a motion before the House, that the honourable Leader of the House have an enema by mouth before coming to Parliament every day. That is my motion before the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please!

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Your Honour do now report progress to His Honour, the Deputy Speaker, and ask for leave to sit again.

I will get the enema tomorrow morning, and I will get the injections for him.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. CHAIRMAN left the Chair, reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr.

DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.
9.20 p.m.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until tomorrow, Tuesday, 20th March, 1984, at 10.00 a.m. o'clock.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.
9.22 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. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee of Supply. We are at Head 28. Does any other honourable Member wish to make a contribution? The honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, under Head 28, the description of Subhead 3 includes:

(c) Negotiating the purchase of land on behalf of Government, including advising on values, goodwill and depreciation.

(e) Acquisition of land under Land Acquisition Act.

The subject of acquisition has had frequent ventilation in this Parliament, but I think we should take the opportunity of these Estimates to look at the whole situation and see what improvements we can suggest on the question of compulsory acquisition.

While I am raising it here, I am a little bit surprised that it should come under this Schedule, because the Ministry of Housing is responsible for the Acquisition Act. In fact, right now we have the procedure divided among three sections: The Ministry of Legal Affairs is responsible for legal procedure; the Valuation Department handles the professional and technical end, although – responsibility for that is given to Legal Affairs; and then the administration co-ordination is done by the Ministry of Housing. Also, there is now a review procedure for any compensation over $50 000.

So far from contracting the procedure, we find that the procedure is being spread out a little bit more. I think we should take this opportunity to look at the possibility of shifting the officer who deals with the co-ordination from the Ministry of Housing into the Legal Affairs Section. Fortunately, the two Ministries are positioned in the same building, which facilitates the procedure a little bit, but there is a distinct possibility that they could be separated physically, which would further complicate matters.

I think that, despite the fact that the Minister of Housing says that we have dealt with this a lot, it is a subject that burns everybody. It touches on a number of people, and the Government is anticipating a fairly big programme next year involving acquisitions, so anything to facilitate the speeding up and short-circuiting of the procedure will be helpful.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, I want to take an opportunity to raise another matter of concern as far as the courts are concerned, and this relates to the question of a Court of Appeal for Barbados. There is an existing system where the judges of the Supreme Court of Barbados are at the same time the judges who sit in the first instance and also function as well as judges of the Court of Appeal. The judges rotate the system of appeal, so to speak, so a judge who sits in the first instance would find cases handled by him being heard by his other brothers in the Supreme Court on appeal.

This is not, the most satisfactory and effective method of dealing with appeals, and I make this plea again. It seems that the Governments from time to time have not paid sufficient regard to the administration of justice in ensuring that the institutions, which are required to ensure that justice is administered in the best possible way, are fully in place. It seems to me that time is more than right for serious consideration to be given to the establishment of a Court of Appeal, staffed by judges who do not sit at first instance. I suggest that we need an independent Court of Appeal.

I know that suggestions have been made from time to time in this area. I believe that it has recently been mooted that a Caribbean Court of Appeal is the direction in which we should be focussing our attention. In my view, there is nothing basically wrong with a Caribbean Court of Appeal serving the region. But in the meantime, as far as the local jurisdiction is concerned, I still think that it is terribly important that we should have an independent Court of Appeal in Barbados, staffed by judges who do not have to rotate on a continual basis as first instance judges and appeal judges.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am going to take this opportunity, since my colleague has raised this question of the Judges of Appeal, to advance his call for the consideration of the creation of a Caribbean Court of Appeal.

It is standard practice in the monarchies in the Caribbean to have as the final Court of Appeal Her Majesty's Privy Council. I think that, by and large, over the long years of colonialism and Commonwealth association, the Privy Council has served its purpose, and, generally speaking, one would not wish to appear to be overly critical of the Judicial Privy Council.

I recall, however, that when the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) was the Attorney-General, and subsequent to that, he talked about the repatriation of the Constitution of Barbados, and a number of other related matters, which really speak to the whole question of the sovereignty of the country as perceived by the citizens of the country.

The argument against removal of matters from the Privy Council as the last Court of Appeal for Barbados has always been that it ensures a certain degree of impartiality while at the same time not casting aspersions on Caribbean judges. There has been a persistent view among some intellectuals, and among some people who have an interest in these matters, that the Judicial Privy Council is one way of ensuring that the justice which is dispensed finally in the Caribbean is impartial, and, because it is removed from the scene, it is likely to be even more so.

I, myself, do not hold to that particular view. I believe that when a judge has reached the point where he is a practising judge, generally speaking, his integrity as an officer of the law will allow him, and does allow him, to rise above the partisan fray which is going on in the particular litigation.

It is a fact that many scholars are concerned about the attitude which emanates from some of the judgements in Guyana. This is a feeling abroad among scholars, the latest of whom is Professor R. W. James, who wrote a very scathing and at the same time enlightening article about the administration of justice in Guyana in the most recent publication of the *West Indian Law Journal,* which cannot go unnoticed by those who take an interest in these things.

There has been some concern about the direction which has been taken in Guyana where, of course, there is no final appeal to the Privy Council. But that notwithstanding, one can find in decisions of the Privy Council itself, not only areas of inconsistency, but also judgments with which one may disagree. But that is the nature of the system which we all know, and which many of us love.

I will give you one example of the inconsistencies which can emerge, even from the Privy Council. You will recall, Sir, that in the murder case concerning Abdhul Malik, the case of *DeFreitas v. Benny,* Lord Diplock was called to deliver a judgment concerning cruel and inhuman punishment. DeFreitas had sought to suggest that an eight-month hiatus between the decision that he should be put to death and the actual execution date of that decision was itself cruel and inhuman punishment.
10.15 a.m.

This forum is not the place to go into great detail, I am merely sketching the facts. The point is that during the course of that judgment Lord Diplock for the Privy Council said that eight months could not be considered cruel and inhuman in the context, but perhaps if it were a matter of years the Privy Council would have to give very serious consideration as to whether that in itself did not constitute cruel, inhuman and unnecessary punishment to the individual, which would be a breach of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago.

Along comes a case from Jamaica, a case called *Riley,* in which four years elapsed from the time some of the persons concerned were found guilty of murder and sentenced to death, during which time there was a tremendous discussion in the Jamaican public community, and during which time the Jamaica Parliament took a decision in the Lower House to abolish capital punishment, and in the Senate, by one vote, not to abolish capital punishment. The Executive went with the Senate and so capital punishment was re-introduced, as it were.

The long and short of it is that four years elapsed. One would have thought that, given the position taken by Lord Diplock in the *DeFreitas v. Benny* case, it would be fairly automatic that a four year hiatus between the judgment and the execution of sentence would constitute cruel and inhuman punishment, contrary to the fundamental rights provisions of the Constitution. But lo and behold, Sir, the Privy Council, with Lord Diplock sitting, did not even find it convenient even to refer to the judgment delivered by that same body in this same area, on a point which was brought to their attention by the lawyers for the plaintiffs as it were.

I am not going to take this opportunity to try to analyse a particular judgment. I am merely drawing to the attention of this Honourable Chamber than even with a Privy Council, and all the arguments which have been put forward as to why we ought not to move away from the Privy Council, there you can find inconsistencies in judgments which leave those who examine them to wonder.

I make that point to go on to say this. I believe that in the Caribbean we have, and have had, enough eminent judges that we could have a Caribbean Court of Appeal, which would be the final court of appeal for persons in the Caribbean. I believe that after the number of years of dispensing justice that we have had in the Caribbean, and notwithstanding the fact that the communities are sufficiently small that what happens in Jamaica would be well known in Barbados or in Guyana, and can affect the thinking in Barbados or in Guyana, I am satisfied that, on a balance of probabilities, we are likely to get as fair and as reasonable a dispensation of justice within the Caribbean Court of Appeal as we now get in the advice of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

I recommend to the Attorney-General and to the Government that as part of their Caribbean Community policy, and as part of their legal policy, they pursue, with a certain degree of vigour, the setting up of a Caribbean Court of Appeal as the final court for our jurisdiction. This is not something which one expects to occur within weeks, not even months. It may very well take a number of years before it is established in its final form, but I think that the time has come for us to stop talking about it and take serious steps to implement such a provision.

I am satisfied that the Caribbean Court of Appeal would not only find favour with the vast majority of the people in the Caribbean, so long as it is explained to them properly, but that it would speak volumes for the development of a Caribbean jurisprudence which, in the final analysis, is what we are going to have to have if we are to retain and enhance the sovereignty which we talk about in this region.

To those who might say that certain decisions which have been made by the Privy Council would never have been made in the Caribbean, I merely say this. In each of those judgments where the Privy Council can be said to have taken a revolutionary stride forward, they have had to rely on at least a judgment at first instance by a Caribbean Justice. In other words, some Caribbean Justice has always been in the forefront of the revolutionary stride forward. In the case of *Thornhill* it was Justice Georges. We have our own situation here in Barbados where our own Chief Justice is regularly agreed with by the Privy Council, where his own Barbadian brothers, as appeal judges, differed from him.

The point I am making is that always there is some Caribbean Justice that is in the forefront, and therefore that argument does not hold. I am going to leave that point, because I believe I have made it, and I am going to make one last point, since I am on my feet, concerning the deployment of legal officers in the Public Service generally.

I believe that the Government should give consideration by now to giving Ministries their own legal officers, instead of having a pool in the Attorney-General's Office dealing with all aspects of particular issues which go to the Attorney General. These legal officers would be under the aegis of the Attorney-General, but nonetheless would be functioning within the Ministry itself rather than within the body of the Attorney-General's Chambers.

I think, for example, to take a few, that the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministries that deal with financial projects, should have their own legal officers. The Ministry of Education is certainly in need of some legal advice within the Ministry on a daily basis, given their need to administer the new Education Act properly, effectively and correctly. I think that the time has come for us to have legal experts in the respective Ministries – if not all, at least the senior Ministries, the ones which are involved in areas where legal questions arise often.
10.25 a.m.

These legal officers would still be under the aegis of the Attorney-General; the Attorney-General would still be the Chief Legal Adviser to the Government and, therefore, any advice which these persons give would be subject to the Attorney General's fiat and/or observation. But, in my view, having legal officers in Ministries would speed up the work of the country and preclude a number of situations, such as where from time to time, we have seen legislation come to this House which had to be brought back shortly thereafter for one reason or another. It would also streamline the whole legal process in the governmental sector and, finally, it would help to build up a level of expertise, because the particular officer would be dealing with these matters on an on-going basis, and would be touching base with the administrative arm of the Ministry. He would therefore be better able to influence policy, and himself to be influenced by policy.

I hope that the Minister will take these recommendations in the spirit in which they are offered. I believe that they can contribute towards the advancement of the administration of justice in Barbados generally, and the efficiency of the delivery of these services to the population as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I believe I can ask the honourable Minister to wind up.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I am not about to wind up, because I have several interventions to make during the day.

We are taking Head 28, which covers a number of departments, and I would want to speak in respect of each one. The Registration Office was engaging the attention of the House last evening, and there has been a

lot of talk about the courts and the judiciary. I also have a few things to say about the Police, the Prison, the Fire Service so I think that it will be necessary for me to make a number of interventions during the day.

It may be a good point to start by saying that the stability and the integrity of a community rely to a very large extent on the quality of its judiciary. We in Barbados have been very fortunate over the years to have a strong and independent judiciary, made up of persons of the highest probity, and, therefore, we have not been subjected to the type of criticisms and doubts about our system that have been heard in many countries of the world.

Last night there were some comments made about accommodation in the law courts. One or two honourable Members on the other side talked about the type of environment in which justice could flourish – there was talk about the physical environment. I submit that it is not the physical environment that ensures that justice flourishes. It is the environment of compassion and understanding that prevails in the courts, and this involves all parties – those who are witnesses, those who are Counsels, the whole lot.

I am very well aware, of the conditions, and I find myself floating in a sea of tedium when I hear, year after year – to my certain knowledge the last fourteen years, about the physical conditions in the law courts and in the Supreme Court Registry.

I know that the conditions are not the best, but one has to understand that during a period of austerity and recession, non-economic projects are the ones which are accorded the lowest priority. We have been through a difficult period, and the emphasis of the Government has been the productive areas of the economy. We are now turning the corner, and we have indeed put into our Estimates this year, under Head 28, monies for the development of many capital projects that fall under the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

We heard last evening about the Oistins Court. The Oistins Court is undoubtedly as fine and as modern a court of law as you can find anywhere in the world, and we intend to build other such courts in this country.

In the Estimates, and if you would check them you will see, there is provision for the construction of a court in St. George. For some time, we had heard that when the St. George Girls' School had been closed, and a new primary school constructed in central St. George to accommodate the girls and boys from the St. George's Boys' and Girls' Schools, the site on which the Girls' School stands will be used for the construction of a new police station and law court, and bring justice, if you use justice in that peculiar sense, closer to where the people live.

Those of us who know the parish of St. George well know that there has been a tremendous build-up of residential areas in the central area of the parish. The police station and court are over at Boarded Hall, some considerable distance away from where the bulk of the people live. So we are moving towards the construction of the law courts and police station in central St. George. There is money in the Estimates for this purpose.

I myself am personally disappointed that we were not able to make provision for the construction of a new Supreme Court during this coming financial year, but, as I have pointed out, there is a scale of priorities to which you must reasonably adhere. I am confident that in the next financial year, we will be able to begin construction of a new Supreme Court building, which will render all the perennial criticisms about the state of the courts useless and irrelevant.

This is a convenient point to mention that we are again looking at the plans in relation to the site on which we intend to build a new Supreme Court. We already have the drawings for the construction of the court, but we are looking them over again because we consider it a matter of great importance that we should preserve the Jewish Synagogue on the site for the construction of the court.

We believe that a restoration and preservation of the Jewish Synagogue would be of national importance and will preserve an important part of our national culture and heritage. We have to do adjustments to the drawings of the architects for the construction of the court, and by the time we have managed to work that all out and get the work done for restoring the synagogue, I think we will be on our way for the construction of a new Supreme Court.

There are other ideas. One was put to me this morning by the honourable Member for Christ Church West, (Hon. H. deB. Forde), and I think that he should develop it. It is his point, and I do not intend to steal his thunder, but I think it is a very useful suggestion, and I believe that you will hear more about it as the day goes on.

10.35 a.m.

Reference was made last evening to what kind of legislation do we have in the pipeline. The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. TAITT) raised the question of the Vagrancy Act, I give the honourable Member the assurance that I, like he, am somewhat concerned about legislation on the Statute Books of Barbados which, in 1984, could still be deeming citizens of this country as

rogues and as vagabonds. In these cases, the magistrates have no option, they have no discretion. They are required by law, a law that was passed at the time when the social structure in this community was vastly different from the way it is today, to carry out their duties in respect of it. Perhaps it made a lot of sense in the days when human beings of a certain colour and background were considered more like beasts of burden and chattel than human beings. But those days of deeming people rogues and vagabonds, and putting permanently on their records minor offences – misdemeanours, things like wandering and loitering – those days are over.

We do not have a proper law reform section in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and I am going to make some very strong points now. There are a lot of people, including the Government, that require the legal officers in the Ministry of Legal Affairs to do far more than is humanly possible. We have two or three people, only one on staff, who are trained to do law reform work which in many countries a whole section of Government is concerned with, and they have been producing under a great deal of strain and stress. I promised here in the House last year that we would introduce a lot of reform in the area of criminal law, and I know I made that promise several months ago, but the fact that we have not been able to bring the legislation before Parliament up to now is due solely to the fact that we do not have the personnel to do the quantity of work which is required of us.

More and more legislation is coming before Parliament. If you look at the amount of laws that were passed, say, in the last five years, and compare it to the amount of laws that were passed in the fifteen or twenty years before that, you will see the tremendous increase in the volume of legislation that has come before Parliament. We are also getting a lot of complex and difficult legislation, like the Companies Act, the International Business Act, and recently, I have seen the new Road Traffic Act, which took a gestation period of perhaps fifteen or twenty years, with regulations that are thicker than my biggest briefcase. These bits of legislation require an extraordinary amount of time and diligence on the part of drafters – yet we are continually being pressed, particularly on the floor of this House and beyond in other areas of Government, to turn out legislation at a rate that is way beyond our capability.

I have some information on the staff situation in my Ministry. I am told that shortly one of our officers is leaving to go to another Caribbean island to work, and I am also told that one of our very senior officers is shortly to go to another Caribbean island for an extended period of time. One of my Principal Crown Counsel left at the end of last month to work for a statutory board.

(Asides)

Hon. L. R. TULL: I hear over my shoulder some are leaving for the private Bar. Well I do not know that; I have not heard that one yet.

At the moment, Mr. Chairman, I have difficulty in attracting Senior Crown Counsel to the advisory section of the Ministry, and indeed only recently we had to appoint someone with only five years' experience to the position of Senior Crown Counsel, and we have one with less than five years' experience acting as a Senior Crown Counsel. We have a number of vacancies at that level.

What has happened in the Ministry is that there is no difficulty in recruiting young and junior people, but it is extremely difficult to recruit senior people, and you well know that we cannot reasonably expect junior people, recently graduated lawyers, to do a certain type of work that entails a great amount of difficulty and research. Yet, we are always being criticised. I think that if you looked at the whole background and all the facts, you would agree with me that the situation is untenable.

I heard the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) this morning make reference to the situation with land acquisition. The Government has taken a decision that the access road to the airport would entail about 1 800 acquisitions – I think that is the figure – so it means that a lawyer in the conveyancing section, the section that deals with land acquisition in the Ministry, must now take on a further 1 800 land acquisitions for the next year or two.

At the moment, there is only one lawyer in that section and that is a section where we usually carry three officers. Our most senior and experienced officer has just left to work with a statutory board. Another one of the officers has been transferred to act as Deputy Registrar – without even consultation with me. I heard about it after it happened. That is the situation that is obtaining in the Chambers, and I think that the officers in the Ministry have every justification in feeling that they are being called upon to do more than any public officer should do.

Further, I am a political Attorney-General. It is not my job to do day-to-day legal work. I should have enough officers, competent and capable, who could advise me on the wide range and multiplicity of matters which come before the Chambers. I do not have the time nor the inclination, with three Ministries to run and a constituency to look after, to be spending my time doing legal research, and I believe that it is only reasonable that I should be putting the type of pressure in the appropriate areas to get a greater number and better quality of staff. By better "quality", I only mean more senior. That is not to make any pejorative comment on anybody in the profession.

Now law reform, Sir. I have said that we are doing some work in the area of criminal law reform.

Mr. M. A. KING: I wonder if the honourable Attorney-General would give way. I want to ask a question on the matter of staff, if it is appropriate. I wonder if the honourable Member could tell the Chamber what is the Government's policy, seeing that there is this difficulty recruiting staff for the Ministry, as far as the appointment of non-nationals is concerned, and whether there is any distinction in the classification between Barbadians who are naturalised citizens of Barbados and Barbadians who are born citizens of Barbados.
10.45 a.m.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if I can give a clear, definitive answer to that, because it has more to do with another Ministry. The Ministry of Defence and Security deals with work permits and all that. In other words, I am telling.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Barbadian citizens.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: Oh, I know what you are asking about. I know where you are coming from.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Give us the policy position and we would not go into details.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: I am going to be like Pontius Pilate. I am going to wash my hands of that one. My grandmother told me not to get into the big people's business. I understand that there has been some difficulty in that area, but, as a lawyer, you would not expect me to rely on hearsay. If you give me the facts, I will deal with them. But I am not getting into that at this moment.

We have a Criminal Law Reform Committee. I pointed out that we do not have the amount of personnel to do the work that we require them to do. Fortunately, we have been able to have the services of Mrs. Betty Bourne-Hollings as a law reform consultant, and she has been able to give us a lot of assistance.

We have the other committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Williams. I do not like calling the names of public officers in debate, but I think it would not be out of place in this case to mention that Mr. Errol Chase does a lot of hard work in this area. Again I must commend the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Miss Bannister, because I am sure that.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: You cannot call the name.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: Do not tell me I cannot call names. This is a free country.

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I do not know about that. You know that that is not a Standing Order of the House. You know that I do not know why you are interrupting me.

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I know that you cannot criticize a member of the public unless you give notice to the Speaker before hand, but I did not know that you cannot praise people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, let us carry on.

Hon. L. R. TULL: When you are ready to talk, you can get up and call it by whatever you like.

I was saying that I want to really thank the Chief Parliamentary Counsel for allowing the Deputy to spend so much time on law reform, rather than clearing the voluminous amount of legislation which comes before the Chamber week after week, month after month.

The criminal law reform programme entails new legislation in respect of theft, offences against the person, criminal damage, criminal law procedure, magistrate's courts and the rules affecting magistrate's court evidence, rehabilitation of offenders, forgery and counterfeiting and, as the honourable Member raised last night, the question of parole. A number of these pieces of legislation are at the stage where they are to be submitted to Cabinet, and I can confidently predict that they will be before Parliament before the middle of the year.

This area requires a lot of work, Mr. Chairman, and it requires a lot of voluntary work. We have to ask representation from the magistracy, from the Bar Association, and the judiciary to give free time to sit down and help us work out the reform necessary in these areas. All this goes unheralded and unsung. When the criticism comes, nobody seems to be aware of the tremendous amount of work which is being done in this area, and which is not directly involved in the day-to-day preparation of legislation for the various Ministries.

I want, before I yield on this first segment of my submission, to talk about the question of legislative drafting. Legislative drafting is usually considered the unglamourous part of an attorney-at-law's business. There are a lot of areas with high visibility and glamour – legal drafting is not one of them. It is indeed one of the most difficult and most time-consuming areas of activity of lawyers. But, ironically, it is the one area that is vital to the proper functioning of the Legislature. Every piece of legislation which comes before Parliament must be done by legal draftsmen, who work away from the glare and the publicity to make the wheels of a Government roll – and roll fluently.

We have to do something to bring legislative drafting into the 1980s. Some time last year, I attended a meeting

of the Law Ministers of the Commonwealth countries, and one of the items on the agenda focussed directly to the question of bringing legislative drafting into modern times through the use of modern technology. Certainly, with the tremendous strides being made in computerization, a well-studied look at the way in which that particular technology can be used for better results in legislative drafting is something we must look at. I know it is going to be a very expensive exercise, but, in the end, it might be cost saving – and not only cost saving, it might allow draftsmen to produce more accurate work. For the future, this is an area that we have to spend a lot of time looking at.

I know that the Training Vote in Government has been stripped almost to nothing for the last two or three years. But I am suggesting that it is of paramount importance that there is a need for training – we do train them when they start – and retraining of draftsmen to bring them up-to-date with the rapid changes which are coming about in the art of legislative drafting.

This is a matter which is engaging the attention of many countries in the world, many countries in the Commonwealth, and we in Barbados have lent our support to the efforts of the Commonwealth to bring about a better co-ordination of the efforts of drafting sections throughout Commonwealth countries, and to see how, through the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, we can pool our resources, both human and capital, to do the type of research and come up with the type of results which would make a major impact on the area I just described.

I want to talk some more on other aspects of the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Answer the questions. Answer the questions we asked today.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael West talked about a Caribbean Court of Appeal.

I am in agreement with the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central on the unsatisfactory nature of our arrangement for appellate work in the courts of Barbados. This matter of the judges rotating is not new, it is something which has been with us for a long time. Judges who hear cases in the first instance then become appeal judges for other cases that they have not heard, and we have always considered that an unsatisfactory situation.
10.55 a.m.

This is so considered by the judges of Barbados, the Bar Association and Government. But the restrictions under which we are operating relate mainly to financing, because it would require a number of other judges, full time judges, to make a Barbados Court of Appeal a reality.

We have given a lot of thought to this, and it has been very much in the mind of the Government to introduce a local Court of Appeal. Indeed, the legislation was passed in 1980. But we are now taking a look at the concept of a Caribbean Court of Appeal again – it is not a new thing.

I should point out that no final decision has been taken about Barbados' position on a Caribbean Court of Appeal, but it is actually under consideration. We have to be careful that the idea does not go abroad that that decision is already taken and that we are now working on how it can be implemented. We are certainly giving very active consideration to Barbados' participation in an East Caribbean Court of Appeal. It will militate against the type of awkwardness which at the moment prevails in our existing system of rotating Puisne Judges to work as Appellate Judges from time to time, and it will also answer the question of cost.

We get a lot of suggestions – they are easy to make – about what improvements we should make and what other services we should give. The honourable Member for St. Michael West, for instance, quite rightly said that there should be legal counsel in the Inland Revenue Department, Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and other key Government departments. It would also be useful if we could have lawyers working as law clerks for the four judges, doing a lot of their research and so on to assist them in that area. But we are talking about money and, therefore, within the context of our resources, we have to make the best use of the limited resources we have.

I have no quarrel at all with the East Caribbean Court of Appeal. We are looking at it. I believe that it will address and answer many of the difficulties we have been experiencing because of our existing system of movements from Puisne Judge to Appellate Judge and back, and so on. As soon as a clear decision is taken, we will consult the judges in Barbados and the Bar Association and come to whatever working arrangement we believe is in the best interest of this country.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of explanation before the honourable Member for Christ Church West begins: I just want to make the point that my recommendation concerning the Caribbean Court of Appeal goes beyond the concept of an East Caribbean Court of Appeal as a second tier. I am talking about a final court for all the Caribbean, not just the East Caribbean, to replace the Privy Council.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): The Minister has again made one of his comprehensive

speeches. It answered and addressed most of the issues which were raised by the honourable Members who preceded him in this debate on what I consider to be a very important Head. I completely concur in his philosophy, which has been so clearly and explicitly expressed in his speech. I agree with everything he has said.

I, too, wish to underscore a point which has missed successive Ministers of Finance. There are two fallacies under which both Right Honourable Members have suffered in the past, and probably this is continuing. One is that legal services have no economic implications for the development of the country. You cannot have development in any society if you have not got basic law and order to safeguard the democratic framework of that society.

In the allocation of scarce resources, it has been perhaps the pattern of the economic planners of this country to relegate legal services to a rather low priority. Both the Right Honourable Member for St. John and the Right Honourable Member for St. Thomas have the bad habit of thinking that if you spend $1 million on housing or industrial estates, it has a greater impact on the society than if you spend $1 million in safeguarding the judiciary and the law courts. I have taken issue with both of them, because I believe that their approach is wrong.

We have seen the dangerous position, which existed prior to 1977, where the Police Force was run down to the extent that it eventually was reflected in the tourist industry, and it has taken some years to restore the Police Force. I said that it would have taken three years before we had reached a state where crime would have been under control. I believe I have been proven right in everything I said, although there was a fight to get money voted for the police in 1977.

We have seen a consistent pattern of believing that because the lawyers happen to be of a certain, as they seem to think so, social class, the legal services in Barbados must not be given full support. Indeed, when I look at the Estimates over the last twenty years, legal services has not had its adequate proportion of the resources of Barbados. It only takes two or three instances of corruption in the judiciary, or one or two instances of miscarriage of justice that affect outside investors for us to see how soon Barbados would be anathema to foreign investment. That is why I feel very strongly that one should not forever procrastinate about reforming the judiciary and giving them the necessary infrastructure to permit them to function properly.

Plans have been laid for the construction of new courts. It is significant that between 1955 and 1984, the only new court we have seen was built during the Barbados Labour Party regime, the model court at Oistins, although plans were made for other extensions. The situation in the Supreme Court is disastrous. There is nothing more you can do to facilitate people in the Supreme Court. The physical space has out-grown the number of people who must function there. It has out-grown the transactions that must take place there. It is not unknown for files to be lost. I am surprised that the staff can function in some of those surroundings.

Government can no longer delay the construction of a new court, and it must face up to this. We cannot compare the construction of a new law court with the building of a housing estate or industrial estate. It is a wrong comparison, and it is nonsense, no matter who puts forward that view. I took issue with it in the Cabinet, I take issue with it now, and I took issue with the Right Honourable Member for St. John, who has the same myopic view of the legal services of this country. The fact that people may be Prime Ministers does not mean that you cannot say that you disagree with them. The law courts should have been constructed some fifteen years ago. The cost is now too high, and it will continue to escalate the longer we continue to talk and not deal with it.

We must seek to introduce new techniques. I am glad to hear that the Minister is looking at introducing new techniques in the drafting sector, using computers and other apparatus to simplify legal drafting and other procedures. We must also introduce new techniques within the Registry itself, the microfilming and microfiching of records. All this is necessary, because, in the last resort, the maintenance of law and order, whether through the police services or through the judiciary, is the bedrock on which we maintain democracy.

The decision to keep the Jewish Synagogue will certainly maintain a part of our history, but it does pose very serious problems of adequate space on the site on which it was being proposed to construct the law courts. We will have to preserve Codds House as well, what is known as the old Waterworks building. The Minister has informed me that Codds House will be used as the Registry, but it has a very strong historical past, both as a use for Parliament and the law courts from time to time, and it seems to me that if we are now swinging around the building we are still going to be caught in problems, even if we go up five or six storeys, of adequate parking space for the public who will be using the facilities.

It may well be that we should give some consideration to using other areas of land in Pinfold Street, and in MacGregor Street itself there is probably still about an acre and a half of land, which is presently in commercial use, which could be available. In Pinfold Street we may be able to assist the 'Y' by relocating the 'Y' in much more commodious circumstances, with a proper indoor sports facility, while using that space for the law courts and redeveloping Greenfield. We can also

look at the Country Road area, particularly the area behind the National Housing Corporation where Government still has land, and there are also other open spaces for a law court that would do justice to Barbados.

Part of the problem is that lawyers, like politicians, have continued to sell themselves cheaply. I am not talking of what they may charge by way of services, but because a lot of lawyers came into politics – and many of us are in politics, and I suppose we exercise some power – it became fashionable to attack the lawyers. It has crept into the ethics of Barbados that politicians are corrupt, are bad and do not make a contribution. I think this has sometimes influenced the political powers in how they approach the profession or legal services. It is most unfortunate, because the legal profession has made a more extensive comprehensive contribution to the development of this island than any other profession that I know of, including the medical profession.

If you look around in here, you will find the sacrifice that several lawyers have made – sacrifice of time, sacrifice of family, sacrifice of earnings – to assist in the development of Barbados. It is not without significance that of the last four Premiers and Prime Ministers we have had, three of them have been legal people. One has been a doctor.

We should not be ashamed of the legal profession. We should make no apologies to the public for the fact that we have performed well, and we do not deserve to be decried for it. That is why I always speak out very strongly on this issue. It is true that it is a profession you can put down and take back up, but we are making a sacrifice in relation to the development of our own country.

I know the Minister has inherited the continuing problem of the movement of staff. His analysis is absolutely on target, but I do not believe that we are going to find a solution to that problem until the Government, whether it is our Government,or a Democratic Labour Party Government, tell the people who advise Ministers that lawyers cannot be pigeon-holed into a Civil Service classification and treated as though one lawyer is equal to an Administrative Assistant, another lawyer is equal to an Assistant Secretary, and that therefore their salaries are tied willy-nilly to the particular post. The problem will continue as long as people keep looking at their own remuneration as a guide to how much to pay a person who is operating in the profession.

The lawyers in the Ministry are not allowed to practice. There is only a limited range of giving advice to statutory boards. This commenced under my predecessor, the honourable George Moe, where they were allowed, subject to the Attorney-General approving it a certain amount of remuneration for doing services, of a very high security nature, in some respects for statutory boards.

My own sentiment, which is not necessarily shared by the members of the department, has always been that it is better that Government's legal officers do not have to look outside of the Government to be dependent on clients, because there is liable to be a serious conflict of interest. Although I agree that, in the last resort, the Solicitor-General and the Attorney-General have to determine where that conflict may arise, there can be serious problems if they work for persons who are dealing with the Government at the same time as they are fully employed by the Government.

In this regard, lawyers are different from the doctors. There are very few doctors, consultants and what not, who cannot draw fees from the Government and at the same time carry on their private practice. This is not the case in the legal profession, and this should be reflected in the remuneration of the profession.

I am told that when a lawyer comes in they say he has a degree, but sometimes we have two degrees. If you start working as a Crown Counsel, you have got your LL.B. and you have your degrees as a barrister, or you have a degree which is called the L.E.C. of the Legal Education Council. So you have taken two degrees, and yet you are being bracketed at a rate with someone else coming into the Service who will probably not have the exposure, the length of time, the minimum of five years, which you have had. No sooner has the officer been there for three years, sometimes less, than he is thrown into areas of work which have the most serious and momentous implications for the country.

I still believe that the Attorney-General's Office provides the best opportunity for any young legal officer to be exposed to a wide area of problems, the like of which you do not get in private practice. With the experience I have had in private practice and then in the Government, and back to private practice, I still remain convinced that there are very few of the private practitioners who can get a grasp of the law which one can get in the Attorney-General's Office, whether it be in drafting, advisory, negotiating treaties or whatever. That range is not available outside, and therefore the young officer has a first class opportunity of seeing several aspects of the law and learning rapidly.

But they are not going to stay, because they are so tied to the rigidity of the classification that, after a while, they find themselves obviously falling behind their colleagues, who have gone into private practice without the restrictions that apply in the Public Service. The Ministry has therefore lost, and continues to lose, the lawyer who has been there for a reasonable period of time. I think that he is going to have to try, as I tried,

not always successfully, to break the stranglehold of the Civil Service approach to the problems of remuneration of the legal profession.
11.15 a.m.

Sir, I hope I can speak again. I will give way to somebody else, but there are one or two other areas that I would like to talk about.

Mr. A. TRUSS (St. Michael Central): Mr. Chairman, Head 28, dealing with the Ministry of Legal Affairs, is very wide-ranging. It covers Central Administration, Legal Services, Registration Services as well as Administration of Justice.

The subheads under these major headings are numerous, and, to highlight one which I think is important, there is "Initiation and review of policy affecting all programmes of the Ministry and its related Departments."

Head 28 also deals with providing legal advice to the Government, drafting of new laws and updating of old editions, negotiating for the purchase of land on behalf of the Government, collection of debts due to Government and drawing up and perusing all documents to which Government is party to.

It goes further, and covers the registration of patents companies, trade marks, deeds, births, marriages, deaths, and so on, as well as the administration of justice, grants to probates, title suits and letters of administration, and, last but not least, it deals with the issuing of liquor licences, certificates for bailiffs and marriage certificates and the sitting of magistrates at trials, preliminary hearings and inquests.

It is therefore very difficult in the very short time allotted to us to deal comprehensively with Head 28. One would have to select one of the major headings, because the ones I have highlighted are only representative of 25 per cent or 30 per cent of all the subjects under the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Head 28.

Over the years, in my opinion, the Barbados Labour Party has done more for legal affairs, the Attorney General's Office, the police, the magistrate's court and so on than perhaps any other Administration, and that is because we have perceived this particular area as one of great importance.

The former speaker mentioned the fact that one cannot measure the development of a country purely by saying one has built a road or has spent so much money in housing, tourism or in the manufacturing sector, and I agree. When one spends money in the area of the Police Department, the Fire Department or the courts in order to establish a proper judiciary system, that is money very well spent, and, over the years, the Barbados Labour Party has spent more money on this particular area than perhaps any other Government. We now intend to spend $5 633 747 in this area.

The Barbados Labour Party has strengthened the rule of law. We have pledged a reform of the administrative law, the establishment of an administrative review tribunal, the establishment of the office of Ombudsman and a reform of the Supreme Court Act. We feel that all of these measures will further protect the liberty of the individuals.

If I may turn briefly to our manifesto of 1981, page 27, under "The Rule of Law and Strengthening the Citizens Rights", we have pledged to: protect the right of an individual's privacy, strengthen the rights of those in police custody, give greater access to public information, and underpin the right of free association, including the right to be represented by a trade union. The Trade Union Act is dealt with under Head 28, Legal Affairs.

We have also pledged a Family Court, to implement the reform measures contained in the Supreme Court Act and the Criminal Appeals Act, to implement the judicial review provisions as recommended by the Cox Commission, so that they be entrenched in the Constitution of Barbados and strengthen the fundamental rights of all Barbadians.

With reference to the Hall of Justice, we are behind schedule as far as that particular building is concerned, but there are several reasons for that. One reason, as outlined by the Attorney-General, is that it is seen fit to save Codds House and the Jewish Synagogue.

The importance of Codds House is that at the time when Samuel Jackman Prescod, the first black man elected in Barbados, was elected to Parliament, it was at the time serving the purposes of Parliament. People know it as the old Waterworks Building. It is, indeed, in my view, noteworthy for preservation, because it represented Parliament at the time when the first black man was elected.

Secondly, the Jewish Synagogue is of historical importance to this country. Barbados was colonized in 1626, and the first Jewish settlers arrived in 1627. I have often heard the Right Honourable Member for St. John, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, for whom I have the greatest respect, on occasion say that the name "Barrow" was actually derived from the Jewish name "Barouch". I accept that as a historical fact coming from the honourable Member for St. John. I have no reason to doubt that "Barouch", which was a Jewish name, had changed to "Barrow", because, in truth and in fact, in England today there still exist a Jewish family called "Barouch".

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Legal Affairs.

Mr. A. TRUSS: I am dealing with Legal Affairs and the preservation of Codds House, because the reason for the delay in the construction of the Hall of Justice was in order to preserve Codds House and the Jewish Synagogue. I think it is relevant to deal with the Jewish Synagogue under this particular Head.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order: I would like to draw to Your Honour's attention the fact that there is no quorum in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am advised that there is no quorum. Let the bell be rung.

The bell was rung and a quorum obtained.
11.25 a.m.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, as I was saying, I appreciate the latitude which you have given me, because I think it is important that we talk about the preservation of Codds House and the old Jewish Synagogue. The entire restructuring of the Hall of Justice, as I understand it, basically involves a change of angle. As the plans were, it meant that one had to demolish the Jewish Synagogue. By changing the plans, it means that the Jewish Synagogue can be preserved, but at the same time you would lose little or no space within the Hall of Justice.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not think the Attorney-General has addressed his mind to the question of registration. You will recall that there was some question as to the information required for our national registration certificates, birth certificates, and so on. I wonder if he can explain whether that has been done by the committee.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): I feel that there is a lot of new technology which can be introduced in our records department; and you do not need a Hall of Justice to have that, you just need a willingness to bend your mind to appreciate the impact of new methods of storage and new methods of communication. It is not going to be too long where every lawyer's office in Barbados is going to have a computer terminal hooked up to a central data area, from which you will be able to get all the deeds, the companies – everything that is registered. We have to start bending our minds to this. It is not that costly. States in Australia are working on it, Hong Kong is working on it, and it is something which the Law Society or the Bar Association and the Registry should get together on immediately.

Secondly, it is time we stop having the Registrar like a yo-yo. One minute he is an acting judge, another minute he is a Registrar. We must have a fifth judge. We cannot have this situation continuing, because it affects the Registry and it affects the community.

Thirdly we have to make up our minds on the question of the Court of Appeal.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Do not mind the DLP! You all were more obstructionist than anything else!

We have to make up our minds about a Court of Appeal. Everybody knows where some of us stand. From 1966, I was always in favour of Barbados being part of a Court of Appeal of the Eastern Caribbean. If you look in the Constitution of Barbados, you will see that special provision has been made for the conferment of jurisdiction. That is one of the things that we achieved consensus on in London when we were negotiating the Constitution, and it is time that we do it. We are all part of one law school now.

We had expected that the Companies Registry and the Intellectual Property legislation would have been in force from April 1, but a problem has arisen. We had expected that we would have been able to temporarily use the area where the Court Marshals were, because the Government had rented separate and distinct premises for the Court Marshals in Roebuck Street, but I understand there has been some problem with the insurance company, which has not been settled, so the renovations have not gone on.

The Planning and Priorities Committee in Cabinet has agreed that Codds House is to be repaired, and that the Companies and Intellectual Properties office will go in there. In the meantime, agreement has been reached between the Ministry of Establishments and the Registrar's Office on the kind of personnel structure which would be necessary. So temporarily we will have the Registrar being in charge of companies and intellectual property, but he would be supported by an officer of the level of Chief Magistrate – I think they call it S–4 or something like that. When that person has been appointed, he will be able to take advantage of the opportunities which the Canadian Government and the World Intellectual Property Organisation have offered. He will be able to set up the division, go to Canada and see the modern methods.

Obviously we are not going to introduce the legislation on April 1. My Ministry has recommended January 1, 1985, as the new date, but I want to make it clear that I want the proclamation done now, because I know lawyers. They do not like any kind of change at all. When I told them last year that the date was April 1, 1984, people only started to work and hustle in the last four months, and were begging me to give them more time to study the

Act. It is two years now, and they still want more time. Everybody always wants more time. The truth of the matter is that they do not want the new law because they do not want to agitate their minds to go and study the new law. People have no idea how difficult it is to get people to accept anything new here. It is very difficult.

I wish the Attorney-General would proclaim the law now and not on January 1, 1985, so that there would not be any question that you will have to come and amend the law. That is the only way to deal with it. They would know now that they must go back to their books if they want to read it. Ninety-nine per cent of the lawyers do not practise in that area anyhow, but they still want to pass a lot of Resolutions, but it is too soon and all that kind of stuff. So we have a number of problems.

I hope that the fire in the Registry has taught us a lesson. If that fire had occurred in the other part of the Registry, there would not have been any depository that we could go and pick out a microfiche or microfilm of all of the records. We really must have new techniques of storing data. I hope that it is treated as a matter of great urgency, and I hope that we settle the problem of the fifth judge and the problem of the Court of Appeal.

There is one other area. My constituents have been complaining to me, and I am going to say it, that they have some vagabonds among the legal profession and that the profession cannot get them disciplined. People write to me from abroad about it, and I tell them to write the Disciplinary Committee, because there is a Disciplinary Committee, and I want the Disciplinary Committee to know that there is dissatisfaction among some sections of the public with the way they are handling cases against lawyers. People write to me and say that there are lawyers here who have their money for land and would not give them the conveyance or reply to them. I hope the Disciplinary Committee will deal with these people.

As a lawyer, I object to being called a crook, but I know that there is strong evidence supporting the view that there are some black sheep in the legal profession. They should be dealt with. If they do not deal with them, I will call the names of all of them in the House of Assembly and the names of the members of the Disciplinary Committee. Whenever you go abroad, you hear many Barbadians abroad are quarrelling about it, and it is time that we face up to these issues. The fact that many of us are lawyers should now allow it to continue. It is nothing to do with the judges now; it has to do with the Disciplinary Committee.
11.35 a.m.

There is also a problem with the Judicial Advisory Council. People are also complaining that the Judicial Advisory Council takes a long time to make regulations. With respect to the Maintenance Act that is on the Statute Book, the Government was cursed in the newspaper by a lawyer for not bringing in the Maintenance Act. The Government does not pass regulations; it is the Judicial Advisory Council that passes the regulations. The Bar Association should have replied to that lawyer and told her that she should have looked up the law. If she had done that, she would have seen that it is nothing to do with the Government. The Judicial Advisory Council has to gazette it.

(Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: That was a political statement.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I do not care about my politics. I am talking about the legal enlightenment. I am ashamed of the fact that somebody who pretends to be a lawyer does not even look up the law. It is very bad. And she does not have any shame, because she signed her name and everybody knows now that she does not know any law.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am not going to comment on anything else. We must have these things done. If there is a difficulty with staff, these matters should be brought to attention.

There was some discussion on the question of the upgrading of lawyers in relation to the Government Service. Last month I believe the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition had to draw the House's attention to the perennial problem which we have. We have a problem with the professionals in the Civil Service, because, whether we like it or not, there is a belief that there is a lot more money to be earned in private practice than there is to be earned in Government.

We also have a problem with our egalitarian approach to salary revisions. Barbadians are so egalitarian that there are very, very narrow differentials between the highest paid worker in the Government Service and the lowest paid one, and, as a result, people in the middle levels and up do not feel that the Civil Service is a rewarding career, and they prefer private practice. Judging from the number of blood checks that I see people being charged for, I am not so sure that today it is all a bed of roses, but the perception is that there is a lot of money to be made outside.

What is happening outside, and this is something that my constituents have also complained to me about, is that there are lawyers who are charging percentage fees as much as 30 per cent now.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: For what?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Road accidents, arbitrations, collecting debts – 30 per cent! That is not fair, and

people have been complaining about it. I have had to advise people not to pay, but to go to the Registrar and ask for a taxation, and that is what they are doing.

I am drawing these matters to the lawyers' attention because I do not think that they should feel Government is afraid to bring in a method of determining their fees, too. Everybody knows that periodically in all of these societies, you have to look at the scale of cost of the professions, and Government, as I understand it, is well on the way to looking at the scale of cost of all the professions in Barbados: architects, doctors, engineers, lawyers, surveyors – everybody. Do not think otherwise. Other countries have an office of fair trading that does a review periodically, and we must look at this. It is not fair for people to ask for 30 per cent, or even 25 per cent. I thought 10 per cent was the limit, but there are now some bold ones, who are charging 25 per cent and 30 per cent, and that is not fair.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: They are getting mixed up with debt collections.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is right – they are getting mixed up with debt collections! But we must look at these things, because it does not even obtain in the United States any more. The Probate Courts in New York State have issued directives that the old traditional 30 per cent for the administration of an estate is over. The person who brought this to my attention was somebody who had lived in America, and the person wanted to know what we were dealing with.

If we do not clean up these areas in the legal profession, the profession will not get the respect that it deserves. We should not be afraid to speak about it because it is the legal profession, and because we are dealing with these administrative matters in relation to it. We should come into the House of Assembly and deal with it, and this is the proper time. I hope that we will get these matters settled in the very near future.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Chairman, first of all, I should like to deal with the question of the preservation of the building which used to house the Waterworks. I do not subscribe to the view that every old dilapidated building in Barbados, either because of its antiquity or because once, for a brief time, some historical figure happened to have sat in that place in a legislative capacity or otherwise, should be preserved.

Recently, we have heard of the Chief Town Planner serving notices on someone to reconstruct a building which was deemed to be of historical importance. I do not know how one reconstructs with modern materials, in this modern age, a building which had been constructed by the military engineers, in the 19th century or early in the 20th century, out of bricks and rubble stone, and what benefit that will be to the community.

Certainly, the preservation of the synagogue is one which could be of tremendous advantage to this island. The point I was making the other day in reply to the Right Honourable Prime Minister was that I was very glad that he was able to persuade the Jewish community to do something about it. I was suggesting that it should not be left to someone outside of Barbados, because I had great difficulty in trying to get the Jewish community in Barbados to take an interest in any aspect of the restoration of the old synagogue, other than the graveyard itself, although most of them are reasonably well off. But when we come to the old Waterworks building, I do not know what particular architectural advantage that building has ever enjoyed, and certainly it would be in the way of any development of the Hall of Justice or the law courts which we wish to embark on.

In the United Kingdom, there is provision, where a building is of historical importance, for the owners to be compensated if you put something like a Stop Order on any development or change of use on that particular building. Unless the Government is prepared to acquire all of these buildings that young Mr. Broodhagen has designated to be of interest, we have to be very careful that we are not acting unconstitutionally and preventing a person from disposing of his property, other than of course, subject to the ordinary Town and Country Planning restrictions, in such a way as he thinks fit.

It was never considered that the demolition of a building, which is no longer serviceable to the owner, came under the restrictions of development control, because development control did not embrace the demolition of buildings, but merely the construction of buildings. Now, we are entering into a phase where the demolition of a building is supposed to be a proper Town Planning exercise.

If the Government is so concerned over the retention of edifices which the Government considers of national interest and of some economic, historical or cultural benefit to this community, then the Government ought to be in a position to say that the property will be acquired, at a price under the Land Acquisition Act which will be a fair market value.

I do not see how, in the circumstances, the Government could go to a place like the "Belair", a property which certainly needed renovating for a very long time, one with the termites beginning to take over possession and evicting the owners as it were, or any of the invitees, because of danger of collapse, and when the owner of that particular edifice, whoever he may be – I do not know whether it was Mr. Slims, I do not know his other name – is attempting to carry out some renovations, you stop him from carrying out these renovations because it has an old wooden gallery to the floor. And three doors up from the Family Planning Unit, there were three buildings, with similar galleries, which were demolished – and nobody said anything.

11.45 a.m.

I do not have any brief for the gentleman – I said that I do not even know his name. I think I entered those precincts on one occasion, years ago, to listen to some jazz music when Ernie Small was playing there – all the jazz musicians used to go there in the small hours of the morning – and I really enjoyed it. I must say that it was not a very comfortable place. You did not know where the bar ended and the dance floor began, because drinks were all over the place. Now if the owner is taking steps to improve the premises as a tourist attraction, I do not see how a wooden gallery with some upright rails puts that place into a category of places which should be retained until the end of time in Barbados.

We have to be very careful that people do not come to this island and tell us what we must do. A lot of people in the National Trust are not even in Barbados. I really welcome their participation in matters of interest in this country, but we have to be careful.

If Government owns a building and is prepared to say that it must not be torn down, that is laudable. The Adjutant General's quarters in Bay Street, which used to be the old hospital, is a building which belongs to the Government, and the Government should tell the civil servants that while they may want to increase or improve their accommodation, they are not interfering with that building – it belongs to the people of Barbados. How do you go to a private citizen whose father, or antecedents, may have left the building to be divided amongst five or six people, and the only way, under the Succession Act, to properly dispose of the estate is to sell the building to somebody who wants to develop it and divide the money amongst the beneficiaries, and tell the person he cannot sell it, because that would be change of use, and if someone comes to develop it where you can get a proper price, he will want to tear down the building.

I do not know the full history of "The Shrubbery". I do not have any brief for the owner. As a matter of fact, I once tried to acquire a small piece of land from "The Shrubbery", about 20 000 square feet, which ran behind a property which I owned at the time, which was handed down to me. The Town Planner said that I could acquire it, but the owner of "The Shrubbery" would have to take down the wall. I said to myself 'Hurray', because that is by far the ugliest wall anywhere in Barbados. I think Members will agree with me.

When Dr. Walcott lived there, it had a sweet-lime hedge growing on top of half the wall. But "Janet" or one of the hurricanes came, the hedge was destroyed, and they put some ugly bricks on top of the wall to a height of about 11 ft. So I was very pleased. Then the owner refused to sell me the 20 000 square feet of land, because he said he was not taking down the wall. MCW then came in and told the owner that if the wall was taken down, they would compensate him for the land, because they wanted to extend the pavement all the way down to "Maxwelton", where the Browns lived at the time. The owner refused to tear down the wall. So I am glad to see the wall go. The building which was taken down, "The Shrubbery", is of the same vintage as the house where the honourable Prime Minister lives. It was built by the same people, the Royal Engineers. I believe the medical officer used to live at "Tyrol Cot", and somebody else used to live at "The Shrubbery", or vice versa. They did some fantastic brick work.

What used to happen in those days was that the ships that used to take the sugar from Barbados brought down cargoes of bricks, and that is how we had these very magnificent brick buildings. But there are buildings and buildings. I believe that "Tyrol Cot" should be preserved, but I did not see any particular architectural merit in "The Shrubbery", and especially in the wall which was there. I think that to ask somebody to come and rebuild that in all its pristine glory, with the ugly wall as well, is beyond the call of duty of any Barbadian citizen.

I think that, now that this thing is in the air, Government ought to have a good look at this whole National Trust business: whether there is going to be compensation to owners, what buildings really need preserving, what buildings are not really cosmetic, whether a building is in such a state of dilapidation that it is not really worthwhile preserving it at all.

As far as the computerisation of the court records is concerned, I am not sure it is a good thing to have legal officers locked into a computer, let us say in the Registry where, instead of sending over and doing searches, an articled clerk can extract any information he likes out of the Registry without paying the necessary fees or doing the proper searches. I am a bit concerned over this universal registration business which, the National Insurance informed me only two days ago, they are embarking upon. I can see a lot of dangers in a system of registration whereby any kind of information, including your medical records, income tax returns, and other private matters could be accessable to anybody in a Government department, or anyone who is tinkering about with computers.

Some of us have seen a movie called "War Games". There really are some very bright young eleven and fourteen-year-olds who understand these things better than we do. If you have a system whereby lawyers could go and get access to records in the Registry, the next thing you know is that their children will be coming in on Saturday mornings while waiting to go to "Wheels" – where I understand the Prime Minister visits sometimes

– somebody suggested that the Prime Minister does not walk about or go anywhere, but I see him taking his children to "Wheels" – and start tinkering about and getting information out of the government computer about people's income tax, what operations people's wives had and so on. It can be very dangerous.

In our search for modernization, we have to remember that we live in a small society. Modernization is expensive, and it is not labour intensive. What we need is efficiency with the resources, which are mainly human resources, which we have. We need to use those human resources, as productively and efficiently as possible. I am not in favour, just because people in certain countries who produce these technological devices are employing them, because of the vastness of their societies, of the Government or anybody else spending money on that kind of thing which can have far-reaching consequences insofar as national and personal security and liberty are concerned.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Chairman, it appears that I came to the House just in time, because although the connection between some of the matters to which the Leader of the Opposition has adverted, and Legal Affairs is tenuous, I think he has touched on a number of matters which concern the Government, and which we should thank him for drawing to the attention of the House.

First, to deal with the computer, I have the authority of Mr. Deputy Speaker for saying that it is possible at present to tap the Government's computer as it now is. He says that as long as there is a telephone in the room where the computer is, there are methods of doing it.
11.55 a.m.

It is possible to put protective codes in the computers so that people cannot get certain aspects of information, but I understand that clever people know how to instruct the computer to search for its own codes. Certainly there is on record the case of one very skilful bank employee who knew how to instruct the computer to search for the code which dealt with the transfers of funds to personal accounts. The computer searched for the code, unlocked itself, he gave himself a million dollars, went to California, where the computer recorded what was in his account, took the money and went to the Philippines, never to be seen again. There were two Philippine cases involving great sums of money, so I think it is a danger of which we all have to be aware.

The Leader of the Opposition cannot possibly know, but just at the moment Government departments have gone mad about computers. They are asking the firms in Bridgetown to provide plans for computerisation of this, that or the other record, and the firms in Bridgetown are only too glad to be asked by somebody who does not know about computers, because they can offer plans much more elaborate than someone going to try to find out for himself would normally see.

Somewhere buried in the Estimates is a computer for the Ministry of Labour. I think the amount is $80 000. I objected to it at first, but they eventually convinced me that it came with a training programme and with soft ware, and that it really would be an excellent means of dealing with the old age pensioners, national assistance and other people who are on welfare one way or another.

One computer firm in Bridgetown gave a quotation of $2 million to the police to give them a computer which would not only categorise the three hundred or four hundred criminals in Barbados – I doubt there are any more than 500 people whose names would have to be recorded by the police on a permanent basis as people to watch: the people who have been to Dodds, people who have been convicted, and people who have been caught but not brought before the courts for lack of evidence – but this $2 million computer apparently was going to do resource allocation manpower management – every conceivable thing that you can think of – at this enormous cost. The Government had to decide that it really could not believe that the police records needed anything more than a $10 000 off-the-counter Radio Shack computer, and the training of a couple of people who would transfer – I said it was 500, but suppose it was 1500 – the 1500 record cards to the computer with a note of the *modi operandi* of Barbados' known criminals so that you would save an hour or so when you want to find out who breaks warehouses, who breaks schools or whatever when such a crime is reported.

I think we not only have to be careful about computerisation for its own sake, but we have to be very careful about being ripped off by computer salesmen, who pour it on because we are ignorant. We belong to the ignorant generation. A computer keyboard looks like a typewriter keyboard, and our acquaintance with a computer ends at that point. I have a personal computer at home. I have tried very hard to teach myself to use it – I sit down in front of it, I type, I spend half an hour on it – but I cannot get it done. I have a child at home who sits down and creates computer games and knows how to copy software systems. Children know these things, which, perhaps, will always be closed books to people of my generation.

To touch on the other point, the question of old buildings, I will have to ask you, Mr. Chairman, to allow me the same latitude, on what is really a town planning matter, as he allowed the Leader of the Opposition.

This matter is very much in the air at the moment, and the legal steps you have to take on the preservation of old buildings are matters of quite intense discussion, albeit in a narrow circle. I cannot go into every aspect of it, but there are a few things which the Leader of the Opposition has said, and which have been published otherwise, that deserve to be dealt with.

First, the constitutionality. I have had an opinion from legal officers of Government that since the Town Planning Act was made before independence, matters done under and by virtue of the Town Planning Act cannot be in contravention of the constitutional prohibitions on dealing with properties. It is a small point, but it is worth setting people's minds at rest.

The second thing is the general principle of paying compensation where you list somebody's property and prevent them from doing what they like with it. Town planning development, as developed in Britain shortly after World War II, was an ideological concept of the use of property. The Government effectively set out to nationalise the use of property. That was what it said. Nobody was to be allowed to do as he would with property as was the case in the past.

This first concept of planning development in Britain was that you had to apply for permission to do something, and if the permission was granted, well and good; but if the permission was not granted, you could ask for compensation for the loss of permission, and a town planning fund was created to deal with that. Into this fund a proportion of the accretion to the value of property on being granted planning permission was supposed to be paid, and out of that fund compensation for the refusal of planning permission was also supposed to be paid.

That concept broke down very early on this very matter of historical buildings over and above any questions of zoning. I think that, eventually, the Government had to come to a decision to get rid of it after the clubs in St. James Street and the surrounding streets began to apply for planning permission, hoping that the permission would be refused so that the Government would have to pay large sums of money for the preservation, for example, of the Travellers' Club and the Reform Club. I am a member of the Reform Club, and I can tell you it would be a serious historical tragedy to demolish the Reform Club. The interior contains some quite exceptional architectural work.

The clubs started to apply to demolish the clubs and build skyscrapers. They could not be given permission because of the historical nature of the clubs, and large sums of money – £440 000 is the figure that comes to memory in the case of one of them – had to be paid as compensation for refusing the permission. Virtually from that day onward the historical development of town planning has been more as a function of zoning rather than of controlling and owning the use of property, which was the immediate post war concept in Britain.

Our Town Planning Act is informed by considerations of zoning rather than of historical interest, and certainly not of charging people for the benefit of planning permission, and compensating them where planning permission could not be given. So, basically, we have proceeded in town planning in this country on the zoning basis.

12.05 p.m.

If it is recalled that the Town Planning Act said, originally, that all land in Barbados could be used for agricultural purposes, you will understand that it was starting from a basis that the natural use of land was agriculture, but that there were certain zones where development could be allowed. That had its anomalies.

You could carry on a chicken farm or horse-racing stables in the middle of Broad Street, if you could find the land, subject only to public health considerations of not creating a nuisance. In 1981, honourable Members will recall that we put an end to that. You now need permission to carry on agricultural activities in residential areas, just as you would need permission to build a house on agricultural land. But, despite the basic zoning concept, the Town Planning Act has always contained provisions protecting historical buildings. The sections from Section 27 onwards all deal with preventing people from destroying the country's assets.

Section 27 prevents people from cutting down trees. We have recently made regulations about that. You cannot cut down a tree with a diameter of more than one metre without permission. This does not seem to have gone into the public consciousness – I noticed that a mahogany tree at Rockley was recently cut down – but we are doing our best. The Town Planner and his staff are keeping their eyes open, especially where building works are going on near trees, so that they can warn the owners of the trees not to cut them down without permission.

Section 28 gives the Minister responsible for Town Planning the authority to make Building Preservation Orders. Where you see a building threatened by a development, you can make a Building Preservation Order, but let me make a distinction. The list, generally, is for buildings of special architectural or historical interest. Building Preservation Orders may be made in respect of those buildings, but you can make a Building Preservation Order in respect of an unlisted building, unlisted, that is, under Section 29.

Section 29 sets out the conditions under which buildings are to be listed. I have said in another place that I take on my shoulders the responsibility for the initiative which has led to the recent architectural listings. I considered that doing it *ad hoc* would give rise to a lot of difficulty. Accordingly, a list has been compiled under Section 29, in consultation with the Barbados National Trust, and this is the list which has recently come to the public's attention.

At the moment the list is incomplete. The list has concentrated particularly on St. Michael and on buildings owned by the Government and the church. There will be many other buildings in other parts of Barbados, besides churches and Government buildings, which will, in due course, be listed, and, in case the general public thinks that the Town Planning Office is interested only in old buildings, I have instructed the Chief Town Planner to have a look at all modern buildings in Barbados. I said, "Start with Sandy Lane," and I told him to examine all modern buildings and see which of architectural interest should be preserved, so that, in due course, they will go on the list as well. It is not just because a building is old that we are putting it on the list.

Those three sections are the sections to which I have asked the Town Planner to pay attention for the purpose of preserving the architectural heritage of the country.

Hitler employed the young Albert Speer at the age of 25, I think. The Leader of the Opposition is very familiar with Speer's work. He was the architect for the Nuremburg Rally, and I think the honourable Member has accused the Barbados Labour Party of following the principles of the Nuremburg Rally in some of its most spectacular meetings. Speer so impressed Hitler with the work for the rally that he employed him to replan Berlin, and he uttered the words that "in architecture, mankind leaves its greatest because it is his most conscious work."

I do not go the whole distance with the gentleman, but I do say that we must pay some attention to the buildings in our country, especially because of our small size. If people do not think that overhanging galleries are important, the Town Planner should persuade the Government Information Service to explain to people that what might seem old-fashioned and no more than quaint, may be important from the point of view of architectural planning balance within a city.

I do not want to give a lecture on architecture, but everybody knows perfectly well that Speightstown is an attractive place because the buildings on the main street in Speightstown have overhanging galleries which represent a past era in Barbados, are pleasing to the eye, reminds you of the history, and so on. You can learn all of this from common architectural works.

I certainly belong to the school which believes that nobody will ever want to see the small concrete matchboxes that have sprung up around the streets of Bridgetown in place of buildings that had some charm and decoration in the past. Too many of our businessmen have never travelled outside of Barbados to understand that a utilitarian concrete matchbox is there only for fifty years, before it is knocked down on the grounds of ugliness. But, as I said, I cannot deal with architecture in all its ramifications.

I will deal with the specific cases that have come under the Head of Legal Affairs, where legal action has been taken by the Town Planner recently. In Bay Street, the Government considers that overhanging galleries of the Martineau house, where the Barbados Labour Party was founded in 1938, are important architecturally, just as the house is important historically.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: No, no. The first week it was the Barbados Labour Party, and at the next meeting Dr. Scott said he was not any Labourite, and he objected and had the title changed to the Barbados Progressive League. I can show the honourable Member the Minute Book. I have it in my office. The Barbados Labour Party was founded in March, 1938.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: It was not abolished. The name was changed.

The interesting thing about the foundation of the Barbados Labour Party in that house was that Grantley Adams was not present. He was doing a case in St. Lucia at the time.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: There were a lot of doctors at that first meeting, but in those days we had a lot of sensible doctors in politics, Dr. Storey, Dr. Scott, Dr. Payne – a lot of them.

To get back to Bay Street, that house is of architectural and historic interest, and we aim to preserve that house. Now once the street has the character of one of the houses having an overhanging gallery – and, indeed, it is a very fine house; it has a gallery on both sides – it is reasonable to try to preserve the rest of the street with some uniformity.

12.15 p.m.

We lost one of the wooden galleries at Harry's Nitery, when, just after the time when I was the legal adviser, a concrete gallery, lacking the grace, of a wooden

gallery, was added. But there are wooden galleries, and it is the intention to preserve that part of Bay Street with that character. The other side of Bay Street has been.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order: What the Prime Minister is saying is very interesting to all of us. I have to draw to your attention that we are still on Head 28, which is Ministry of Legal Services, and we have been on it for some considerable time. He might not be aware of that; he might think that we are on Health. I am sure he does not intend to have a long discourse on it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Both sides of the House have strayed, nonetheless I believe it is the consensus of the Committee that the remarks made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and those being made by the Honourable Prime Minister are of interest. If the Committee will indicate to me that it would rather pass the Head, then let some honourable Member move that the question be put.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I shall not be long. The reason why when the Belair was being dealt with the Town Planning intervened is not that we did not want the Belair to be renovated. We really are very grateful to Mr. Price for taking an old building and seeking to preserve it. He is doing exactly what the Act contemplates. We have no quarrel with Mr. Price renovating the Belair – Mr. Price is now the owner; the Bank of Nova Scotia foreclosed on the building and sold it to Mr. Price – but the Town Planner wanted to make it clear that the renovations could not be carried out without consent of the department.

The department may be able to give some help, may be able to give some advice on colour schemes and so on. There may be other incentives which, in the fullness of time, may become available, and the intervention of the law in the matter of the renovation of the Belair was designed to preserve the facade of the building in its original form. Two doors had been blocked up, and I gather that Mr. Price reopened all the doors, but as far as we were concerned, he really only needed to reopen the two downstairs doors. I would like to express my thanks to him for his co-operation with the Government in this matter. The matter has been resolved most amicably, and I am sure will form the basis of co-operation with other owners in the future.

There is a scheme for Bay Street which will involve road widening, but in such a way as not to destroy any of the historic buildings. The Bay cottages, three together on the one side, will be preserved, and so will be the galleried buildings on the other side.

"The Shrubbery" is a matter which, I suppose, is almost in the courts, and so I cannot say too much about it. But on the question of the wall, there was never any difficulty about the wall. The wall was always to be demolished, and I dare say the Town Planner welcomed its demolition as much as the Leader of the Opposition. It is a wall for which permission would never have been given in that form under the present planning legislation.

It seems that some settlement, if such a term is appropriate, may be in the pipeline between the owners of "The Shrubbery" and the Government. I cannot say some things, which will be favourable to the owners, which I might like to say, because I dare say that if the matter goes to court it will appear in matters of litigation, but I do see some mitigating factors. And since the property bounds on government land, it may very well be that a better use of the Culloden Farm boundary and "The Shrubbery", and the property formerly owned by the Leader of the Opposition and indeed the property next door to that, may very well be found. We may not have to trouble the department of Legal Affairs too much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG(St. James North): Sir, I am going to put the Head, but I could not let the comment made by the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) go unchallenged. The impression which he has conveyed is that this side is wasting time. This Head, a matter which I consider should take no more than ten or fifteen minutes, started last night at 8.02 p.m. The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King), as a lawyer, dealt with the matter, and then you had all kinds of contributions from the other side. Did he not expect us to respond? This is the Government, and we must respond.

You had some control over the time it took to debate Head 28. Within 15 minutes this morning, four of you spoke, so you will have to tell the Leader of the Opposition that. You are not going to make comments about the Government and think that it is not going to reply. It is a matter entirely for you if you want the debate to get through.

The question that the sum of $1 693 641 under Head 28 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – stand part of the Schedule, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 29 – PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS – $60 449

The question that Head 29 stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 30 – POLICE

Head 30 – Police – was called.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $7 442 701 under Head 30 – Police – stand part of the Schedule.

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

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Chairman, I believe it was just about a year ago, at this same time in debate on last year's Estimates, that we considered the Police Force. At that time, a lot of optimism was expressed about the direction in which the Police Force was going and about the boost in morale which was expected from the new Commissioner of Police, and new programmes were articulated, particularly the programme in relation to the resident beat police officer. Now, one year later, I am not so sure that the same optimism can be expressed about the general state of the Police Force, because there are a number of complaints and public concerns very much in evidence about the operation of the Police Force.

First of all, let me deal with the question of appointments to senior positions in the Police Force. I believe it is fair to say that in relation to appointments to senior positions in the Police Force, there is public concern that undue pressures from the political directorate are being brought to bear in relation to the appointments in senior positions in the Police Force.
12.25 p.m.

I believe this matter should concern all. Appointment to positions in the Police Force should be in the hands of the Police Service Commission – the Governor-General acts on the advice of the Police Service Commission – and the Police Service Commission should be free to make its appointments without fear of interference from anybody in this country, irrespective of their political associations, and irrespective of economic influences which may be brought to bear in respect of any considerations other than considerations which the Commission considers to be in the best interest of the Force.

We have to be concerned, for instance, that police officers, who have been proven in enquiries not to have the best records, should be, and are being considered for appointments, and are being catapulted up the ladder of the Police Force over other police officers whose records speak for them in a better light.

It is certainly going to do the morale of the Force no good if officers down the line are going to feel that they are being overlooked, because of what they may conceive to be pressures being brought to bear on the whole question of appointments from sources which should not really be taken into account in determining appointments.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I have to ask the honourable Member a favour. I would be very glad to know this. Has he got any evidence of any police officer being promoted over the head of another police officer senior to him, except where the Commissioner of Police has recommended it, in the last five years?

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, I am making the comments in the way in which I intend to make them. I will not at this moment be drawn into any argument with the Right Honourable Member for St. Thomas by replying to any specific question which he may direct. I raise the questions, and I invite the Right Honourable Member for St. Thomas to investigate the areas about which I have complained. I am sure that if he does a little research it will not be too difficult to pinpoint the areas about which I have complained.

Aside

Mr. M. A. KING: I was not going to mention promotions outside of Barbados, but now that that issue is being raised, I believe that a number of police officers from the Barbados Police Force are doing service outside of Barbados. I believe that there is a very slight increase in the Estimates for the Police Force. I wonder if we could have some information from the honourable Member responsible for the Police Force regarding the conditions of the police officers who are part of the Barbados Police Force and who are serving overseas. What provision is being made for paying them whilst they are overseas? What provision is being made to effectively carry out the work which those police officers who are now serving overseas would have had to do if they were in Barbados?

There is no doubt that because Barbados' police officers are having to serve overseas in various areas, there will be a lacuna in certain areas of the operations of the Barbados Police Force. We would not want to feel that there is any deficiency in any areas of the Barbados Police Force because of the assignment of Barbados' police officers in other directions. I believe that only yesterday, during the course of debate, a statement was made in this Honourable House that the officers who are serving overseas in Grenada were likely to be stationed there for the whole of the year. If that is so, it means that it has to have an effect on the number of persons who are available to serve in the courts in Barbados, and would have an overall effect on the efficiency and dynamism of the local force.

In the course of his statement this morning, the honourable Member for St. Michael Central (Mr. A. Truss) referred to the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto when he talked about the Government's wish and intention to strengthen the rights of those in police custody. As is his wont, he proceeded to read parts of the manifesto without making any point about it.

The rights of persons who are in police custody is something which is a matter of concern to a lot of us who are concerned about the rights of persons as citizens of this community. From time to time, we hear that people are being detained in police custody, and that they are denied the right of seeing and consulting with their lawyers. We hear various reasons given as to why persons have not been able to consult with their lawyers whilst in police custody. We hear various statements about the length of time that people have been detained. We hear various questions about the length of time which the police may lawfully detain people without charging them or without bringing them to trial.

Everybody seems not to want to understand, particularly the police, that, strictly speaking, they have no right to detain persons unless they arrest them. Sometimes when you hear senior police officials asking you: "How long have we got the right to hold the person without formally charging them?", you begin to ask yourself: "Is this the way how the police officers think, or have they been so accustomed to detaining people without people understanding what their rights are that it has now become part of the thought process?"

We know, from practical experience, that the police are inclined to tell people; "We invite you to come to the station so that we may investigate the matter," but people who feel constrained to go to the police station more often than not do not realize that they have a right to say: "If you do not have me under arrest, I am not staying." Persons, especially persons who are not guilty, and are inclined to assist the police in investigations when they are asked to go to stations, and the police, above everyone else, ought to know and understand that they have no right to detain people unless they charge them.

So when the honourable Member for St. Michael Central talks about introducing legislation to protect the rights of persons in police custody, it is important that we recognize that there is a large body of people who are concerned about persons who may be the victims of police detention, and their families and friends. We are concerned about the rights of individuals who may be held by the police, and who may be, or may not be, held under arrest or under any law in power.
12.35 p.m.

While I am dealing with this question of detention by the Police, I think it is appropriate to mention the conditions under which persons who are arrested are detained overnight in cells at Police Stations. I think one does not have to use too much imagination if you visit the cells at Central Police Station, for instance, to see the very abominable conditions under which prisoners are held there overnight. You may say that it is not a long time. It is true that it is just overnight, because the next day they should be brought before the courts and, if they are not given bail, incarcerated in Glendairy. But the cells at the Central Police Station are in an abominable state and they smell horrible, particularly of urine. It is about time that some attention is given to establishing better environmental conditions at the prisons, at least minimum health and safety standards even for prisoners. Because even although they are prisoners, they are entitled to certain health standards.

Another area of concern is the whole question of the long delays in getting inquests brought before the court to be completed.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): If the honourable Member will just allow me to interrupt him, Sir; I am really taking note of the time, not only the Clerks at the table. Surely, my colleague, the Member for Christ Church West Central, has been speaking for more than fifteen minutes. I know it is human nature that he could have just overlooked the time, but I know he has been speaking for more than fifteen minutes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you referring to the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central?

Certain remarks made by the honourable Member for St. James North at this stage were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your indulgence, which I will not trespass on. I was making the point that inquests, in my view, are being delayed too long before they get before the courts. They are a number of inquests where there have been fatal accidents. There are some cases pending now for two years where the inquests have not yet reached the court. These are areas which need to be expedited. There need not be such an unreasonable delay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King) made the alarming statement that political pressures were being brought to bear on the appointment of senior officers in the Police Force. Strangely enough, he directed his question to the Right Honourable Prime Minister. I do not know if he does not want the Minister who is responsible for Police to reply. If so, you could consider that a rule of the Opposition is to say something without wanting an answer.

I can say, however, quite categorically, that, certainly during the time I have been in the Ministry, the recommendations of the Commissioner of Police to the Police Service Commission have been strictly adhered to

– much to my regret. If that is the basis for criticism, then make the criticism. I have seen recommendations from the Commissioner from time to time which looked rather strange to me, and I was confident that the Police Service Commission would reject them, but they did not. The honourable Member should know better to pick up those titbits of gossip around James Street, which is the most fruitful area for gossip in Barbados, and bring them in here.

(Aside).

Hon. L. R. TULL: I am glad that the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) said that I do not interfere with anybody. The Commissioner of Police said in December of last year, at the Annual General Meeting of the Police Association, that there had been no political interference by the Government in the operation of the Police Force since he was there. He said it. At the meeting, I asked the Commissioner of Police and the members of the Association present, after I thanked him for that statement, to give me an undertaking that the Police will not interfere with the operations of Government. I have not got that promise yet.

(Aside)

Hon. L. R. TULL: If you are so supine that you do not understand how the Police can interfere with the operation of Government – too bad for you. I am not here to educate you.....*(Aside)*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please order.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, statements such as that made by the Commissioner of Police remain etched in my memory, because we have gone through a long period, since we were in Government, of hearing irresponsible people – aided by people who should know better, like the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, who is today articulating the malice that he picks up in gossip around Bridgetown – say that we have been interfering with the operation of the Police Force. The Commissioner of Police in Barbados is a man who speaks his mind freely – he does not always say the right thing, but he speaks his mind quite freely – and he has said, without invitation or provocation, that since he has been Commissioner of Police, the Police Force has not been put under pressure nor interfered with by the Government.

In respect of promotions – I see them. They come through me and they go to the Police Service Commission. I tried for the few minutes before the honourable Member finished his contribution to think hard of one recommendation for promotion made by the Commissioner of Police to the Police Service Commission which was not accepted. I cannot think of any.

12.45 p.m.

From time to time I talk to the Commissioner of Police and express my misgivings about certain things, and I will continue to do so. He listens, he does not always agree with me. He is a very single-minded man, he knows what he wants, and he goes ahead and he does what he has to do. I only want to nail the lie to that one, because that is a good headline statement. I believe that it was intended for that, so I had to deal with that before the headlines are written.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member is questioning my motives for making my speech. He is imputing improper motives, he is accusing me of catching the headlines.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I do not know why the honourable Member is complaining, I believe that politicians like the headlines. What is wrong with that? Anyhow, I hope that I have nailed that particular lie.

The honourable Member says that a year ago there was great optimism about the Police Force, the direction in which it is going, the rise of morale and all of that. Again, Sir, that was pretty well inspired. I can well remember how "Sleepy" Smith was going around the James Street area putting out all sorts of stories about the appointment of the Commissioner of Police and what pressures were brought to bear in this area and the other area, whose arms were twisted, and making all kinds of ridiculous statements that had no foundation in fact.

The morale of the police is as high as it has been. I want to state a few things that happened to the police during the past year and then I will move on from there.

The honourable Member made allusion to the Resident Beat Officer Scheme, which has been an outstanding success. This scheme started some time in the early part of last year, and I have been receiving from members of the public, many words of commendation for the establishment of this scheme, which provides for an officer who is there as their friend and counsellor, and who deals with day-to-day problems that come up in their districts.

It was a scheme instituted by the Commissioner because he want to re-establish the image of the police officer as a community person, a man vitally involved in the day-to-day activities of a particular community, thereby establishing the confidence of the community in a particular police officer. It has been a tremendous success.

The officers in the scheme have been working with youth groups, schools, church groups and every kind of reputable group in a district to restore confidence in policing to the people, and indeed to help the people in the various ventures which they undertake in their districts.

During the past year we have also had the institution of the Juvenile Liaison Scheme. This scheme is to help young people, children – first offenders with trivial offences – to have their matters resolved outside the courts, and to provide a certain measure of counselling to them to help them avoid getting into further acts of trouble.

It is not solely a police operation. I believe the Commissioner of Police is the Chairman, but we have representatives from the Welfare Department, the Ministry of Education, the Probation Department, the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Child Care Board. These people and some from other agencies, who can be, and are, co-opted from time to time deal with the problems of these young offenders and help them through counselling to avoid the type of problems they find themselves in in the first place.

During the past year, we have seen a beefing up of police public relations. It is not only what you hear on the radio, on mornings, a charming policewoman's voice helping with the traffic and so on, but indeed we see the department, under Inspector Longe, using the media in the evenings to alert Barbadians as to certain difficulties which they should keep their eyes out for, and advising them of what is happening in a district. If there is a build up in the incidence of crime in a particular district, the police will speak to the people in that district and tell them what is happening, and tell them to lock up their doors and windows.

It is an outreach to the public by the Police Department such as has not been seen in this country for many a year, and it is paying dividends. It is paying dividends in the diminution of reported crime in the past year in almost every area. There has been a reduction in violent crime by almost 40 per cent. Crimes against visitors to the island in whatever form have fallen, and juvenile crime has been reduced by 50 per cent over the past year. These are significant statistics, so I do not understand why the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central believes things are going to pieces and that the morale in the Police Force is falling.

He made reference to another matter, which I would like to spend a moment or two on, and this is in respect of complaints against the police for heavy-handedness.

The honourable Member cannot feel as strongly as I do that the police should not take advantage of citizens. The police must understand that, in carrying out their jobs, they must operate inside the law. I certainly will not be condoning any evidence of police brutality, any trampling on the rights of the citizens of this country. The honourable Member can be assured that as long as I have anything to do with it, that would be the line I will be taking.

To go on to another matter, it is very easy for all and sundry to complain about the police – without any evidence to back their complaints. The police have a very difficult job. While we complain about them, we expect them to protect us, and sometimes they deal with some very vicious and ruthless people. You have to take all that into consideration.

With a police complaints procedure, you have to be sure you do not set up the type of procedure which will undermine the confidence of the public in the police, and, on the other hand, you must not devise a procedure which is so burdensome on police investigation that you destroy the morale of the Police Force. You have to strike a delicate balance.

In the past year, I have been giving thought to the whole question of police complaint procedure. At the moment, and it has been so from time immemorial, the police investigate and adjudicate complaints made against themselves. All of us who are lawyers trained in the common law know that it is a basic violation of the natural justice law that a man should not be judge in his own case. It is an untidy situation to have a complaint made against the police and have the police investigate the complaint and adjudicate it too. Something is wrong with that, and I have given a lot of thought to it. I have discussed it with the Commissioner, I told him I really am not too happy with it.

12.55 p.m.

On the other hand, you have to be careful that you do not import too strong an external element into investigations against the police, because if you do that, you are going to destroy the integrity of the Police Force. The Police are not going to be happy if you set up an independent group of people to investigate every complaint against them and adjudicate it. They will say; "I have the type of job that makes that sort of operation difficult".

So what is the answer? I submit that the answer is striking a balance between the two. First, you continue to allow the police to do their own investigations. After all, who else is going to do it. You cannot ask a private citizen to go out and investigate a complaint against the police. Complaints against the police come to me regularly, and they range from bad manners to felonies. People complain that a policeman has been rude to them,

and they do not see why they should pay taxes to pay a policeman to be rude to them. So you cannot ask a private citizen, or a handful of private citizens, to investigate complaints of that nature. The police will have to do it, but I have under consideration, and I am discussing this with the Commissioner of Police, having some external element in the adjudication after the investigation has been completed.

During the past year, there has been a marked drop in the number of complaints made against the police. I want you to remember that. I do not know what is the reason for this, but I would venture to say that the fact that the Commissioner of Police has set up a Complaints Committee, headed by an Assistant Superintendent of Police, who deals with these things on a day-to-day basis, and who has a time limit by which investigation and adjudication must be done, has gone a long way towards reducing the complaints. It obviously has had some impact on the way the policeman on the beat or the criminal investigator behave.

But there is more to it than that. A number of policemen have been put before the Courts for beating and assaulting them. Some of them have been thrown out of the Police Force for carrying away money from inside the Force. The police know that if they are in breach of the criminal law, they will be visited by the Commissioner of Police with very strong action. They are not getting away with murder. Over the past year, I have seen a number of policemen being disciplined. I have seen policemen sent to prison. The message is clear. We will not be condoning any illegal or criminal activity by an individual police officer.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg that you report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. CHAIRMAN left the Chair and reported progress to Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 2 o'clock today for lunch.

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.

1.05 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, before we go back to Committee, I indicated to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that there is a Resolution for $1.055 million, Order No. 9 on the Supplementary Order Paper, which I would like to do during the course of the day. I propose to do it at this point, and then we can always go back into Committee. If there is no objection, I crave Your Honour's indulgence.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House is already in Committee of Supply. The Leader of the House is entitled when the House is in Committee to deal with a matter on the Order Paper and then continue with the other matters. It is only at the end of the day that he would want to report on the matter from the Order Paper.

The House will resume Committee of Supply.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Mr. Chairman, before I move that we deal with this Resolution, I indicated to my colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that this is a Resolution for a sizeable amount of money and that it would bring about some debate.

My view would be to do this Resolution now, have it passed in all its stages – and I am giving this Committee the assurance that I am prepared to call the Ministry of Transport and Works Head so that they can have a wide-ranging debate on the Ministry of Transport and Works. On the other hand, the view may be taken that they can say what they have to say on this – and probably there would hardly be much more to say on MTW. It is a matter of choice for the Opposition.

I should like, however, to give the House the assurance that I am going to call MTW as soon as I call Head 74, which is Defence and Security, so that we would have an opportunity to deal with MTW. I should also like to let the Deputy Leader of the Opposition know that any time I give him my word on any matter at all, he can

accept it. I would try to outgun and outfox him in the debate, but when I give him my word on the floor of the House, he can rest assured that I will stand by it.

I beg to move that this Resolution be dealt with in all its stages if there is no objection, and that the Minister of Transport and Works, in whose name it stands, may proceed.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the House did discuss this matter with me, and he did give me the kind of assurances which he is now giving this Committee, and we are prepared to proceed with this Resolution without any kind of protest. Depending on how the matter is introduced, we may be prepared to allow this matter to proceed without very much debate. I am very glad to see that, on this particular occasion, the Minister is speaking first and not from behind, and I would like to assure the Leader of the House that he may be able to outfox me in other matters, but not in debates on the floor of this House.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I did say "outfox and outgun". Maybe I cannot outfox him, but I can outgun him.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1983–84 NO. 33

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON (St. Michael West Central): Mr. Chairman, this request for a supplementary is occasioned as a consequence of some delays which were experienced during the construction of the Spring Garden and St. Barnabas Highways. As you are aware, Sir, Messrs. C. O. Williams and Company were awarded the contract for the construction of these two highways. For the most part, the contract was on schedule, but due to the fact that a number of intervening considerations posed some difficulty in so far as the execution of the work was concerned, additional consideration had to be given to those delays and the attending expenses that were occasioned. These interruptions resulted largely from the fact that, particularly on the St. Barnabas leg of the St. Barnabas Highway, a number of design changes were called for as a consequence of the decision to install roundabouts. This, however, was only one of the factors that had to be taken into consideration.

The National Housing Corporation had some difficulty in executing the relocation works of the residents of the area of St. Barnabas Road, and the difficulty occasioned in this relocation exercise translated into a delay for the main contractors as well. Some additional lands had to be compulsorily acquired as a consequence of the need for redesign of the road, and this, too, led to further delays in the execution of the project.

2.15 p.m.

One of the problems we have always experienced when we had works of this nature in progress is that occasioned by the need to relocate utility lines. We have not been fully able to get the utility companies to work together with us. Although we are in constant dialogue with them, from time to time we still experience substantial delays, which lead to additional expense, on very carefully prepared projects. One such delay which I can bring to your memory, was the delay occasioned on the Pine East-West Road, where, even after the Ministry of Transport and Works had already barber-greened the surface, we still had to wait for several weeks, indeed months, to have electrical lines relocated.

The Telephone Company is usually fairly fast in responding to our requests to relocate utility poles, but the Light and Power Company is not always as prompt as we would like, and this leads to difficulties. In relation to the St. Barnabas Highway, the need to relocate underground cables in the area of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation was one of the reasons for the fairly extensive delay. As always, as you are aware, this translated into additional expense for the contractor, who had to virtually demobilize and wait until that particular matter was solved.

The project drew a fair amount of on-site marl fill from the stone cuttings through Mount Friendship, but because of the relocation exercise which I referred to earlier, it was necessary for the contractors to seek additional marl fill from off-site locations.

All these matters resulted in substantial delays. The removal and the relocation of houses at Mount Friendship occasioned a delay from July 1981 to April 1982; design and construction of retaining walls to minimize land acquisition – July 1981 to March 1982; relocation of houses along Highway 5 – September 1981 to March 1982; the relocation of the telephone cables, again the same time frame – September 1981 to June 1982.

The delays resulted in the contractor submitting a total claim of $1.7 million. But during the adjudication process, Delcano, who were our consultants on the job, adjusted the claim, based on the justifiable delay from 25.13 weeks, to $1 055 318.07, or $666 450.36 below the contractor's figure.

This, therefore, is the reason for this supplementary, and I beg to move that this Head do now stand part.

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

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

ESTIMATES DEBATE RESUMED

HEAD 30 – POLICE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We will now resume the Estimates debate. We were at Head 30.

Does any other honourable Member wish to make a contribution? The honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, in speaking on this particular Head, I wish to start by making the point that I am very glad to hear from the Attorney-General, the Minister of Legal Affairs, that there has been a reduction in crime. When I spoke on this matter last year, I believe I had cause to refer to the hyperinflation in crime that was taking place in this country in recent years, so I am pleased to know that there has been a reduction. This is to the good of our community and it does show that the Police Force, under proper direction, and with the assistance of the public at large, can carry out its very difficult task of walking that tight rope between the maintenance of law and order in this society, and doing it within the framework of the fundamental rights and privileges of the individual citizen.

I should also like to take this opportunity to compliment the Police Force, particularly those officers who have been directly responsible for good police work in achieving the result to which the Attorney-General referred.

I, however, wish to address the particular subject of complaints about the Royal Barbados Police Force. There is still, in this country, considerable criticisms against that Force about wrong doings on the part of members of the Force and about police brutality. We hear all kinds of phrases being used about certain procedures within the Force in that regard.

I started by saying that there is a tight rope which has to be walked between the preservation and maintenance of law and order and the preservation of the rights of the individual. Therefore, in carrying out their functions, there is a considerable responsibility placed on the shoulders of all police officers, not only to ensure that the general public is protected, but also that those persons who may be suspected of wrong doing or criminal activity are treated in such a way that their individual rights are not in any way abrogated or infringed.

It is human that in the execution of their duties, charges and accusations will be made. One cannot avoid that when we are dealing with people. I think it is also incumbent, however, to ensure that when accusations and charges are made against the manner in which members of the Police Force carry out their functions, there should be adequate machinery, and an impartial or independent mechanism in place, to ensure not only that justice is done, but that justice is seen to be done.
2.25 p.m.

This matter was raised during the Estimates last year. On that occasion, the Attorney-General and the Minister of Legal Affairs said exactly what he said today, that he was in discussion with the Commissioner of Police about introducing into the investigation of wrong doings on the part of members of the Police Force, and in relation to charges made by members of the public, some independent machinery, in terms of the adjudication, when the facts had been investigated by the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I would like to ask the Attorney-General how far those discussion have gone. I have had occasion to read back last year's debates, and from what the Arrorney-General has said today, there appears, on the surface of it, to be no further progress apart from the discussion. I think that a year is time enough for the Attorney-General to be able to report some kind of progress on these matters.

I do not know what would be the difficulties involved in terms of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, or in terms of the police administration, against the establishment of an impartial and independent complaints review body to look into any dissatisfaction which may still remain and persist after the police have carried out their own internal and departmental investigation. One is not questioning the right, need, or the desirability of the Force to investigate and to inquire into complaints made by the public against their operations. That is as it should be. But I am saying that if we accept the principle that justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done, or appear to be done, then I believe it would be in the interest of the Royal Barbados Police Force itself to willingly accept that independent and impartial final body, which could deal with what I hope would be only residual dissatisfaction after the Royal Barbados Police Force has carried out its investigation.

I do not wish to belabour this point anymore. I think that I have made it quite clearly, and I hope the Minister will be able to give me a clear statement as to what progress has been made on these matters.

There is one other issue to which I would like to refer. It is clear that the police have a very big job on their hands to hold down crime in this country and to ensure that the laws of the country are maintained and that order is preserved. They can only do this if they are given the resources necessary to carry out that task. I have looked at these Estimates, and I see that there are some substantial increases in the resources made available to

certain Ministries and certain departments, but I can only detect a very marginal increase in the allocation to the Royal Barbados Police Force. I would like the Minister to tell us what requests have been made by the Royal Barbados Police Force for additional resources to carry out its work to implement its mandate to the people of this country? What cuts have been made at the Estimates Committee to the requests made by the Royal Barbados Police Force? They would have put up proposals to whatever the committee is called. I do not know, you have so many different names now – the Estimates Committee.....

Asides.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I do not know what is going on in Government. I have to come here and ask.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order: I will answer the questions for you. The honourable Member would like to know what cuts have been made at Estimates Committee. He knows very well what Estimates Committee is all about. He knows that proposals come not only from the police, but from all departments in all the various Ministries. They come up with a figure, the Minister of Finance examines the amount of money which the various Ministries put up, and he, in turn, according to the economic picture of the country, determines what money he would rather give to a particular department.

The Member on the other side is only trying to highlight that the police put up a sum and somebody told him that it was cut. We know these old tricks good. You do not have to belabour that. It is a clear-cut case. The Minister of Finance can tell the Minister or Head of Department that he is not going to give them the amount of money. If the money he gives runs out, they will have to come back for a supplementary.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I have told you already that you cannot outfox me. Why do you not allow the Ministers on the front bench to deal with their portfolios. Why do you believe that you have to get up? What can you teach the Attorney-General? You may be able to teach the Minister of Communications and Works.

Why do you not let the Attorney-General speak for himself?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Because we have collective responsibility. I speak for all the Members on this side. It is no more than the Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) speaking on Health.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what does the honourable Member rise? The honourable Member will have a chance to speak.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: It is only a loud aside.

Laughter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: The Government has been boasting how it is doing everything in its power to assist the Royal Barbados Police Force to carry out its functions. They have also said that the Government is an open Government. I am asking the Government to demonstrate their openness here and now today. Tell us what the proposals were from the Royal Barbados Police Force for carrying out its very onerous task of maintaining law and order and its other responsibilities in this country, and what cuts and reductions were made by your Government to those requests from the Royal Barbados Police Force in that particular regard.
2.35 p.m.

This is an open Government and you are trying to help the Royal Barbados Police Force. I will pause at this juncture and wait for a reply. I may also be rising again to speak further.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael South raises a number of questions. First of all, he starts off by saying that I said things today which I said last year, and he said it almost as if it were a censure. I always believe that there is virtue in consistency.

In respect of what has happened about complaints against the police since last year, the honourable Member may not know this, but I am advised that in the past, that is prior to last year when I spoke, the police themselves initiated prosecutions. With respect to complaints against the police that were minor offences, misdemeanours, prosecutions were initiated by the Commissioner of Police.

I am advised now that since then the Director of Public Prosecutions initiates prosecutions for criminal offences, however serious or however slight, and they include offences committed by police officers. Therefore, if a police officer unlawfully assaults a citizen of this country in the course of his duty, there is consultation between the Police Force and the Director of Public Prosecutions right from the beginning. The instructions to initiate prosecution come from the Director of Public Prosecutions. The honourable Member wants to know what is new? That is new.

The honourable Member seems somewhat nonplussed. If I may reiterate it, in the past it was the police who would institute criminal prosecutions for minor criminal offences against the police themselves, based on complaints from the public. The situation now, since last year, is that the Director of Public Prosecutions, acting on the advice of the Commissioner based on investigations, is the one who initiates prosecutions. So the external

element that we talked about in these complaints, the independent element, is the constitutional officer called the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The honourable Member wants to know about cuts. I really do not know what cuts took place, because I do not keep these things in my head.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: You want to ask the question and answer it too?

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sit down!)

Hon. L. R. TULL: I will sit down.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): The honourable Member is saying he has not got the answers to these matters in his head, and he asked if we would tell him how to proceed. It is customary at Estimates time to bring the officers from the Ministry, bearing in mind that the Minister might not be seized of all the ramifications of the particular Ministry in his head, so that he may call the officers and ask them.

We have reason to believe that a comprehensive programme for crime prevention in this country was presented to the Minister, who approved of it and sent it on to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. But the Minister of Finance does not seem to understand or does not have the same contemplation as most of us in this Honourable Chamber of what is necessary for the prevention of crime, and that is what we are asking the Minister to reveal to us in this Honourable House. He does not have to tell the population.

Hon. L. R. Tull rose.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know you would want to get up now!

Hon. L. R. TULL: The honourable Member is really not being fair, because the question put by the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) was: "What cuts were made at an Estimates meeting?" The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) gets up and talks about some development plan for crime prevention which was put up at some point to the Minister, which he passed on, which, in essence, is something completely different. I do not quite understand it.

What the honourable Member for St. Michael South is, in effect, asking is – I have already said I do not have that information in my head – to disclose to him conversations and communications passing between Heads of Departments and Ministers. The honourable Member must know that that is entirely improper.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation, if the honourable Member will give way: What we are concerned about, and this is the point I was making, is that the Royal Barbados Police Force has a most difficult task to perform, and that they cannot do it without resources. We are trying to seek some information on the programmes, and their cost, put up by the Royal Barbados Police Force, for which you have ministerial responsibility. We are asking you to come with an open heart and tell us this is what they are asking for, we have only been able to provide this amount of money, we have had to make these cuts.

If you do not carry that information in your head, and you are not disposed to send a note and call the officers, the Permanent Secretary and the Head of that particular disciplined force, to give you the information, I will tell you, you instruct them now to come and have discussions with us and tell us exactly what it is they are asking for, and what happened to those particular requests. Instruct them now, because we want to know.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): I can really see the contempt with which you all treat the Leader of the Opposition. It was he who said he hoped there would be no filibustering during the Estimates. Are you really going to ask a Minister to call a civil servant to ask the civil servant to tell him how much money the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had put up? That is a very important body, too. They look after the sick and make sure that they are well.

Do you mean that every time you ask a question, we are to call a civil servant and ask him; "Can you remember if they asked for $10 million and the Prime Minister only gave them $8 million?" That is within the province of the Prime Minister. If there has been a cut, he decides the cut. I would be very disappointed in my colleague if he went to a civil servant saying it was $10 000 947.08 but they only got $10 000 947 – the Prime Minister cut out the eight cents.

Do you know what I say all the time? Whenever there are people around – I cannot say in the gallery – they say things to embarrass those people. Do you believe that we on this side or other people around are idiots? You had better put your argument in a better way. I believe you can.

2.45 p.m.

What in truth and in fact you are saying, is that you know as a fact the Commissioner of Police put up certain financial propositions to the Estimates Committee and that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, or whoever was the Chairman of the Estimates Committee on that occasion, cut out some of the money. How would you know that money was cut out? Did the Minister of Finance, or the Commissioner of Police, or whoever was there, tell you? Because what you are saying

is that you know as a fact that the figures have been cut, but you want to know by how much. It is absurd. You cannot embarrass the Minister of Finance or the Commissioner of Police or his colleagues.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): The policies and programmes for each financial year are determined by the Cabinet of Barbados, as elected.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You are now so notorious as a person whose regard for truth is non-existent that anything you say, the people will ignore. No one bothers with you.

The position is very clear. No member of the Opposition will tell this Government how much money to appropriate in respect of any service. If you have information, if you are trying to convey the impression to the public that the Democratic Labour Party has people planted inside the Police Force so that you can bring out information on the floor of the House of Assembly, do it.

As far as we are concerned, you can have all of the Police Force. It does not matter. If you think that that will give you political advantage, walk about and tell the public that as far as the Democratic Labour Party is concerned, they can use the Police Force for political purposes. If you think that that is good for Barbados, you walk about and say that. If you think that the promotion of dissention between the Armed Services and the Unarmed Services of Barbados, walk about and tell the people that. There has got to be a limit to this insinuation and nastiness. In an attempt to get narrow political advantage, or imagined political advantage, try and promote dissention.

The fact is that every Ministry puts up requests. All these Ministries will receive that amount of money which, in the opinion of the Cabinet and the Ministry of Finance, can be financed in that particular year.

The public expenditure programme of Government over a period of time is set out in the Development Plan. I am ashamed of the fact that the honourable Members have not read the Development Plan. If they had read the Development Plan, they would have seen how much the Government intends to spend on the police.

That is the only information you will get. If you do not like that, go to political meetings and say exactly what information you got, but, at the same time, say who gave it to you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it is remarkable that these Estimates can bring out, even from as distinguished a Member as the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John), the most utter contempt for the people of this country. The primary responsibility of honourable Members on this side during this week is to question the allocation of the resources of this country, and, in questioning those allocations, my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford), asked a simple question as to whether the Minister could give us an idea as to how the views of the planners in the Royal Barbados Police, as translated into the resources, differ from the views of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. That is all, but we had that contemptuous outburst from the Member for Christ Church East Central.

In his Second Reading speech and subsequently, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was meticulous in pointing out how much of the resources he is prepared to allocate, and will be allocating, to the security forces in the country. He indicated that there is a need for an impressive increase in the amount allocated to Defence and Security. We have not questioned that. Sixteen million dollars will go to Defence and Security.

We have to take the Prime Minister's word, as he is one of the emperors of the Eastern Caribbean. But the Royal Barbados Police Force falls within the ambit of all of the talk that has been going on, and it is a major concern of the people of this country, as to crime prevention.

Only yesterday, according to the newspapers, the Commissioner of Police in Barbados indicated that white collar crime is now the most important and fast growing element of crime in Barbados. He indicated that there are executives in this country who are participating in the spread of the worse cancer that is affecting this country in the last 15 years apart from the Government. (He did not say "apart from the Government!" Those are my words. The Commissioner of Police would never have said that.) He talked about dope, cocaine and other items dangerous to the community coming through the Port. I read that in the newspapers this morning, so that is nothing original from this side.

The Minister responsible for crime prevention in this country – I do not think he is responsible for crime, generally speaking. He is the Minister responsible for crime, but he is not a criminal. You have to be very careful how you use those words. That is why I am saying the Minister responsible for crime prevention – if one goes back and reads the speeches which he made to the Police Association on two successive occasions when he addressed them, you will see that the Minister's ideas and the Commissioner's ideas seem to coincide. So if, when one looks at the resources, one finds that the resources are not matching the projections of either the Minister or the Commissioner of Police, one has to go to the head of the stream, one has to go to the cancer – one has to go to the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance obviously does not share the views of the Minister or the Commissioner, because

the resources which he has allocated here shows no appreciable increase. What increases we see seem to be the natural increases in personal emoluments. What kind of crime prevention we are going to have in white collar crime when more sophisticated criminals are constantly coming into Barbados, when people in high places in Barbados, both public and private, are now engaging in high level prostitution, in high level crime, buying dope and engaging in other similar – I want to be very careful, Mr. Chairman – areas of crime without an increase in resources? When these persons, people, obviously are causing the police tremendous difficulty, what is required is that the Commissioner of Police be allowed to put his money where his mouth is. The Commissioner of Police and the planners in the Police Department must be given the resources so that we can try them out and see whether or not what they say they would like to do is capable of being done.

This community has an interest in crime prevention, and this community has not yet reached the levels where hard drugs like heroin have taken hold, but we know that there are a number of people in high places who are benefitting substantially from white collar crime and other racket – connected crimes. When you start talking about whole containers being stolen from the Port, those involved are not little boys that grew up in Carrington Village and Fairfield and places like that. Those are high level people in Barbados who are now making crime an industry.

2.55 p.m.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, you cannot lock them up if you do not give the Commissioner the resources. I agree with you. We want to lock them up, and therefore when we see Estimates in which the resources made available to the Commissioner appear to be less that adequate, it is our duty .....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, it is our opinion, but it is our opinion based on reasonable observation, based on what the Minister himself has said over the years, and based on what successive Ministers responsible for legal affairs have said.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) is constantly saying that proper policing is an economic activity. Only here today one heard him repeating the theme that Ministers of Finance – and one understands why he would have to make it general, but one understood what he was saying – seem to feel that giving the police the resources they need is a waste of resources. Those are not his exact words, but that is the thrust of his input. Since we have only had two Ministers of Finance, and since my experience with the first Minister of Finance in an independent Barbados was that he was always in the forefront of trying to assist the police, I have to come to the conclusion that it is the other Minister of Finance who is halting the police in their upward thrust towards crime prevention.

It is one thing to have a beat officer, it is another to have your liaison committee, but the crime is occurring. Everybody in Barbados who is anybody knows where the crime is occurring, and they know what is required.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You wish me to be a little more specific? In Oistins you can get, I understand, a certain amount of dope at a certain place. That is what you hear all over the place.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Tell the Commissioner of Police where you can get it.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I tell the police every chance I get. There are certain people in Barbados who, it appears, the police are afraid to lock up. If you push me hard enough I will tell you, do not worry! You keep pushing me! I will drop a word in your ear!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you please address the Chair? I must have order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. You know when they aggravate me I may get a little wild.

There is a major construction company in Barbados. Only today we heard that they are bringing in cocaine in windows. Do you know glass windows? The Commissioner himself said yesterday, and this is no secret, that it is coming through the Port. The police could get the evidence if they had the resources.

You take Barbados now. We have sent 70–odd policemen to Grenada. My colleague referred to this earlier. We have, I believe, 75 or more policemen in Grenada. It either means that there were petty-fogging before and that we had 75 too many people in the Force, or that in an emergency we have come to the aid of Grenada, but that emergency has now stretched into an institutionalised situation. The Prime Minister himself said that the forces will be in Grenada for the whole financial year. I heard him say so.

How do you expect the police to find evidence in the time that is required for court where you know who is suspected of trafficking in drugs. Every honourable Member over there knows that the proof that is required in a courtroom requires meticulous investigation. How can they meticulously investigate the commission of crime, stop the rapes at the University of the West Indies, provide peace for us when we are going home at night from late meetings, go and listen to whatever Eric Sealy and other people say on the political platforms, stop the

Coney Island people from killing one another, stop the cadavers from coming in – how can the police do all these things with 75 of their force in Grenada, and no information from anybody over there as to how they intend to fill that gap?

We are not mad people. We are not so wicked that we would want to crucify the Minister. We believe that we are helping the Minister. We believe that the Minister has been fighting for the police. The Minister seems to suggest that if I give him a chance to talk he would say even more than I am saying. The honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) is not the kind of person who stirs up mischief. The honourable Leader of the House has said on more than one occasion that the honourable Member for St. Michael South is one of the model Members of this Chamber. So when the honourable Member for St. Michael South, who is concerned about crime prevention in his constituency – his constituency, like mine, is made up of the lower socio-economic grouping – and all the people they send to prison – all of the people who are victims of crime are invariably the people at the bottom of the social ladder – when he asks a question which relates to crime prevention, he should be given an answer.

I do not wish to comment on any cases that are before the courts, but even on the question of giving bail, those of us who observe from reading newspapers raise questions about one person who gets bail as opposed to the other. And if we who represent these constituencies raise these questions, it does not fall well from the mouth of any honourable Member to say that we have information from the Police Force.

The information we have cannot come from the Police Force, Mr. Chairman, as you very well know. One of the most difficult things in the world to do is to get information out of a senior policeman. You cannot ask any senior policeman any serious questions. If you bring him information, he will listen to you, but they all fool you, making you believe they are giving you information, and when you put it down on paper and reduce it, it does not add up to much. The Government has so politicised the situation that the Commissioner apparently has a tight rein. If you have a good friend in the Police Force, you can get him to discuss cricket, you can get him to discuss even the cadavers, but he is nothing to do with the Police Force.

We do not have to get information from the Police Department to say to you that the Minister of Finance is choking the Minister of Legal Affairs in his attempt to prevent crime. We can say that on the basis of your own presentation. The information we get, we might get from Washington. When your Budget is prepared in Washington, we might get an insight into it even before you do, but we do not have to go into the Police Force to get information.

You have been in power for eight years. You came into power and you promised the police. The Attorney-General of the day, who still has not taken care of some business with me arising out of his staying over two years, came to this Honourable House and painted a veritable picture of absolutely perfect progress for the police. I remembered the Attorney-General of the day on a certain occasion sticking to his guns even though the Prime Minister cursed him on the floor of this House and differed with him. Whether one agreed with him or not, one had to recognise that he understood the role of an Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs. I think his colleague understands, too.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has expired.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, will you let me make this last point?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, only a few minutes ago I heard that the police keep watch over dead people. That has not happened since the days of the mortuary down on the Reef Road. You are such a cadaver that you are telling us in here that the Royal Barbados Police Force, with all its sophisticated training, are called upon to watch over dead people. The last policeman I knew used to watch over dead people down at the mortuary on the Reef Road was a man called Marshall.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order: I never said that. I said they could talk about them, not watch over them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot have two honourable Members on their feet. Nor can I allow the Hansard Reporters to be interrupted. Please continue.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am hearing a lot about the police today, how the poor Commissioner and how the poor Barbados Police Force cannot even open their mouths and talk, that you can discuss cricket and football with them but nothing on policing. Well, I am very, very proud to know that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force do not discuss their duties. That is a plus for the Ministry of Legal Affairs.
3.05 p.m.

In your day, there was a man called "Johnny Salt Bags", who used to walk about and curse me face to face. But now, in our day, the Police Force has become an independent body. I feel proud to know that they are only carrying out police duties. The Police Commissioner is on record as saying that there has been no political interference during his time, and we have asked that there be no police interference in Government.

We are spending $23 million on the Royal Barbados Police Force. We have increased the Barbados Police

Force by 300 persons. I cannot say that you had increased the Royal Barbados Police Force by 300 persons in fifteen years. If the Royal Barbados Police Force has discovered that there is white collar crime in the country, it is because we have made it possible for them to have sophisticated methods of discovering this sort of crime. We have made it possible for them to get the training, and we have put at their disposal all the modern techniques so that they would be able to discover this type of crime, and it is unfair and utter nonsense for the Member to get up and try to brand the Police Force as a body which gives information to members of the Opposition.

You said just now that your duty is to question the allocations. If the allocation is for $15 million, you question why they are spending this amount, why they did not put it one place and why they put it another place. You are not qualified to question what the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance decides to give to the Police Force. You are qualified to question what is allocated here. That is your duty.

(Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: How do you know?)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: How do I know that? Otherwise, it would convey to any thinking person that you were given information from within the Cabinet on an Estimates Committee meeting, that someone came out and told you that a proposal was put up to the Minister of Finance but he only gave so much. It is an embarrassing thing. Uncharitable people say that about the Commissioner and the Force.

You want to convey that you are all pro-police. How could you be pro-police when you treated them so badly over the years? You gave them bad working hours and bad working conditions. You had a series of Privates and Lance Corporals. You were choking some young men who were seeking a career in the Force. We gave them a regrading. There are young men now with Crowns on their sleeves, and who are proud of it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Address the Chair, please.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Do you want me to suspend, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you offering a suspension? Go ahead.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You drove young men out of the Police Force because there was not a ray of hope for them. But now you are in here talking about the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I go further. They do not go down in the barracks and discuss anything now, they were able to get a big sporting complex in Roebuck Street. Even that came in our time. I do not mind how much money they were collecting before, we made Weymouth available to them.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the people in Barbados should help themselves, and help crack down on whatever crime there is in Barbados. Quite recently, there has been a bank robbery here in Barbados. I feel such large financial institutions in the country should by now have television cameras and whatever sophisticated methods are used so that they would be able to help track down bank robbers and so on.

Let us not fool ourselves, all the Police Forces in the world have their work cut out for them. It is not only in Barbados. The world is not changing, it has changed. The old machine guns are no longer around, there is now the AK47. People are going into space and all these sorts of things, so people must move with the times.

This bad Government, this callous Government, this cadaver Government, with the architects of cadavers down in the corner, is giving them $23 million in a recessionary period. When you had all the money, you bought the North Point, which by now would have been water-logged, because you bought it three years before you decided to build the Cement Plant. You could have taken that US$364 000 and put it towards the functioning of the Police Force.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Give them beds. Buy beds for them.)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: As my colleague is saying, to buy some beds and let them know that they are human beings.

Too many of us run down the police. As soon as anything happens, people ask: "Where is the police?" The policeman is only a human being, he is only another person, and unless we set out to give all the co-operation that we can to the police, we are going to have these problems. You can lead off by setting the example, as a responsible person and a former Government Minister, a man who had collective responsibility for this country.

You said on the floor of this House that in Oistins there is a house which you know, where cocaine can be found. I am asking you to do this country a favour. Nowadays, the police have all the problems of hard drugs on their hands. I am appealing to you to go and give the Commissioner of Police the name of the house and its location, and if you know the name of the person who lives there, tell the police so that they can crack down in this area. What a wild accusation, if it is untrue!

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The police know the person.)

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

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I only speak about it because I drew it to the attention of the police about a year and a half ago. Do not talk to me about telling the police anything. Anything I hear of, I tell the police. I told them about those in Bay Street, too. Wherever I hear about them, I tell the police where they are.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Do not mind him with that childish thing. I am going to bring a Resolution in here making sure that you be changed from a girl to a man, that the Government spends money on you to have your sex changed to what you really are.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You said that you told the police about this two years ago. The police have carried out their duties. Why bring it up now again? Is it still going on? Are you not satisfied with the investigations of the police? That is what you are saying. You drew it to the attention of the police two years ago, and still you can bring up today that there is still that house in Oistins. I can only conclude that the police have done nothing about it. Again, you are condemning the Barbados Police Force.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I started off by saying, "Sir". I cannot say, "Sir" all the time, Sir. It is not my style. There are different strokes for different folks. I said, "Sir" when I started. I cannot say, "Sir", "Sir", "Sir" all the time. I am not a robot, nobody has programmed me.

Sir, I am making my final plea. I am going to write the Commissioner of Police and ask him if the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) has submitted the name of the house, because if he has not done it, I am going to ask him where the house is and I want to go with them. I want to be satisfied beyond a shadow of a doubt. I want to help the police in whatever investigation I can help them in.

Aside.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I would not know the house. You are telling me about it. You lived in North America. You are a North American man. You know about that sort of business and about Colombia. You were a Consul-General. You had access to Colombians and Haitians, not me. I am a local boy.

3.15 p.m.

I believe that the police is given whatever money is available, knowing that there are a number of other things to be done. Although we may be sorry that the police cannot get everything now, they can be satisfied that they have had a lot of things during this party's period in office.

I should like to commend them publicly. I mean the entire Force, I am not talking about the Commissioner. I am talking about the men at the bottom. I knew the Commissioner long before anybody in here, but I am talking about the men at the bottom, the boys out there who are taking the bullets, ducking, and hiding in the grass and behind doors to be able to bring a degree of stability to this country as far as crime and such is concerned. You are shouting: "Commissioner, Commissioner, Commissioner"! I do not shout. I am talking about the Police Force, all and sundry. I am not giving credit to the Commissioner of Police alone. I want to commend the same resident beat officers who go in the Pine, through the Farm, and through Cats Castle. They are the ones who open themselves to all sort of attacks before making their approach, so that they will be able to bring some credit to their Force.

I am ashamed of the Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford), in particular and this talk about money. That is not your style. That concerns the two front runners for the DLP. You are not in it. You do not get into this debate. You are too deep. You do too much research. You are always reading. You live in the Archive and the libraries. That is not for you. Rise above the occasion.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, so many things have been said within the last few minutes that I do not know where to start.

One of the things I heard about was resources: I believe the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) started there. In the last year, the Democratic Labour Party was in government, 1975–76, they spent $6 million on the police. This year we are spending $23 million. The money spent on the police has moved from $6 million in 1975–76 to $23 million this year, with fairly steep increases every year from the beginning, in 1976, right up until now.

When we came into Government, there were about 800 policemen. We said they were not enough. Now, there are 1050, an increase of 30 per cent in the last few years. What resources are you talking about? There is more equipment, more training, more vehicles, more

opportunities for promotion, more senior officers – everything, year after year.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) again with some bogus figures, said that there are 75 policemen in Grenada. That is not true. My figures state that there are 47 policemen in Grenada.

A question was raised by the Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King) about these men. The policemen in Grenada are there voluntarily. Nobody sent them. They are free to come home any time they want to come home, and we have a backup of volunteers who are willing to go in at any time.

I am instructing the Commissioner of Police to let the two of us pull off a bonus – train extra policemen, not only to take up the numbers who are going by attrition, but to cancel out the 47 policemen in Grenada, so that by the time the forty-seven come home from Grenada, we will have forty-seven more policemen. That is the situation. I have told him on several occasions that that is what he should set about doing.

I hear all this talk about drugs. The Democratic Labour Party has a way of throwing these things out and leaving them in the wind. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) is one of the most wicked in that regard. He has gone on the public platform in this country and told people about persons involved in drugs. He said he knows who they are, who is involved, and all of that, and he sought to leave in the minds of the public the impression that people of some standing in the community were involved.

I did something fairly extraordinary. I wrote him a letter – and he must know how my fingers burned me when I was writing him – asking him to give me the information on these people who were involved in drugs at any level in society. I gave him the undertaking in writing that I would get in touch with the Commissioner of Police, pass on the information, and move heaven and earth to get these people brought to justice.

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: He said that he sent me a reply. Yes, he did. He sent a stupid, arrogant, foolish, puerile response back to me. If I knew that this subject was going to blow up today, I would have brought along the foolish letter the fellow wrote me and read it out in here.

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I will not bring yours. I will bring mine tomorrow, not one that you will go home tonight and write. I will bring mine tomorrow.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt), who finds it necessary to improve on any stupidity that comes from the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central makes the same charges. He knows where cocaine is, who is involved, which house it is at, and all of that. I think it is absolutely disreputable.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation, if the honourable Member will give way, Sir: What I said, if you will recall when I referred to drugs and white collar crime, is that only yesterday the Commissioner himself made a speech that is reported in the papers. How can you call that improvement on foolishness, or whatever?

Hon. L. R. TULL: You did also say there was a house in Oistins.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Which you know about. Bree knows about the house. Everybody knows about the house.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I do not know why the honourable Member is interrupting me. I did not interrupt him. The honourable Member said that there is some house in Oistins where they distribute cocaine. If the honourable Member does not want to say it publicly in here, when I am finished speaking I can go outside with him, he can pass the information on to me, I will put it in the hands of the police, and I will move the police into taking whatever action is necessary to look into that situation.

3.25 p.m.

There is no point in legislators, people with a certain public trust, getting up to make the kind of reckless, irresponsible statements that we hear emanating from the mouths of honourable Members on that side. All of us are interested in dealing with this cancer you speak of, which is eating out the entrails of the society, and anybody who has children, particularly teenaged children, will know that there is a pressing and threatening danger in respect of drugs in this community.

There is no point trying to get any political mileage out of your reckless statements. Give us the information. Both the honourable Members for St. Michael West and the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central can meet with me and the Commissioner of Police outside in the next ten minutes and give us the information.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will meet with the Commissioner any day, but not with you).

Hon. L. R. TULL: Well, the Commissioner will be perfectly willing to meet with you now – I am speaking for him – if you will leave the room and go outside and

give him the information. You do not have to wait until I am finished speaking. The Commissioner will be willing to meet with you and the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central now, and you can give him the information.

In the rather stupid reply to my letter which I received from the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, I think the only sentence that made sense in terms of English, not content, was that he had communicated that information to the police already. I checked with the police. I asked the police if the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central had ever made any complaint, or given them any information, about drug trafficking in Barbados, and they said "no". I am going to read this letter tomorrow. He cannot tell the truth.

The honourable Member knows, for instance, that drugs come in Barbados in window frames for the construction industry. Why does the honourable Member not tell the Commissioner of Police which construction company is bringing in window frames and bringing in cocaine at the same time? Everybody in Barbados will owe an eternal debt of gratitude to the honourable Member if he comes up with that information and helps the police to bring to justice the people he is in here denouncing.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West, in a very lurid exposition, lined up these things for a little publicity and talked about this big lot of rapes at the university. There has not been one single rape reported at the university at Cave Hill in the last five months.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Somebody has to be mad.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: Apparently somebody has to be mad. The honourable Member for St. Michael West said that there were rapes in the last five months, the Commissioner of Police said that none has been reported.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: The Press is always misleading the public. You people give them misleading information all the time and they carry it.

I am very sorry that I cannot tell the honourable Member for St. Michael South exactly what are all the cuts, but if he wants me to tell him some, I will tell him. The amount of money put up in one area by the police was for $2 499 431, and it was cut to $2 479 899. According to my arithmetic, that is about $1 900 cut off a budget of $2½ million. There was a figure of $165 619, and they added $118 000 to it. There was a figure of $417 956, and the same Minister of Finance, who you are reviling, added on $88 000 to the figure they put up.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, let him send it so we can check it independently.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I cannot give you the Government's files.

The police put up a proposal for a computer for $2 million and we cut it out. The reason is very simple. I spoke to the Commissioner and asked him to get a study done on the needs, first of all, and what type of technology is required for the needs of the Police Force. After that is done, we will know what kind of computer we want, and then we will buy it. I believe that there is a token vote in the Estimates so that on conclusion of that study we will be able to go ahead and buy a computer. Are you going to buy a computer for $2 million without even having someone to operate it? Do you want more examples, or are you happy?

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: We want the files.

Hon. L. R. TULL: The people of Barbados took the files out of your hands since September 1976, and they are not likely to get back into your hands. We will keep the files over here.

We built the police station at Oistins, and the policemen called it a hotel. The facilities up there are better than anything they could have imagined. My recollection is that when the police station at Oistins was about to be opened the Commissioner of Police said that he had so many applications for transfers to Oistins, it looked as if the whole Police Force wanted to go up there. That is the kind of facilities we are providing for them.

We are going to build a police station in St. George, and there is money in the Estimates for it. It is about time we bring these fancy services from the south coast into the centre of the island, so we will build one in the constituency of the honourable Member for St. George North (Mr. J. G. Odle).

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: If you look in the Estimates, instead of carrying on with this big song and dance, you will see what we are spending the money on. You will see, for instance, that the police had $250 000 in last year's Estimates, this current year that ends next week, for structures. They have $836 000 now, more than three times as much.

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: You say I cannot talk about Capital under Current? What were they doing all day, Sir? I thought it was the rule that you do not talk about Capital under Current, but if you open the door, I will walk through it – and you did.

I see here $600 000 and another $600 000, which is $1.2 million, almost 100 per cent increase in the money given to the police this year, for the very tools they need for crime prevention. This deals with the question raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael South. This provision is for the purchase of new cars, land rovers and vehicles and equipment for the Police Department. What is the honourable Member complaining about?
3.35 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, do not listen to the Opposition. I am the one speaking.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am listening to both sides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I am not going to go on anymore on this, because I think the debate so far has been a very divisive one. There has been a planned.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Hon. L. R. TULL: My time is up, Sir?

There has been a plan by the Opposition to come in here and throw the seeds of discord in this community, which would make the police feel that, somehow or the other, the Government is hostile to their interest.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please, order. Please wind up.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Sir, I will come back again when I have more time.

Mr. A. TRUSS (St. Michael Central): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the honourable Members for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford), St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) and St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) made some points in relation to Head 30, and this Head is a very important one. The points raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in relation to the IMF.....

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

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have not spoken on this matter, as you are aware, and I have been dragged into this debate. He is debating statements that I am supposed to have said, and I cannot understand what he is saying.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Mr. A. TRUSS: The honourable Member is correct, but he made a very loud aside, which I heard, and I will deal with that loud aside.

I have a great deal of respect for the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Asides.

Mr. A. TRUSS: I will be dealing with the honourable Member for St. Michael South and the honourable Member for St. Michael West, who have made contributions. I will not be dealing with the aside. That is how much respect I have for you, Sir.

The Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition answered the question put forward by the honourable Members for St. Michael South and St. Michael West in the Estimates Debate of 1976. I will tell you why, if I may read from this volume, House of Assembly Debates, Second Session of 1971–1976, January – December, 1976, page 6127. The Right Honourable Member for St. John, the Leader of the Opposition, said:

> "People in this country frequently forget that although the Government is a business, it is a non-profit making business. It employs about 15 000 people in this country on a regular basis and they enjoy all the security that Government employment carries with it; and at the same time, expenditure rises relentlessly and the only source from which the Government can meet its requirements on capital and current accounts is from borrowing, either internally or externally, and from the monies which we raise in taxation and Government trading. It is as simple as that."

That deals with the asides about the IMF.

He went on to say:

> "Therefore we have to assess our priorities very carefully when it comes to a development plan because, as I have emphasised before, these priorities have to be based on the context of current prices, and with the demands being made on the resources of the country, we need to concentrate on the productive sectors in order to stimulate the economic growth."

That is why he, in his wisdom, allocated $6.6 million to the Police Force in 1976, because the resources at that time afforded him only that much money. We, at this point in time, can allocate $23 million. We would love to be able to allocate more, as the honourable Attorney-General has pointed out, but one has to face facts. The resources of the country mandates that only

so much money can be allocated in each individual area, and this money has to be used very prudently.

Thirdly, and finally, on the same page, the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition said:–

> "Your alternative then has to be to have recourse to additional sources of revenue by way of taxation, but when it comes to expenditure, one would think from the claims that are made from time to time by the people who are being supported out of the Treasury that the resources of Government are limitless, and that all that you have to do is to make demands in the same way as a worker for a private capitalist who is a multi-millionaire and who can be satisfied with a small margin of profit in order to meet the claims of the workers.
>
> That is not the nature of the Government, and any demands which are met can only be met at the expense of the rest of the society who then have to pay ransom to what I have frequently described – and I make no apology for it – *as the army of occupation.*"

That takes care of the point raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael South about scarce resources.

He also wanted to know what was our plan. I have no argument with what the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition said at the time he was Prime Minister, because I believed then, as I believe now, that he made that statement about "an army of occupations" – he can disassociate himself from that as much as he wants, but that is what he said – because he clearly saw the need, as the Minister of Finance at the time, to juggle the very scarce resources of the country in such a way as to satisfy the requirements of each and every Barbadian in the best possible manner. So even though his methodology may be different to the present Minister of Finance, one has to be realistic.

It is very easy for the Opposition to call for more money in a particular area, but I have never heard them yet call for less money for a particular area. And when you say that total expenditure has grown, everything is relative. The Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition made reference to that when he was Prime Minister; he said that everything is relative and every year is a record year. This year is a record year on Current Account and on Capital Account.

In 1952, total Government expenditure, both capital and Current, was $11 million. In 1962 it was $25 million. In 1976, at the last Estimates when the Right Honourable Member for St. John was Prime Minister, the Current and Capital Estimates totalled $210 million. Today, we are talking about over $746 million. The Government is expanding. It is, as he said, no different from big business.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South wanted to know that was our plan. We have released several documents in which we have outlined our plans. The "Promises and Performance" document, which was circulated and is a document of this House, outlined what our plans were between 1976–81. We released a manifesto in 1981, the bible of the Barbados Labour Party, in which we talked about what our proposals were for the 1981–86 period.
3.45 p.m.

In the Development Plan, chapter 17, page 113, if the honourable Member for St. Michael South would read it – we have all received a copy of it – we talked about police stations, law and order, law courts, probation services, fire services and so on. The plan is there. All the honourable Member for St. Michael South has to do is to read it, instead of getting up and giving the impression to the Press and the public, and perhaps to the Members on his side that we have no plan. The plan is in writing.

Now what are the facts in relation to this Head? I do not like to cast aspersions on anyone in the previous Government. I have said on numerous occasions, publicly and privately, that I have a great deal of respect for the honourable Member for St. John. Perhaps if he had listened to some of his colleagues and shaken off some of the Ministers which he had around him, he would never have lost the Government in 1976. He lost because he was doing too much work and his Ministers were doing too little. But we came into power and found neither short-term, medium term nor long term policies for the police. We came into power and we reacted immediately and with urgency to these problems. We paid a duty allowance to the police to compensate for working for long hours, and we set out to improve the working conditions and physical conditions of the Police Force, and the non-police duties that were attached to the police up until 1976 were removed. We recognised the significance and the importance in this country of having a strong, well-trained and efficient Police Force, and one with a very high morale. Therefore, I cannot agree with honourable Members on the other side, who are trying to give some sort of indication that all is not well as far as this Government, the Commissioner of Police and the Police Department are concerned.

The Commissioner of Police, as has been pointed out by the Attorney-General, could not get his $2 million for the computer this time around, but the token vote is there. I agree with the stance the Government has taken in this particular case. At the National Petroleum Corporation, we have just put in a computer for $250 000, an IBM 36, but before we did that we had to study what the requirements of the corporation were. That study cost an additional $50 000, but that is money well spent.

The Commissioner may very well find out that the $2 million which he thought he needed for a computer is far in excess of the requirements of the Police Force. On the other hand, he may be proven to be correct. The point is that whether it costs $2 million, less than $2 million or more than $2 million, if you do a proper study, then you would be armed with the facts, and then you would know when you make a decision that you are making the right decision, based on an analysis of the requirements of the Police Force. Then, you buy a computer to meet your requirements, but you cannot just buy a computer and then find out what the requirements are in the Police Force.

I am not saying or suggesting that the Commissioner of Police does not know what he wants. I am suggesting that we get a professional computer man and let him do the study, go into the Police Force assess the information given by the Commissioner of Police and the other members of the Police Force, and let that professional advise the Police Force on the sort of computer they need. Then this Government would give it to them.

The facts are that there has been a decrease in crime in 1983 over 1982. There were only 7 687 cases of crime in 1983 as compared with 7 954 in 1982, which is a decrease of 267 cases. I do not have the up-to-date figures for 1984, because we are currently in 1984, and I would not want to make a projection, but I would say heartiest congratulations to the Commissioner of Police, the Police Force and the Attorney-General. The perception of this country is that they have done and are doing a good job.

Of the cases in 1982, some 3 083 were cleared up. In 1983, a number of 3 718 cases were cleared up. Again you see more efficiency in the courts, more cases being tried more quickly, because this Government is spending more money not only in the area of building new stations and headquarters, but we are spending money in administration. We are spending to preserve the peace, and on the prevention and detection of crimes and other contraventions of the laws of Barbados. We are spending money in the Police Department to control and regulate traffic on the highways and byways, to provide security services to members of the public and to carry out patrols for the prevention of cane fires. We are spending money at the Regional Training Centre. The provisional training of recruits from Barbados and other contributing islands, staffing and general management are all part of the operating cost of this $23 million. That is where you see greater efficiency within the Police Department. We are even looking after the Police Band; we are buying more instruments and giving them better facilities.

On a new and more positive basis as well, the Attorney General alluded to the fact that recently we established a Juvenile Liaison Scheme and Resident Beat Officer Scheme. Again the Commissioner of Police and the high ranking officers of the Royal Barbados Police Force are to be commended for the revolutionary thoughts and ideas which they have introduced, because money is one thing, but thinking is another, and the introduction and planning of an idea is a third. The Juvenile Liaison Scheme – I do not have very much time, so I will just highlight what the main activities of the scheme are – is to provide a counselling service to parents and to juveniles, and it involves the voluntary supervision of juveniles. The main objectives of the scheme are to provide a system that will deal with young offenders, to reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency, and to raise funds to assist juveniles that are in need.

I want to end with the Resident Beat Scheme, because it is important that the public of Barbados understand what the Police Force is trying to do for them, and what this Government is trying to do for them in terms of providing money and expertise.

This scheme was introduced in June, 1982, and it forms part of the new policing approach under the direction of the Press and Community Relations Department. The objectives are to organise effective community relations between policemen and the communities, to develop a major source of information to the Force by having this sort of relation, and to project a community policeman image by having that policeman being involved in every aspect of the community. The officer will then be able to initiate and execute school programmes and be a major source of information to the Police Force. The Police would be geared to ensure that there is no victimisation.

My time has run out, Sir. Thank you very much.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Chairman, I am going to be very brief. First I should like to draw to the attention of the honourable Member for St. George South, the Attorney-General (Hon. L. R. Tull) that his figures are inaccurate. He said there were 800 members of the Police Force in 1976–77, and after doing some careful research, he said there are now more than 1 050. I have discovered that in 1976–77, taking out 36 members of the civilian staff, there were 883 members of the Police Force, and in the current Schedule of Personal Emoluments, there is a total figure of 890 people outside and 110 at Police Headquarters, making a total of 1 000. So the comparative figures are 883 as against 1 000, an increase, over a period of eight years, clearly of 117 members in the Police Force.
3.55 p.m.

I am at a great disadvantage, because nowhere in the Schedule of Personal Emoluments for the 1984–85 Financial Year, which has been circulated, can we find any mention of the Defence Force. Every other Govern-

ment Department is mentioned. In the Schedule of Personal Emoluments for the year 1976–77, the establishment of the Barbados Regiment is clearly set forth. We are completely in the dark as to the relative strength of the Barbados Defence Force. That, I suppose, is a military secret. I have never heard that the number of people in an army was a military secret. Everybody knows what the size of the British Army is.....

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: What is it?)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: .....what the size of the American Army is, and what the size of the Russian Army is.

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: What is it?)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: It is published in the newspapers all the time. It is debated in the House of Commons and set out in White Papers. Up to last week, I saw a reference made by the Vice-President of the United States himself as to the strength of the Deployment Force in Savannah, Georgia, the total strength of the Marines in the United States Navy, the strength of the United States Army and of the Air Force. All of these things are set out.

The Prime Minister has elected not to put in the correct total for the Defence Force. Everything concerning the Defence Force is now a matter of mystery and not for public inspection, so much so that, on August 26, I was able to read out a ship's manifest to disclose that stretchers, and abdominal bandages were being brought into this country for the Defence Force. A shipment arrived in Barbados yesterday, and the articles consigned for the Defence Force were described as "unspecified cargo", contrary to international maritime law and conventions.

In between that time, attempts were made to purchase a ship in the name of a person who was not a Barbadian, and to vest the property of that ship in that person, in order to bring supplies into this country for the Defence Force. The Right Honourable Prime Minister knows that what I am saying is true. That person was told not to worry about the Coast Guard, that that would be taken care of.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: If the Prime Minister wants me to tell the Commissioner of Police, give me five minutes and I would go outside now and give you the name of the officers and everybody.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am not quarrelling. I should like to send a little card over to the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition and let him write this information, because I have never heard it before.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You are hearing it now.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I know, and I want to know if it is true or not.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You know that it is true.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I do not know anything about it. I have never heard it before.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Three of your senior officers were involved. How do you explain that? The shipment came in yesterday. The public would know, because it was printed in the newspapers that I said in August – not in October, after Grenada – "Who are they going to war with or against?"

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the police, not with the Defence Force.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am dealing with the comparative structure of the two bodies. I will give the Right Honourable Prime Minister all of the information, but I know that two officers will lose their jobs.

The Prime Minister was saying that they were hurricane supplies, as if people who are injured in a hurricane would run up to the Drill Hall instead of to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

And when I said that they were German mercenaries, who were paid officers, he denied it, and said that the only Germans who passed through here were going to Antigua to sell arms. But at the same time, on the very same day that that publication was released, Colonel, later to be known as Brigadier, Lewis was in Germany. He went to Bielefeld, Badsalzufflen, Badoeynhausen, Buckeberg and Oldenburg recruiting people for a special deployment force the very same day that.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order! If Brigadier Lewis had listened to me, the sergeant who was introduced to the former Prime Minister in Singapore in the early part of 1973, who we traced as the leak of this itinerary in Germany, he would not have had the chance to have talked to you at all.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Then you are saying that it is true.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I know the very person who told you. I have a libel action against a member of his family. I had warned from early that he should not be trusted with any information.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Sir. This is totally irrelevant. We are going to call Defence and Security next. I will be happy to deal with it, but this is irrelevant.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have already spoken about this. Mr. Leader.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: When I had that information, and the Prime Minister was denying that he was recruiting Germans, the gentleman to whom he referred, and who I did not meet in Singapore incidentally – I met people like Mr. Nelo Bynoe, and I met the people up at Shangai Air Force Base – that gentleman was in the Army. I did not meet him in Singapore, so get that out of your mind. He was in Germany with Brigadier Lewis. Now because the Prime Minister suspects him of giving me the information, he is being parted with the duties which he was performing for the Defence Force, although he was not a full-time member. That is the way things operate in Barbados, and how people are victimized wrongfully.

I did not get my information about the ship that brought in the bandages and so on from anybody, I got it in England. I had come back from England the day before. You did not know at the time that the manifests for every ship which comes here were available. I was getting a car shipped for my son at the time, and I got the manifest. I was tantalized when I saw these things listed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We will deal with Defence Force under another Head.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: When you are victimizing people, make sure that your information is correct.

You have admitted here that Brigadier Lewis was up there recruiting people, and yet, you are calling me a liar, because I said only two people were down here in Barbados training people. Twenty-seven people.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Sir: I did not call the Right Honourable Member a liar. The West German Government called him a liar.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Oh, you suborned the West Germans to call me a liar because you knew that I was telling the truth!

Laughter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This has nothing to do with the police. I think the Right Honourable Member is straying too far.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I will show you how it has to do with the Police. Our contention on this side is that in 1976–77, Defence and Security costed this country $1.88 million, but in 1984–85, Defence and Security is costing the country seventeen point.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir,.....

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

Hon L. S. CRAIG: I must draw this to Your Honour's attention. I have given an undertaking to the Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) that, immediately after this Head, I am going to call Defence and Security.

Certain remarks made at this point by the honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig) and the Rt. Hon. Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will now hear the Honourable Leader of the House.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I rise on a point of order, Sir. I gave an undertaking to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that I would suspend the sitting at 4.00 o'clock for tea.

I beg to move, Sir, that you, do now report .....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You do not like to hear what I have to say.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I have just started.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You can come back again. Please take your seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You can go to tea and come back refreshed.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I do not take tea in here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

4.05 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Who cares if you take tea – you look like a bag of tea.

I beg to move that Your Honour do now report the passing of one Money Resolution and ask for leave to sit again.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for 15 minutes so that we can have tea.

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

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

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. 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 reverted to Committee of Supply, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee of Supply. The Right Honourable Member for St. John may continue his speech.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull) had mentioned that the size of the Police Force, which is what we are discussing, was 800 in 1976–77 – as a matter of fact, I do not think he mentioned the size – and now they have over a thousand. But the figures I have discovered says that in 1976–77 there were 883 people.

I would like to make this abundantly clear. You can have an establishment for a certain number of persons. That does not mean that on a particular day that you have that number of persons, because people have retired, people are on leave, and that sort of thing.

The establishment was 883 in 1976–77. Today, the establishment is 890 in this Schedule of Personal Emoluments, plus 140 at the Police Headquarters, which includes all the Inspectors, Superintendents, Deputy Commissioners. If you subtract 30 – it is really 31 – civilian staff, of which they still have a few we had 34 civilian staff in 1976–77 – you would then get 110 at Headquarters, plus the 890, which brings the figure up to exactly 1 000. An increase of 117 members.....

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: You are not right.)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I do not quite understand. I can only go by the book. If the book is wrong, then I am wrong. What I have done is to subtract the civilian staff. There were 34 civilian personnel at Headquarters, according to the Schedule of Personal Emoluments for 1976–77, which I have here, and which I could pass to the Prime Minister. According to the Schedule of Personal Emoluments for 1984–85, there are approximately 30 or 31. If you subtract the civilian staff from that at Headquarters, for the 1976–77 figure you would have to subtract from 110, and to get the present figure you would have to subtract 31 from 140.

The overall total of uniformed established Police Force between 1976–77 and 1984–85 grossed by the figure of 117. But there are eight full financial years between 1976–77 and 1984–85, and a rise of 117 in the Police Force is nothing to brag about when you consider the inordinate increase in crime. I am not saying that rise is due entirely, or at all, to the Labour Party Government, but there has been an increase in crime, and to increase the Police Force by that meagre amount in eight years is nothing to sing about. On the other hand, whereas the expenditure on the Police Force is $21 695 000 to date, of which salaries account for $15 million, the amount of money being spent on the Defence Force is $17 864 000 on Current Account. Whereas, on Capital Account the honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, or somebody else – I cannot remember if it was the Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon H. B. St. John) – said that they are providing equipment and so on, the amount of equipment, if that is what the capital is for, being provided for the Defence Force is more than twice the amount.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I must draw to Your Honour's attention that the Defence Force must not enter in this debate. It is completely irrelevant.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You are not the Chairman, and your shouting does not intimidate me. I will say what I have to say.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I take those comments from the honourable Leader of the House. Let us steer away from the Defence Force, even though some mention is being made of it. Let us try very hard to stick to "Police."

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: That is right, Sir. I am saying that the amount being spent on the Police Force on Capital Account is $2.036 million as compared with $4.87

million for the Defence Force. Let us look at the operating expenses. The operating expenses are some $16 million for the Defence Force. What we are concerned about in the era of open Government is that we are getting things being brought down unspecified. What is all this secrecy about? Whereas before, if you go back to the Estimates three years ago, one would have seen that you were going to buy aircraft, ships and ammunition, although we were not allowed to debate the Head, all you have now is a blanket "Operating Expenses" for the cost of running the Defence Force. We have no elucidation on those points at all.
4.30 p.m.

I am a taxpayer, I am a Barbadian, and I want to make this clear. There is a growing emphasis on militarism in this country, to the detriment of the peace keeping function inside of Barbados and the Barbados Police Force. The Barbados Police Force is being deflated in its importance in this community and a greater emphasis is being put on the military side of the picture, if you understand. I am trying to be as general as possible. A fantastic emphasis. I predict that next year the expenditure is going to exceed that of the police establishment. Nobody knows how many people there are in the Defence Force, because they do not appear here in the Estimates, but we know that in the Police Force, which is what we are discussing, we have 890 men to take care of.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have one minute more.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I know that, Sir.

There are other things which the Prime Minister may ask me to disclose, but I do not feel like disclosing them now – a little bit at a time. You cannot give him too much indigestion on these things. I can, however, assure him that whatever I say is accurate, and he is inaccurate as to my sources of information. I do not disclose my sources of information. I have been in this thing too long. I have operated in circumstances bigger than Barbados, in Berlin and all over the place where....

Asides.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: How do you mean where I was in Berlin? All over. Behind the wall and in front of the wall. There was not even a wall then. I know how to operate.

We are concerned about the deflation of the Police Force. It is not that anybody is trying to embarrass anybody else, but we have to be concerned.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): On this side, we are really boys in the yard, Sir. We are being pushed about. The Leader of the Opposition sit down and the Prime Minister gets up to reply, and somebody is ready to quarrel with you to stop the Prime Minister speaking. Why do you not tell people to know their place, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Carry on.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The Leader of the Opposition is telling us all about Berlin and so on. There may be people on this side who have operated in Berlin and in places other than Berlin. I would not go too heavy on being a Pilot Officer or Flying Officer of an R.A.F. station at Teagle, or Gattock, or wherever it was, in today's world. I do not believe that the experiences of the former Prime Minister in the Royal Air Force really mean very much in this context, except that he is rather older than the rest of us.

The people of whom we are speaking, the Commissioner of Police and the Brigadier, have not been any further in the one case than Central Police Headquarters, and, in the other case, Jamaica for their experiences.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order: I am not trying to make any point about my service in the Royal Air Force. I was making a point about my experiences as a member of a military Government in Berlin with the Russians, French, American and British – the Four Power commandatura at Potsdamer Platz.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The Four Power commandatura at Potsdamer Platz is no more – that is where Check Point Charlie is and it was completely demolished before the honourable Member ever went to Berlin.

I recall being told how the honourable Member had described to someone landing on the Autobahn Lingdon, from which trees had been cut down, in an aeroplane, and how it was the first Allied aeroplane into Berlin after the war. I must say, to his credit, that my ears were opened for the story on the first occasion I ever met him, which was in October 1950, but he did not tell that story on that occasion. He did not tell me another story he told to others either, about how he was once lost between the lines and thought he was a prisoner of war, and when he got back to the barracks he found they had divided up his clothes and they were selling his flying boots.

Anyhow, the honourable Member is making important points about which Barbadians are concerned, and the occasional light relief, and the more than occasional exaggeration, and, I fear, falsehood, should not blind us to the need to discuss this matter.

A moment ago, I mentioned to the Commissioner of Police that he will probably be very surprised to discover that spending on the police had increased more

since we had been in power than spending on the Defence Force. Since it is a statement that I believe the Member would not support, in that I think he has been known occasionally to allege the opposite, it is worth giving figures.

In 1976–77, spending on Defence and Security, which includes not only the Defence Force but the Government Security Guards – remember you are talking about a couple of hundred security guards in those Defence and Security figures – was $1 425 184. The spending in the current year is $14 284 713. The exact difference is $12 859 529. Spending on the Police Force in 1976–77 was $8 018 690. Spending on the Police Force in the current year is $21 695 576. It can therefore be seen that the spending on the Police Force has increased by $13 676 886, so the increase on spending on the police, contrary to overwhelming public perception, is, in fact, greater than the increase on spending on the security guards and the Defence Force put together. So let us lay that at rest.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of explanation. Would the Prime Minister equate periods? Because if you take last year's Estimates for the Defence Force and only relate it to one time span, and then you take the Police Force over an eight year time span, you are not comparing equal things. You have to tell us what Defence and Security was costing in 1976–77. I have the figures here. You will see that the increase for the Defence Force from 1976–77 to 1984–85 is more than $13 million, and that is the correct comparison, not to take one year's increase for the Defence Force and then eight years for the police.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: When the honourable Member makes points like that, people think he is foolish. He is not foolish. Years and years ago, I remember talking to Joe Brome, about something that the honourable Member had said, and I said: "I am really sorry, but he really does not seem to understand what is going on." Joe Brome said: "But you do not have to believe that. He knows what is going on. He is saying something that is not true." I said: "Joe, I know you like him, but do you prefer to believe the man as a liar than that he does not know?" Joe Brome said: "Yes!" 4.40 p.m.

The honourable Member heard me say that spending on the Defence Force in 1976–77 was $1 425 184. Even if it was nil, the increase in spending could only be what it was last year, which is $14 284 713. So in looking at any amount here, talking about the Defence Force, do not assume that what you see in this year's Estimates is a final figure, because I am going to reduce the vote when we come to it. That is why I have not chosen this.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: How do you know? I have said it in my Second Reading speech, and the fact is that the occasion of mentioning it has not arisen. This is why I am not dealing with it here. I am dealing with settled figures. The settled figures are the figures for the current year, and the increase on spending on the Police Force has been more since we have been in power than the increase on spending on Defence and Security. I say that over and over again. People who have an interest in promoting strife between the two organizations, by saying how much has been done for the Defence Force and how little has been done for the Police Force, are malicious liars, and I do not necessarily mean the Opposition.

I will deal with the numbers in the Police Force. There were 883 people in the Police Force establishment in 1976–77. This included 44 writ servers, and a variable number of persons responsible for Immigration. The numbers in the Police Force at the present time are 1 049. The Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition forgot to add in the Police Band. He included the Police Band in the 883 of 1976–77.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) is taking up the fire rage of two people who do not like him. One is the Leader of the Opposition and the other is the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He should keep his mouth shut.

If you look at page 40 of the Schedule on Personal Emoluments for 1976–77, you will see that the police establishment was 990. From Medical Officer downwards are civilians, and you can subtract.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The honourable Member, who obviously likes me – if he knows who does not like me, he must be like me – did not hear what the honourable Member said. He said over 800, and that is how one knew that the band was not included. He is now saying that it is over 900. He is a joke.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: You are not dealing with Sixth Form debates. You are dealing with Parliament and men who know what they are talking about, on this side, at least, so do not tell me foolishness.

The 883 includes the Police Band, as you will observe, if you see Director of Music, Assistant Director of Music and so on. How do you mean it does not include the Police Band?

The 883 include the Police Band and, including the Police Band, there are now 1 049 people. I am not

including an additional Assistant Commissioner of Police, I am being exceptionally fair. I have frozen the post and, therefore, I am not including it. So the Police Force has been increased from 883 to 1 049, but that is not the only effective increase.

Since 1976, responsibility for immigration and for writ serving has been removed from the Police Force. Fifty two writ server posts have been released from the Police Force and 40 posts have gone to immigration. That makes 92. Ten more are being released at the end of this month from Licensing, but, again, I am not necessarily going to add them on, but, if you subtract.....

Asides

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: They are being seconded, but the posts will be abolished completely in the end. You think that they are being seconded because you got the information from a source that is not the final source. It is a very authoritative source, but it is not the final source. I only wish that source would sell me some of the information, so that when the Police Station in St. Thomas gets taken out of the Estimates, before I can even see it, I might know something about it. However, I think St. George deserves it more than St. Thomas at the present time. You get information from a source which cannot stipulate, and is overruled afterwards.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order. I wonder if the honourable Prime Minister would tell me how much was spent on Defence and Security in 1976–77. He said that the increase to the Police has been more, and I do not think his figures are correct from the Estimates I have here. I have pages 13 – 14 of the Estimates of 1976–77.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I want to help the Honourable Member. He can turn to page 9 of the current Estimates, the document we are working on.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The approved Estimates for 1967–77.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I cannot argue. I want you to turn to the chart on page 9. The approved Estimates of 1976–77 say how much was voted. Do you remember that there may be a difference between what was voted and what was spent? It is only eight years since you were Minister of Finance, so you should remember that. You turn and you will see what was actually spent. Page 9 of the current document, column 4, Item 3(6), immediately after the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister's Office – $1 089 000; Defence and Security – $1 425 184.

If you add the 92 notional posts retained by the Police, you will discover that the effective increase in the strength of the Police Force since 1976–77 to the present time is 258 persons. It is, therefore, really a very wicked view of the facts to suggest that the Police Force has been starved of funds. Indeed, I really wonder how we have managed to get this increase, because we built the Defence Force up from perhaps 30 regular people, if there were as many as 30 established posts, to hundreds, and we did that at less cost than adding, in actual numbers, 166 to the Police Force and improving police facilities.

It is really time that all this biased argument and biased reporting, designed to drive a wrench between the Police Force and the Defence Force, come to an end. The Police Force has not been so well treated as they have since we have been in power. The post of Corporal has been abolished, and a great number of promotional opportunities for sergeants opened to the privates in the Force. We have increased the number of men in khaki by something like 40 per cent, giving more opportunities, yet, again, for promotion in the Police Force.
4.50 p.m.

The Police Force has not in any way been starved of training. There were command and other courses available to the senior ranks of the Police Force. I can hardly remember any case, except training in airport security, where there may be other needs where training opportunities for the Police Force have been refused. The Police Force has not had the opportunity for the expenditure on Capital to the same extent. We have not reached that Head yet.

The Police Force still got a vote of $800 000 to build a wall at District "A" which fell down at the first rain, and now they want $4 million more to help 30 policemen. I had to tell the Commissioner of Police we have 8 000 old people in this country who could use welfare housing if the money was available. They wanted more money for a computer and twice as much for District "A" as I was giving to the 8 000 old people who need welfare houses. There has to be some reason at some stage.

Continually out of the Opposition we can hear well-informed, accurate accounts of the internal politics of the Ministry of Legal Affairs: who asked for what, who got what, who did not get what and so on. The Public Relations Department of the Police Force is doing a good solid job.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) should be the last to stay in his seat and say that it is a member from this side who has given information to them. He has been warned

already that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. You should be the last to say that anybody on this side gave you information, but your mouth will get you in trouble.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Not more than yours today.)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I really do not have anything more to say, except to refute these figures. What can I say? The Defence Force is being built up from nothing. A Defence Force is being created. In the eight years since 1976–77, several hundred people have been given opportunities to pursue careers which they want to follow. Defence has employed, I repeat, more people since 1976–77 than the Government has laid off in the whole time. It is not a vehicle for employment, that is not its purpose, but, in fact, young boys and girls in this country, with the adequate educational qualifications, have had an opportunity to join the Defence Force, as they have opportunity to join the Police Force.

I would like to answer some of these misstatements, because I fear that tomorrow the Press is going to carry all this foolishness about the German mercenaries and the Rapid Deployment Force, because they now plan to talk about Legal Affairs for the rest of tonight so that I cannot get an opportunity to answer. In fact, I can answer this question of the Rapid Deployment Force under 'Police'. The police used to have a Rapid Deployment Force in Barbados. It was called the Special Service Unit, and indeed it still has a Special Service Unit. The people who mainly used to belong to that unit and the Riot Squad were the writ servers and persons in other sedentary occupations. There was a written report which said that the Police Riot Squad and Special Service Unit could not contain a riot in Bridgetown for more than 24 hours. There was a specific warning that there were buildings that overlooked the control room at the Police Station, and we were even told – they even called the name of poor Elton and Elliot Mottley – that a hand grenade thrown from the Mottley Chambers could incapacitate the Police in the event of an emergency.

In these circumstances, it is obviously necessary to have what is being grandly described as a Rapid Deployment Force. The words are being used by the Leader of the Opposition to bemuse the public. Most countries are extremely proud to have a Rapid Deployment Force. You do not have to use them, but the existence of such forces controls, by anticipation, the type of threat they are called to deal with.

I was very proud in 1979 when, between three and four hours, the Cabinet of Barbados met the Governor-General was informed and took the necessary steps, and the Harbour Platoon of the Barbados Defence Force mobilised and sent to St. Vincent. I do not believe that the United States could mount an expedition of company size inside three hours to undertake a mission outside its borders. They could react from within their borders to a threat of World War, obviously, but not to an unexpected threat, the combination of the command decision and the availability. (The honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) perhaps has experience of being a member of a Rapid Deployment Force). I am very happy to know that we had the beginnings of a Rapid Deployment Force in 1979, and that with the increase in the numbers of the Defence Force, which this vote will make possible, we will be able to have a more efficient one.

Both the Police Force and the Defence Force have people in Grenada. I do not know that I should give the numbers, but I can give them to the honourable Member privately, on a Privy Council basis, if he wishes. He can see my Defence Force file. I really do not mind at all. There is nothing in it whatsoever about ships and supplies and so on. There is nothing in it about any 12 tons of supplies arriving yesterday for the Defence Force, which is really not true.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Is everything in the newspapers true? Do not think this is the first false manifest. I do not know anything about it. The numbers of the Defence Force and the numbers of the Police in Grenada are about equal. They get on perfectly well together. I do not believe that the Grenada Government would wish me to talk about the numbers. The Rt. Honourable Leader of the Opposition can have the whole Defence file. He can see all of Aero Services and its business, he can read about the security guards, he can read about people renouncing citizenship. He can have my whole brief. There is nothing in the brief or file that should be secret from him, and I would prefer him to know the truth rather than to have him make all these fancy remarks about the German mercenaries.

Honestly, the honourable Member was a member of the Four Power commandatura at Potsdamer Platz, and yet I do not believe he would claim to be able to influence the German Government.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The honourable Member is saying that what I am saying is not true, and he said that I never worked in Potsdamer Platz because it did not exist. He does not even know where Potsdamer Platz is. This was the headquarters of the Four Power Government, and I had to go there every single week. He never heard about Yale College or Florida International either, but this kind of cheap talk is not becoming.

I want to know if he can say that what I said about Brigadier Lewis is untrue. If Lewis never went to Germany to recruit the people, why should he have to tell Brigadier Lewis not to take the Sergeant with him?

He warned Lewis not to take the sergeant with him because the sergeant was a friend of mine. Now he is turning around, twenty minutes later, and saying what I said is not true.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I do not know where Potsdamer Platz is because Potsdamer Platz was destroyed in the War, and it is only an open space. I have visited the site on a few occasions. I have not been there yet this year, but I have visited it on a few occasions.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Is the honourable Member saying that the headquarters of the International Commission in Germany, the Four Power Commission, was not situated in Potsdamer Platz? Is that because he says it was obliterated during the War? Platz only means a market square. Do you mean you could obliterate an open space? I am speaking about the buildings, in which I worked, around the square. Are you saying they were obliterated, too?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: In fact, the buildings were obliterated, but I would not worry with the honourable Member.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: So I was working in a tent!

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: You were working in a building that looked down on where Potsdamer Platz had been, and from which you would not have seen Potsdamer Platz if the buildings had not been destroyed in the bombing. But never mind.
5.00 p.m.

The point about Germany is this. Nobody was recruiting any Germans. When we come to the Defence debate, I will tell you exactly what is happening. We have recruited a number of Barbadians who served in the British Army on the Rhine.

Brigadier Lewis went along with a sergeant –

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: A sergeant! Yes!)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Brigadier Lewis went to a reunion of the Barbadian soldiers who served in Germany in order to find out how many of them were interested in joining the Defence Force. I believe that twenty-two of them have joined in various capacities. They will cost a little more, because in one or two cases, we may have to buy them over from the British Army, and they may be paid allowances and so on. That is part of the reason for the increase in the Defence Vote. We do not have a sufficient number of trained Barbadian officers.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: For the information of the honourable Member, at that party, the highest ranking person was a Quartermaster Sergeant. Are you making all of them officers now? Are all of those privates and corporals going to be made officers over our men who have worked for six and seven years in our local Force.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I believe the honourable Member was present at that party. I really believe that he was there in masquerade. He knows that the highest ranking person was a Quartermaster Sergeant. Do you know who that Quartermaster Sergeant was? Perhaps one of the senior Quartermaster Sergeants in the British Army maybe. He is a Training Officer with one of the finest of the British Territorial Armoured Regiments. But it is not true that we are bringing back Quartermaster Sergeants to be officers. We have recruited a number of people who are officers.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Who are below the rank of Quartermaster.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, I think you have gone fully into the debate on the Defence Force. At this point I think you should just steer clear away from it.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I am going to sit down, but I should just like to say one thing.

Two or three Captains and other ranks at that level have been recruited and will be taking up their duties. The rank and file of the Defence Force are going to hear that the highest of them was of the rank of Quartermaster Sergeant, and the sergeants in our Defence Force are going to feel that we brought back sergeants and made them captains while ignoring them. But it is not true. We recruited people who are officers and who have come to be officers.

I cannot say that none has got a commission, because I have not got the CVs of all twenty-two here. I know we sit on the Commission's Board. You cannot become an Officer in the Defence Force without the knowledge of the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister, and we really cannot remember any persons who we have commissioned direct from non-commissioned, ranks in Britain. There may be, but I cannot tell you that I know of any such case.

These reckless statements do no good to the morale of people at whom they are directed. Why does he want to drag down these people? Does he feel he is the only Barbadian who has even held the King's Commission? He held one in War time. There are some people who have held the Queen's Commission in peace time, as regulars. I am informed that there was a Barbadian in every unit in the Falkland Islands, except the Gurkhas and the Welsh Guards. Why try to drag down Barbadians who are in the British Army?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will put the question in respect of the Police.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you making a contribution on Head 30, Police?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have tried on several occasions to address the Honourable House, through you, on this particular matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Police?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I propose to deal very much with the Police.

I want to say that I have always supported, and have been impressed by, the performance of the Royal Barbados Police Force over the years. Indeed, I believe that their commitment to the law process and to constitutionality is so deeply rooted in their approach to their duties that it would be difficult to make any substantial broadside on the Police Force, although, from time to time, there will be difficult persons within their ranks who may cause problems.

As an organization, as an institution, I believe that the Royal Barbados Police Force has performed sterling service to this community over the years. I have been intimately, by blood relationship, associated with that particular institution ever since I was a child. I know of the kind of commitment and sacrifices which the Royal Barbados Police Force has made to this country over the years.

I was very surprised to hear all sorts of figures being bandied about the place. The fact that we are spending some $21 million this year on the Royal Barbados Police Force, as compared with some $6 million in 1976, represents a decline. The $21 million represents a smaller percentage of total Government revenue than the $6 million in 1976. That is a fact.

Additionally, in 1976, if you would recall, the Royal Barbados Police Force, as far as I can remember, had responsibility for Immigration. I have always felt that it was a great error that that particular function was removed from the Royal Barbados Police Force, because they performed efficiently in that area.

A lot of the problems now facing this country in relation to certain immigrants, and the changing pattern of the population in Barbados, probably would not have arisen if that particular department had remained under the Royal Barbados Police Force. There is also a distinct possibility that the problems which we face with drugs and so on might not have escalated at the pace we have seen if that particular department had remained under the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Let it be clearly understood that, in terms of percentage allocation of resources, we are not spending any more on the Royal Barbados Police Force today than we spent in 1976. It is a simple straightforward percentage to work out; you have to compare the $21 million with what you expect in revenue this year, and compare your revenue in 1976–77 with your expenditure on the Police Force.

I suspect that the honourable Minister of Finance must have made a serious mistake when he used his calculator, because in fact, when you look at the expenditure on Capital and Current Account for the Police Force in the year 1976–77, you will see that it was about $9.23 million. This year, the figure will be some $21.9 million, an increase of some 133 per cent.
5.10 p.m.

When you take the same comparative figures in relation to the Defence Force – I am not going to dwell on this, this is just a comparison. I am not going into any debate on Defence and Security. I promise you that. I can assure you that I am not.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will not allow it.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: All I am saying is that the amount spent on Defence and Security in 1976, Capital and Current, was $1.48 million, and 1983–84 it was $20.9 million – that is well over a thousand per cent increase in expenditure on Defence and Security. So the point that there has been a failure to increase expenditure on the peace-keeping forces within the society in relation to the Barbados Police Force at the same pace at which it has been spent elsewhere on another aspect of security is a very valid point. Even those gross figures that I gave, which only compare two years, 1976–77 and 1983–84, conceal serious escalations of expenditures in the one area, namely Defence and Security, as compared with the Police Force, because the capital expenditure on the Police Force very seldom exceeds $1 million, and in many years during that period, you find $10 million and $12 million being spent on the Barbados Defence Force.

I just wish to make the point that the honourable Prime Minister, whose language and behaviour in the Honourable Chamber, I must say.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Leave out the personal approach, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is exactly the point I want to get to. I am sometimes ashamed of the fact that I have to refer to him as the Right Honourable Prime Minister of this country, because of the language that he

uses on the floor of the House. But nevertheless one has to, and sometimes someone would like to accord greater respect to the post, but the type of language and behaviour exhibited on the floor of this House is unbecoming of someone holding that office.

We are making a mistake in not making a greater capital expenditure on the Police Force and in increasing the current expenditure. Crime prevention today is a very sophisticated matter. The request for a computer is something that has to be taken seriously after a proper determination has been made on the uses for which the computer would be allocated, because you have to be one step ahead of the criminal of today in order to protect this community.

I also feel that there should be sufficient resources for the Commissioner of Police to establish a full-fledged Drug Squad in order to deal with the problem of drugs in Barbados. I will say no more. I use the words "full-fledged" advisedly, because I believe that is such a dangerous area that even the lives of those people who might be deployed in that area at any given time could be in danger. Many people do not realize, even now, what a serious threat the drug problem is, and not only to the community at large but to those members of the Police Force who have to fight that problem from day to day. Therefore, I do not propose to go down the line.

I know that a lot more money is needed to allow the Commissioner of Police the kind of discretionary spending that is absolutely essential in order to get to the bottom of the drug traffic in Barbados. Trafficking has now reached international proportions, and has been reported as such in different parts of the world – just from passing drugs destined not only for the domestic population but for other countries as well, through our airport and seaport. The culprits are here in Barbados, and the resources must be made available to the Royal Barbados Police Force to allow them to track down the criminals and to offer proper protection to those people who are fighting the problem of the trafficking in drugs.

I know what I am talking about. This area is perhaps more dangerous than any other area of activity, and the experience around the world is that unless you allocate resources in that area, you will never be able to deal with the problem. As a matter of fact, there has got to be a very sophisticated system in which a Commissioner can ensure that he can protect himself and his own officers, and those other people involved in the exercise, from the drug racketeers. These are dangerous people; they are not only destructive of a community, but they would destroy the law enforcing agents unless the resources are available to fight them.

I want to touch on the question of technological advances. Without technological advances in the Police Force, and because of the pattern of crime, we are not going to get anywhere. When you talk of white collar crime, you are soon going to have computer crime in Barbados, if you do not have it already.

There are computers in the banks and in various Government departments, and with the press of a button somebody can carry away a few million dollars. The Police could do very little to investigate that matter without calling in external help, because you have to be able to go inside the computer and decode the machine in order to pick up the way in which the computer crime was committed. The situation in Barbados presents, I would imagine, a wonderful opportunity for one of these computer whizz – kids to walk away with $2 million and probably programme a computer so that it would destruct or mal-function after a particular entry has been made. This kind of thing has been done in various banks overseas.

What can the Royal Barbados Police do in that kind of situation? They can do nothing at the moment, and they should already have people involved in training with other police forces which are dealing with this particular area of computer crime. Are you going to wait until you have lost several million dollars in a bank and then start a programme of training for the Police Force, which will probably take four or five years? I do not know if that kind of training is taking place, but it is absolutely essential. The proper use of a computer is not just a question of having people who can enter data as to how many convictions a person has or enter a date-of-birth or I.D. card number. It is a question of being able to use the computer intelligently in order to assist in the process of crime prevention and, in many instances, crime detection.

I just really wanted to say that the honourable Member for St. Thomas was inadvertently, I am quite sure, misled by the small adding machine that he had in his hand, into misleading this Honourable House when he suggested that the gross expenditure on the Defence Force was not far more rapid than the gross on the Police Force during the year 1976–77. On the Police Force it increased 122 per cent and on the Defence Force by 1000 per cent.

5.20 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation: What is he denying? Is he denying the figures which are taken from the Estimates, or is he denying the subtraction? Before you say that somebody is misled by an adding machine, you had better be sure, because I read out four sets of figures and I would like to know which is wrong, or which subtraction is wrong.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I was not dealing with Capital, I dealt with Current.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I can give you the information. In 1976-77, Defence and Security, Current, $1.425 million; Capital, $60 000; total, $1.485 million. Defence and Security, 1983-84, Current, $16 149 000; Capital, $4.8 million; total $20.9 million. Increase, well over 1 000 per cent.

Police, 1976-77, Current $8 million or thereabout; Capital, approximately $900 000; total, $8.9 million. Police 1983-84, Current, $21 million; Capital, about $800 000; total, approximately $22 million. Increase, 133 per cent.

Matter proved. Q.E.D. *Quad erat demonstrandum.*

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation, Sir: The honourable Member just said that defence spending in 1983-84 was some $16 million-odd. That is not true. Page 12 of the Estimates shows that it was $14 284 713. Where I come from, we call that lying.

The second point is that when he was dealing with Capital, he gave approximate figures. Do you remember? He said $800 000 approximately. He does not know.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on page 13 of the Estimates the figure is $16 million. It is here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I can have this all evening, and I am not going to have it.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation: The honourable Member really cannot get away with that. He had added Immigration to Defence and Security. If you add Immigration to Defence and Security, how could that be meaningful? Page 12 gives Defence and Security. On page 13 is Immigration; he now adds on Immigration and speaks of that as being a part of Defence and Security, which it was not in 1976–77. That is the point. To get the figure of $16 million, he has quite inadvertently – I am sure, he does not mean to mislead the House; not at all does he mean to mislead the House – merely added in Immigration to the cost of what I said was the Defence Force and the Security Guards.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I would like to make one point.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will have no further interruptions until I hear from the honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Thank you, Sir. It would be a great pity if the debate on Police should really get down to a debate on the Defence Force. It really shows that the phobia which Barbadians have for the military is perhaps the easiest political horse to beat.

Let me begin by admitting that in the 1980, going into the 21st century, small states, such as Barbados, will have to rely for some military establishment, particularly for external security.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the police.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am very much aware of that, Sir.

Internal law and order will remain for a long time as the sole, if not the major, responsibility of the civilian force, which is normally the police services, and we still depend, under our Police Act, for some quasi-military support from the Police Force.

In the past five years I have listened to the various views expressed on both sides of the House on the police. At one stage, the Opposition's case was that there was political interference from the Government side, under me, in the operations of the Police Force. At a later stage, the Opposition's case was that there was spiralling crime. At another stage, the Opposition's case was that they had no case.

The truth concerning the police is simply that, between the years 1969 and 1976, there was a failure to address the urgent problems of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Other than certain cosmetic changes which were being made, no serious analysis was being done on the development of the Police Force as against the other areas of development in our society, and the problems which confronted the police in the 1970s, going into the 1980s, were problems which built up over a considerable period of time.

The police themselves had been conscious of these problems. They have underlined the problems, as they saw them to the Administration. I must confess it was not until these problems manifested themselves in hurting the tourist industry that we got any serious attempt'....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order: I hate to interrupt the honourable Member, but I wonder if he could use the other microphone. There appears to be some kind of feedback, and it is making his voice very piercing to the ear.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am sorry, Sir.

It was not until we got the problems ricocheting into the tourist industry that we had a serious attempt to grapple with these problems and to see the recommendations of successive Commissioners of Police and their staff. I do not believe that that fact can be gainsaid, and it has taken the Royal Barbados Police Force some years to begin to tackle those problems.

I believe that we have at the head of the Force one of the most outstanding policemen in the Commonwealth. That cannot be gainsaid. We have, despite the attacks I have heard on policemen from time to time, a Police Force that has managed to remain above partisan politics by and large, and that has been even-handed in dealing with the problems. Occasionally you will get one or two policemen – to err is human – who may not administer the law in the ideal manner in which policemen would like to see it administered, but there is no doubt that the Police Force with limited numbers, has consistently been able to maintain law and order in this country, even when our numbers are doubled annually by visitors coming here.

The question of the increase in the Force was only attended to between the years 1978, to be exact, and 1983. It takes us three years before you can probably get a policeman to the stage where he can give you a service that is showing return. This is a fact. The Commissioner will tell you that. And we have done studies on the Force, both internally and with external assistance, and it is obvious that some of the changes we made are now manifesting themselves in an improved Police Force.
5.30 p.m.

One of the other areas which I would like to see the Government look at very seriously is an increase at Officer level. We have had, as the Prime Minister said, a real increase of about 250 persons, if you take into account the number of persons who are no longer in writ serving, immigration duties, car licensing and court processing, but we have not had a corresponding increase in the Officer class in order to provide the leadership that is necessary, and it is still true that at some of our stations at nights, and sometimes on days, there is no officer above the level of Sergeant who is there to provide the leadership that is necessary. So I should like the Minister of Establishments to give early consideration to increasing the number of officers in the Force. I think they can do with this increase, and I think the Commissioner can make out a strong case on this ground for some increase along these lines.

I do not believe either that the Police Force has reached the maximum strength that is necessary in Barbados, even if we remove from the force the duties of what is called the "Rapid Deployment Force". I believe that given the projections for visitors coming to our shores, economic development in the industrial sphere, and the impact of our neighbours on us in terms of white collar crime and drugs, we have to look for a real increase over the next few years of between 200 to 300 men. In addition, we must have this increase if we are to have the police work a 40-hour week, which we would like to see but which is not now the case.

We have tried to cushion some of these problems. First, the present Commissioner has redeployed his existing staff, although I am sure that he is affected by policemen going to Grenada. We have given a duty allowance, which, I believe, costs the Government between $600 000 to $720 000 a year. But in the long term planning for the Force, we must not forget that if we are going after getting three-quarters of a million tourists here, that that alone is a strong case for the improvement in the numbers of the Force.

It is also a fact that the neglect in the years 1969-1976 resulted in the police physical plant being severely run down. It is significant that it is only under the Barbados Labour Party that any real progress has been made in providing adequate police quarters. I am happy to hear from my colleague, the honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull), the plans for the new police station at St. George. I hope he will not forget District "D", because District "D" is really a disgrace. I also hope that in the plan period he will be able to go ahead with the new headquarters building and carry out the other proposals in the Five Year Development Plan for improving the physical surroundings of the band, Holetown and other stations.

I was well into my time in the Ministry when I discovered, to my horror, that policemen who were sometimes on 24-hour duty were sleeping on their kits. I notice that almost every member of the Opposition has deserted his place. This continued under the Democratic Labour Party for a considerable period of time. This problem was never addressed in their time, and it really hurts me that, all of a sudden, the police has a series of people saying how much they love them.

Seriously, what did they do for them? Some attempt is now being made to redress those problems. If the problems had been redressed earlier, the police would not have to deal with the serious problem of peaking crime at the same time we were getting more visitors into this country.

They were criticized; people were saying that they were not doing their jobs and they were inefficient. I cannot forget the ugly spectacle of the police being abused in the worst manner at the time of the Pele Enquiry. Sometimes they did not even get the support from the media that they deserve, but they were only trying to do a difficult job, with scarce resources, in difficult circumstances.

Let me congratulate them on the decrease in the crime statistics. You hear from the Opposition how there is this increase in crime. The statistics which are published annually by the Police Force shows that after peaking in 1981, I think it was, serious crimes, like robberies, burglaries and house breaking, are on a downturn. If you look at the statistics for 1982–1983, you will see that the figures show a sharp decline, and I believe that they

ought, having taken the brunt of the criticism, to be given all the praise for the work that they have done.

I have had a long association with the police; I have not only appeared against them, but I have worked for the Association. I do not believe that a lot of people who get up offering them praise are really interested in anything other than a vote from the Police Force. I do not think that any of them seriously analyse the problems of the Force as some of us, like the Minister who now has responsibility for this portfolio, have to do.

I hope that such debates would not always degenerate into debates of the Police Force versus the Defence Force. The Police Force can stand on its own feet. It has had a tremendous history in this country. It has carried the brunt of the defence of the country for a long time, and I believe that, in any event, it is a safeguard we need.

One of the reasons why small and the developed countries keep a strong Police Force is because they have to control the military. I like the military as well, but I believe that Dr. Eric Williams always made the point that he kept the soldiers at the gate and the police closest to him, near to his bedroom. In other words, the soldiers first had to pass the police to get to Dr. Williams. I think that there was a method in his madness.

Obviously, one has to maintain both Forces without creating divisions among them. I think we have two fine men looking after internal and external security, and we have two fine Forces, but, if we are not careful, politicians will do a great deal of damage by the almost reckless manner in which we approach problems such as these.

The technological revolution should not pass the Police Force. I think that their handling of crime could be improved with modern aids. I am heartened by the fact that the Minister has not said that he is rejecting for all time their request for a computer, but that he has a token vote in the Estimates and a proper study will be done on the subject. I think the Commissioner could well make out a case along these lines for some improvement in the method of keeping statistics and detecting certain crimes. In fact, I believe that a report done by Professor Jones of the University of Aberystwyth shows that Barbados' statistics are better kept than the statistics in any other part of the Commonwealth Caribbean, despite the absence of aids, but I am sure that, with improved aids, we can do better than we have done in the past.

There was a time when the police did not even have adequate walkie-talkies.

5.40 p.m.

The recommended number is that one-third of your Force should be properly equipped with walkie-talkies. There was a time when the police had only 36 walkie-talkie sets. We had to address that problem. One of the Commercial banks had to provide, overnight, money to buy beds for policemen to sleep on. I do not know if Barbadians know this. Instead of the police being run down and accused of shooting and beating people, I would like to see a serious analysis done in the media about this type of problem, and how we are answering the problem and supporting the police.

One thing over the weekend which heartened me was a question asked in the *Nation* as to whether people thought the police were doing a good job. Four out of five said "yes", and although five is a small sample, that said something to me. It said that at long last we are getting Barbadians, despite those years of denigration, to truly appreciate the contribution and role of the policeman. The policeman is as much a professional as the doctor, the lawyer, the architect, the engineer – call whatever other class of professional you want. In many ways he is more skilled, because he deals with everything from family problems and the problem of drugs, to the problem of the worst white collar crime that you can find, fraud. He has to deal with the person who may be low down the social ladder and the person at the top of the social ladder, and he has to use psychology and sociological aids – all of the resources are called on.

I think that we are fortunate – I am winding up now, Sir, – in having had, and still having, a Police Force that is one of the best in the Commonwealth. There are few Police Forces, despite what is being written in the foreign Press that can match up to ours.

I want to make a point about the foreign Press..... I notice the foreign Press, particularly the British Press, has launched an attack on the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force in Grenada, claiming that they have gone down there torturing people. That is a blatant lie, it is unworthy of *The Observer,* and I believe that we ought to speak out about it.

People believe that, because something is in the British Press, it is the truth, but sometimes you find the most scandalous attacks in the British Press. When there was an attack on human rights in Grenada, we never heard one word from some of these people, but Barbadian policemen, who have more guts than the English politicians to go and answer a problem that is a cancer in our region, who have left their families, have an unwarranted attack unleashed on them in the British Press. I do not believe one word of it. I am sure that our policemen continue the worthy tradition for which they are well known throughout the whole world.

The question that the sum of $7 442 701 under Head 30 – Police – stand part of the Schedule, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 31 – PRISONS – $1 433 970

The question that Head 31 stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 32 – FIRE SERVICE

Head 32 – Fire Service – was called.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $775 428 under Head 32 – Fire Service – stand part of the Schedule.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North). Mr. Chairman, in seconding that Head 32 stand part, I should just very briefly like to pay tribute to the Fire Service, a bunch of hard working men and women who over the years seem to go unnoticed by John Public except when there is some difficulty.

There seems to be no information leaked to the information centre over there in the corner of the Opposition benches. But although there is no debate, at least he or another Member from the other side could have the common decency to join with me in lauding these men and women who have got to work around the clock, who have got to work against the fire hazards in the country, and who fight cane fires day after day and night after night.

I should like to pay tribute to them for the outstanding work which they have been doing over the years.

I sincerely hope, and I know it deep within me, that my colleague, the Minister under whose jurisdiction they fall, will do everything within his power to even make them feel equally as happy as some of the other unarmed forces that we have in this country.

The question that the sum of $775 428 under Head 32 – Fire Service – stand part of the Schedule, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 33 – PROBATION DEPARTMENT – $87 947

Head 33 – Probation Department – was called.

The question that Head 33 stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 75 – CAPITAL – MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Head 75 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – was called.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Chairman, Head 75 makes provision for the construction of a new police station and the rebuilding of the Criminal Investigation Department. That building is in very bad shape and we are now about to construct a new Criminal Investigation Department.

We shall also be spending some money on the band headquarters. I believe some reference was made to that previously. We shall also be providing a quantity of vehicles and bits of equipment and so on for the Police Force.

For the Fire Service, we shall be providing a new turntable ladder. You will recall that there was a fire recently at the Holiday Inn hotel and the Fire Department experienced considerable difficulty in reaching the floors where the fire was raging, and therefore the need for this ladder is particularly urgent. We also intend to buy a new water tender this year and install a diesel pump.

I beg to move that the sum of $3 310 548 under Head 75 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – stand part of the Schedule.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: 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, I beg to move that the sum of $18 420 962 under Head 17 – Defence and Security – stand part of the Schedule.

5.50 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Chairman, first of all, there are some amendments. On Head 17, Subhead 2, I am moving to reduce the vote form $16 000 000 to $15 000 000. It is complicated to explain the financing of the Grenada operation, but, there is nothing to conceal. The Grenada operation was first treated as a Capital matter, as a one-off thing, and the funds effectively – effectively, not directly – came from the Youth Service. There was no irregularity but, effectively, that is what happened. This is why, as you would recall, we had to amend the Head some weeks ago. Funds that were thought necessary to support the Grenada operation, to make a repayment from the Current budget effectively to the Capital budget, were included in this year's vote, but the matter has been regularized, and it is no longer necessary to have this additional $500 000.

The Grenada operation is being supported from the Defence Force Vote, but one must not think that the Grenada operation is being carried out entirely without any expense. It is not costing a huge amount, because you have to pay a soldier, whether he is in Barbados or in Grenada, and he has to draw his salary the same way, but they do get a hard-line allowance in the nature of active service pay, and there are expenses of transportation which do not exist in Barbados.

In explanation of the increase at Current level, I should say that the Defence Board, over which I preside, made a proposal to the Estimates Committee, over which for that purpose the Deputy Prime Minister presided, and he reduced their proposals. I am therefore presenting what really are compromised proposals.

The Defence Force does need an increase in personnel to do its work effectively. There are insufficient persons in the Defence Force to make it a coherent force. Anybody familiar with military theory will know that the smallest military unit which can operate independently is a Division, as the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) can tell you. A Division alone contains all arms required for land operations, armoured supply, fighting arms, administrative personnel and so on.

A Brigade, which is a level below a Division, is the normal size that Defence Forces of small countries aspire to. Divisions, depending on how they are organized, can be as many as 20 000 people. Brigades are normally less than one third of that number, there being three Brigades to a Division, and divisional artillery and other troops not necessarily being brigaded.

We do not have artillery parts and artillery units, we just have a small Defence Force. It cannot aspire to being the size of a proper army, but it must aspire to being the size of a regiment, which is roughly 1 000 people. We do not have anything like 1 000 people – just let me say that at once, but a regimental organization is the smallest meaningful organization that one can have. We are aspiring to be an understrength regiment. I say these things for the understanding of the general public, lest they think that the activities of the Defence Force are not informed by scientific considerations.

We are not aiming at 1 000 people, but even an understrength regiment has to have a platoon – they are the people who fight when you have to fight – and it must also have cooks, electricians and motor mechanics; people to do the ordinary everyday jobs which are part of any army. Our Defence Force is so small that people have to be trained to do numbers of jobs. You may find a cook who is also a photographer. You will find people in the fighting platoon who may very well be mechanics, and who can turn their hands to photography or gardening, if they have to.

But there is a limit to what you can do and the point has been reached where you may need a fighting platoon, cooks, photographers, and people in the other ancillary services as well. There are a lot of people in the Defence Force who may like all three, but you cannot be patrolling in Grenada, cooking at St. Ann's Fort and taking photographs.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Of the Opposition.)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: There is a very good thriller about a completely imaginary Defence Force unit at Grantley Adams Airport, and this unit is so good that it can identify a member of the KGB who is going to a garage in Spry Street, next to premises that very closely resemble the Chambers occupied by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not know if that is what the honourable Member is referring to, but I do not believe that there is anybody in the Defence Force who can look through a window at the airport and identify KGB agents on their way to Spry Street. I think that might exist in the imagination of those who read the book, like the honourable Member for St. Michael South. It is a very good advertisement for Barbados, and I hope it frightens our enemies, but I do not think it corresponds to reality.
6.00 p.m.

The Defence Force must have some increase in numbers for efficiency. There was a seminar held at the Garrison recently in which lectures were given to the members of the Defence Force and other interested persons on the needs of the Force, and we have analysed the matter and have come to certain conclusions. We are aiming to increase the Force by 11 Officers, 21 NCOs and 60 Privates.

I want to deal with the officers who are being recruited to fill these and other vacancies. With regards to the Barbadians who have been recruited in Germany, I think there were either 22 or 24 of them – I cannot remember the exact number. Three officers, who were captains in the British Army, were interviewed, and two of them have agreed to transfer to the Barbados Defence Force. Six Warrant Officers in the British Army were coming to the end of their engagement, and they were offered commissions in the British Army, but to take up these commissions they would have had to sign on for, I think, five years as short-service officers. They have declined to take up commissions in the British Army, but are taking up commissions in the Barbados Defence Force instead. These can be the only persons to whom the Leader of the Opposition referred earlier as persons who were no higher in rank than Quartermaster and who have been made officers in the Barbados Defence Force.

The Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition should be aware that ranks of Quartermaster are a little out of date in the British Army of today. There is Warrant Officer 1 and Warrant Officer 2, and Warrant Officers are more coming to occupy the position in the regular

British Army that Viceroys Commissioned Officers used to occupy in the Indian Army, if the honourable Member is familiar with the structure of the old Imperial Indian Army. For example, one of the officers whom we are recruiting is the Senior Warrant Officer in charge of the depot of a territorial unit of British Cavalry, now, of course driving armoured vehicles, one of what is perceived as one of the elite British units. The Cavalry is always a little more special than the Infantry, and the reserve territorial Cavalry embody many of the most famous names in military history.

For a Barbadian to be a Senior Warrant Officer in charge of a depot is a very considerable distinction. He is also the Assistant Adjutant of the Regiment, and if this term is familiar to the Leader of the Opposition and people who are looking at this, they will immediately realize that we are not dealing with persons who, at the rank of Warrant Officer, have reached the limit of their ambitions or expectations. I have every belief that these persons will be a credit to the Barbados Defence Force.

The Barbados Defence Force is very short on Officers. Of the active service Majors, I can think, offhand, of only one Barbadian, a lady member of the Force, although other persons who are serving as Majors are not Loan Service officers, they are persons with a commitment to the Barbados Defence Force who, although born in England, are full members of the Barbados Defence Force and whom we can regard as our own soldiers. I forgot Major Tomlin, who is a Barbadian, but who is considered as a Coast Guard officer, Lieutenant Commander, but he is also included. There are no regular officers of the rank of Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel in the Barbados Defence Force, who are Barbadians, other than Colonel Lewis, who is now at the brevet rank of Brigadier.

We suffer from this officer shortage, and there is, therefore, a need to have experienced officers, who can be promoted to fill the appropriate ranks in our command structure. I must say, though, that although we suffer from a local officer shortage, I think the Grenada operation revealed that there are some quite exceptionally dedicated officers at the rank of Major, and I would particularly like to thank them. Perhaps it would be invidious to thank them all by name, but one of them, a staff officer, drafted the plans which the Barbados Defence Force considered appropriate for a military operation in Grenada, and when the military operation itself did take place, the plans used by the Americans differed in no material particular from the plans which the Barbados Defence Force itself had drawn up for a regional security operation in collaboration with other Caribbean Forces. Indeed, the intelligence appreciation of the Barbados Defence Force and the Regional Security Force was, in my view, at least equal, if not superior, to some of the appreciation of the ground which the American Forces had, and for which they planned accordingly. My view is that our appreciation of the situation relating to the seizing of Pearl's Airport was, in fact, superior to that which eventually prevailed. But that is merely my view, as an uninformed outsider.

In addition to the strengthening of the Officer corps and the increase in the non-commissioned officers, the Defence Force is also introducing a small Pioneer Squadron. The Pioneer Squadron will recruit persons whose educational qualifications are at present insufficient for admission to the Defence Force itself. It can be viewed, really, more as an opportunity for youth employment than as a recruitment of soldiers. Youths who are recruited into the Pioneer Corps will, in addition to being given education – they will be brought up to standard in the subjects in which they may be short – will be assisting in some aspects of the administration and community work of the Barbados Defence Force. I expect that they may very well also assist in physical works to be done.

There is some need for physical expansion at the Pierhead, and we are now looking at plans to integrate such expansion into the general Carlisle Bay improvement scheme, where it impinges upon the Pierhead. I invision some reclamation to the south-east of the Pierhead at the back of lower Bay Street. Since we now have within the ranks of the Defence Force an officer who is also the engineering advisor to the Ministry of Finance and Planning, I am confident that the Force will be well placed to do a great deal of its own planning and drawing work, and perhaps most of its own construction as well.

6.10 p.m.

In return for the $3½ million increase in the vote, we will be improving the efficiency of the Defence Force. I spoke on second reading about the special needs of the Coast Guard. We will be improving employment opportunities for a number of youths in the Pioneer Squadron, and if the Pioneer Squadron is successful in the small way we envisage it at first, we may very well extend it to provide employment opportunities for more youths in the future. The pioneers, if they wish to go on to the Defence Force and they meet the educational requirements at the end of their service with the poineers, will be given an opportunity so to do, or they will, of course, have the opportunity to return to civilian life with improved skills as a result of the training which they can expect to get from the Force.

In considering the Defence Estimates, one should also recall that to the Defence Force is given the responsibility for the National Youth Training Scheme, which ought to come into force during this financial year at the St. Lucy training camp. Monies are voted for this on Capital Account, and some element of the Current Vote will be absorbed by the instructors and the other facilities of the Force used for youth training.

This has had a multiplier effect. Because the Defence Force will lose some of its training ground at St. Lucy to accommodate the National Youth Training Scheme, it is necessary to find other training areas. We have therefore decided that training will also be done at Paragon, and an Airport Security Force will be provided on the south side of the airport from the ranks of the Barbados Defence Force. We really think that this is necessary.

During the operation in Grenada, the Americans had a small, by their standards, airport defence unit, but it still involved 85 people, and a certain amount of physical work and physical rearrangement was part of the process. We do not think that we will need anything near so substantial an airport guard, but I mention that to give an example of the numbers that are needed to give proper protection to a modern airport.

Since we are dealing with Defence and Security, we can back-track to Subhead 1 and say that the whole question of airport security has been considered and security is going to be upgraded generally. The numbers of Security Guards will be increased, and they will be formed into a special airport guard service. This service may also take over some of the functions of the customs guards, and some customs guards will be offered employment in the new guard service. It will have a better career structure than the existing Security Guard service, and qualifications for entering into it may be higher than those which have existed in the past. We do not anticipate we will have any difficulty recruiting a good Airport Security Guard Service.

In the Immigration Department, so popular is the work that we have been able to fill, I think, the last four vacancies of Immigration Officer from the ranks of university graduates. Although the starting pay is no different from the starting pay of persons, for example, entering the Police Force, and it is very little higher than persons entering the General Service, it seems to have a glamour or a cachet which is enough to make university graduates think it is worthwhile to enter. I am very glad, I must say, to see university graduates entering the Police Force and other disciplined services in Barbados as well.

I think that there is some room for improvement at the airport. Some 500 000 people left Barbados last year and about 480 000 entered. I cannot remember exactly, but about 10 000 more left than came in anyhow. That is not an uncommon phenomenon in Barbados, perhaps that is statistics keeping. You cannot always check everybody who comes in, but we can check who leave – it is easier. Anyway, the numbers now are such that we need to upgrade the ancillary facilities, and the Defence Force, Security Guard Service and the Immigration Service will all be playing their part in this.

There is very little I can add, but I had better deal with some of these foolish points about German mercenaries. The honourable Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) suggested that I suborned the German Government into calling him a liar. Does the honourable Member really feel that I have that influence with the German Government? That is the most sincere compliment he has ever paid me. I really thank him for it. We cannot only get the United States to invade Grenada, but we can get the West German Government to say the Leader of the Opposition is not telling the truth.

The truth about the German mercenaries in and out of Barbados is that some German arms salesmen, selling revolvers and ammunition to Police Forces in the Caribbean, came to Barbados on their way to Antigua.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: You said that before).

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am glad I said it before and it has stuck in honourable Members' minds. They brought ammunition and weapons, for demonstration purposes, with them. The Defence Force maintains a control over weapons which enter the country. It accordingly met the aeroplane, removed the weapons from the aeroplane, and put them in safe keeping at the Garrison. Whether the Germans were entertained at the Garrison or not, I do not even know. I certainly have no objection to their being entertained at the Garrison. They went to Antigua and they came back through Barbados. They may have given a demonstration to the Commissioner of Police, I have not even occupied myself with caring about that.

Many things go on which are not secret, and which never come by way of revelation. At the time the honourable Member was speaking about the German mercenaries, there was a Royal Marine Commando team giving training to members of the Regional Security Force from all over the Caribbean, and I think some that were not from the Regional Security Force, because I think I even remember meeting a Trinidadian. I went up there and had a drink with the team and shook their hands. Some were police sergeants, some were from the Army, some were from the Royal Barbados Police Force, and they were being trained alongside our soldiers at the Garrison. In what, I cannot even tell you. I just know it was a training course and a Royal Marine Commander was carrying out the course.

I do not know if somebody misled the Leader of the Opposition by suggesting that the Marines who were doing the job were Germans. To the best of my knowledge, they were all English. I shook their hands and I talked to them; and if they were German of origin, they spoke English very colloquially and well indeed. Of course, they were not Germans – it is all part of the

service training which we have had from time to time from Britain.
6.20 p.m.

As far as the Rapid Deployment Force is concerned, the Regiment must have a Rapid Deployment Force, whether they call it that or not. If they did not have one, the Leader of the Opposition would be the first to criticize it. It must have soldiers who can be telephoned and told; "Dress, pick up your weapons, put on your pack, carry four days' supplies or 48 hours' supplies and go to the airport or go to the Pierhead." You must have such persons.

What is not true is that we have to have Germans to do it. There is a sufficient number of Barbadian soldiers who can be relied on to face whatever is in store, and they were the Barbadian soldiers whom you saw getting aboard the C 130s to go to Point Saline within an hour of the first landing by the American Rangers. That is what a Rapid Deployment Force is, no more, no less. It has to be there. When Sidney Alleyne and the rest of the Dems decide to come ashore, it has to be there even to deal with that.

Obviously, I make no apologies if a unit, not called a Rapid Deployment Force, but serving that purpose, is being trained. I would have to apologise to the House if we had no unit. I would have to apologise to the House if soldiers were going to say that they are only going to have a 40-hour week and that they cannot come out, if called out suddenly, to an emergency. That is what soldiers are for.

The honourable Member for St. John has not gone through the experience of sitting down in his verandah at home with a Chief of Staff, a Commissioner of Police and other persons facing authenticated plans for the recruitment of 260 mercenaries, who were preparing to land at Long Bay, St. Philip; and having the Chief of Staff say that the Weapons List, which we obtained, contained far more sophisticated weapons than any available to the Defence Force, and that we could not stop such a force from coming ashore at Long Bay and establishing itself. I had to face that in 1979, and had it not been for the French, who intercepted some of the weapons in Marseilles, and the British, who surrounded the Regent Palace Hotel when the mercenaries, who had already been retained, were meeting to get their instructions for Barbados, we might very well have faced a most unpleasant episode.

Thirty people gave a lot of trouble in Dominica. Sidney Alleyne, with the 260 he recruited, and with the help of the First Secretary of the South African Embassy in London, certain Dominican diplomatic officers and John Banks, could have made a lot of mischief in this country.

In 1976, he wrote to the Leader of the Opposition to announce that he was coming to Barbados to carry out a coup, whatever he may say, because I must say that the letter never suggested for one moment that the coup was being carried out with the approval, knowledge, connivance or anything else of the honourable Member for St. John. He was going to carry out a coup in which he was going to put into power a Government of both parties.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I do assure that the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) did not appear, even as Minister of Consumer Affairs. His name was not among the *dramatis personi.*

Even if you regarded that threat as essentially frivolous, the forces which Sidney Alleyne set in motion in 1979 were some of the world's major disruptive forces. He got in touch with people who are professional mercenaries in the most complete sense. Sometimes people like that have a way of taking over your revolution for you. You find that you cannot control them once they have the money in their hands and the means to carry out their work.

The Defence Force is a necessary result of the disturbed state of the world under the Caribbean since 1976, and this is why, for good and sufficient reasons, we have had to abandon our manifesto pledge relating to the Defence Force and form a Defence Force.

The Caribbean Defence Force is currently under study. A very capable staff officer of the Defence Force is being lent, in addition to his regular duties, to the regional security system to undertake the studies.

It is not envisaged, as presently conceived, that the Caribbean Defence Force will mean any increased defence expenditure for Barbados for a number of years. I do not want to go into this point at any length, but even if it is established, the most immediate effect would be the transfer of most or all of the Barbados Defence Force to a Caribbean flag. Those who anticipate a great surge in expenditure in the establishment of any further regional defence activity are mistaken.

There might very well have to be purchasing equipment, but nobody is contemplating that Barbados should undertake the purchase of helicopters. No matter what anybody in Barclays Bank may have told the Leader of the Opposition, and no matter what may have appeared in any military journal, we have no anticipation of trying to install vertical lift facilities ourselves. I would far rather see some training of another sort to use conventional aircraft rather than saddling Barbados with the

tremendous burden of buying and running helicopters with its present resources. I want to make that clear.

This year's increase in the Defence Force is by way of a definitive regrading to allow the Force to recruit some more men to improve its efficiency. As a regrading exercise, there is an element of surge in expenditure. Increases in expenditure for the next few years will be ordinary increases, occasioned by salary increases and the general inflation in the cost of supplies and in running anything in this inflationary world.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): I want to make a small contribution to this Head. While we were dealing with the Police Force, a number of matters concerning the Defence Force were allowed, in your discretion, to come into the debate. There were comparisons with police training, talk of all the money that was put at the disposal of the Defence Force and criticisms as to why we should put this money at the disposal of the Defence Force. I have no doubt that the Minister of Finance and the Defence Board are well justified in determining how much money should be made available, but I am puzzled by the behaviour of Members on the other side in relation to the whole question of having the Barbados Defence Force.

6.30 p.m.

Just in August of last year we were saddened by the news in Grenada, after countless warnings on the floor of this House and public warnings about a build up of a communist bloc in Grenada, a satellite of the Cubans or the Russians. I use the word "satellite" because the Leader of the Opposition, in his rebuttal and great turnaround, when he wrote in the *Review,* referred to the Caribbean States as satellites, little guinea pigs jumping at their master's finger Jamaica, Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St. Lucia, all of the territories except Trinidad, whose Government is inept and unable to make a decision, and Guyana, whose corrupt Government, that of Burnham, had the Leader of the Opposition as a consultant up to 1975, were described as satellites, and that statement by the Leader of the Opposition gave lie to the facts, as, I understood them, given by his deputy here on the floor of the House, because his deputy was at pains to point out that that party was in support of whatever decision was taken to bring the criminals to justice. And the decision which was taken by the Government of Barbados along with her friends, not satellites of the American Government, was to invite the American Government to assist in bringing these very criminals to justice.

In this paper called the Review, of which the Leader of the Opposition is a member of the editorial board, he condemned the very Barbadian soldiers who went to Grenada, and who if they had to, could have given their blood for their brothers and sisters in the other territories. I therefore cannot appreciate, and would never be able to understand, the policy of the Democratic Labour Party towards the Barbados Defence Force. Why do you not get on the floor of the House and say openly, because this is what you are indicating, that if you should come into office you are prepared to scrap the Barbados Defence Force? Why do you not say on the floor of the House now, once and for all, that you disagree with all the money which is put into the Barbados Defence Force, which is training young men to protect their country in case of any eventuality, as you had in the past and which it is possible you could have in the future, rather than saying one thing in the Press and on the media, and having it confirmed by your deputy on the floor of the House, and then go to the *Caribbean Review* and refer to the people in Barbados, the OECS States and Jamaica as satellites of the American Government?

The only Governments you really have an interest in at this point in your life are the Burnham Government and the one in Trinidad. The only Governments that he is indicating an interest in are not satellites of the American Government, but one of them, for sure, is a satellite of the Russians and the Cuban Government, that is the Government of Guyana. So we want to know where you are prepared to go in the event you should win the Government tomorrow. What are you prepared to do with the people in the Eastern Caribbean? Are you going to dump these satellites and opt for the Trinidad and Guyana Governments, or are you prepared to stand up in here and say that you are satisfied, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that, along with the American Government, the Eastern Caribbean States and Jamaica, the Barbados Defence Force have freed these territories of what could be one of the most dangerous blocs again in the Caribbean?

This, I thought, would be an ideal thing to say, seeing the build up of arms right under your nose. You know as a fact that the Barbados and the OECS armies put together with Jamaica's and even those of Guyana and Trinidad, could not bave combatted the mighty forces that were in Grenada. But you seem to have been going that way. It looks as if that was your keenness, it was your whole idea going towards that particular state.

I want to laud the Barbadian soldiers. I do not know the strength of the Barbados Defence Force, but I believe that if the Minister of Finance could get up on the floor of the House and tell you about the amount of applications that there are for the Defence Force in Barbados, it would shock most of the Members in here. There are countless applications to join the Barbados Defence Force.

I have no doubt that there are a number of people in public life who seem to be afraid of a Defence Force, and that they are going to take over. I do not believe that Governments are taken over by Defence Forces if they are stable and, do a good job. I may be wrong. I probably do not know enough about them, but I do not believe that I have any fear during my life time.

I believe that the Defence Force should be well equipped to take care of any mercenary attacks, equipment which would allow them to stand up and defend the shores of Barbados, with a little outside help. This is an article that I am going to keep for the remainder of my life. I could not have imagined that I would live long enough to see the rugged Leader of the Opposition make a complete turn about, saying one thing on one side, and then, outside of Barbados, when he did not expect that we would have got the article to look at, condemn his very Barbadian fellowmen.

It seems that we will go to dinner on a fairly good note. I am searching for an argument across the floor, but nobody out there is taking me on. I am trying to pull the old general off his hold and he would not come out.

Sir, I beg to support the Head as amended.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, today has been a very remarkable day. We have had all kinds of interventions. In terms of the Defence Force of Barbados, we have even heard the Prime Minister, who is Chairman of the Defence Board, saying that the Brigadier is hard ears, in good Barbadian language, and would not listen to him. We have heard all kinds of revelations. I did not know that the Brigadier was hard ears and would not listen to the Chief, and that the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Brigadier are at loggerheads over a particular matter.
6.40 p.m.

Now, that is.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do you want to deny that?)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation, Sir: Since he obviously wants me to get up, I should explain that I have now gathered that the gentleman in question, who is the informant of the Leader of the Opposition as to the personnel who attended the party in Moenchengladbach or wherever it was, did not go there as a person officially accompanying the Brigadier. He went there because he had been a corporal in the British Army and was attending the reunion. So perhaps I have been a little bit hard in assuming that my words were not hearkened.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I think it is important that we set this question of a Defence Force for Barbados at rest once and for all.

The Democratic Labour Party....

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Opposes it.)

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Who said so?)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD:..... is a party with a history and with integrity. When we formed the Government, we considered the matter of the defence and security of this country as a concomitant of the independence of this country, and we left proposals for the establishment of a Defence Force in this country, a small unit suitable for the needs of a small country.

In its Manifesto for the 1976 General Election, the Barbados Labour Party made it quite clear that they were not interested in the establishment of any kind of Defence Force for Barbados. Under the heading "Defence and Security", on page 22, ...

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: We know that. That is a fact.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: We have got to put it on the Record because we hear all kinds of arguments.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: It is in the Record already.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: This is what the Barbados Labour Party is saying in its Manifesto for 1976:

> "Barbados should have no territorial ambitions. Whilst recognising its crucial geographical significance to the North American and Latin American continents there is no reason why Barbados should attract foreign invasion or intervention. The Party will not commit our country to any foreign defence pacts. Internally, the defence forces will be limited to such as are adequate to maintain law and order. There will be no need to maintain any standing army or other defence force."

Mr. Chairman, this demonstrates that on the question of defence forces for this country, the Barbados Labour Party was wrong. It has since done a double summersault on this matter. The Democratic Labour Party has retained its integrity on this matter. We have always felt that there was a need for a small Defence Force, and we still feel that way today.

The party that has changed its position, because of its wrong diagnosis of the situation facing the country, was the Barbados Labour Party. They have done a double summersault, but are now accusing the Democratic Labour Party of changing its particular position. We have not changed anything. We are still committed to that. I want to make that absolutely clear. You were wrong in terms of the analysis of the defence requirements of this country.

We question whether a party that could be so wrong on these matters is really competent to be speaking with such authority on matters of defence and security of this country. From the way they speak, one would believe that they are the architects of defence for this country. But from their very words, from their own document, we condemn them and show the emptiness of their particular position.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir. If you look at page 28 of the 1981 manifesto, it reads:

> "Events within Barbados, the Caribbean and elsewhere, have provided the need for Barbados to have a limited Defence Force."

We came into power on this Manifesto in 1981, and we came into power with the other one in 1976. During those five years, we saw the need. You do not see the need. You want to hang them now. Do not deal with the 1976 manifesto – deal with the 1981 Manifesto!

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: It is for you to explain your summersaults. You can quote from our manifesto where we have changed our position!

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The people have accepted the explanation already. I do not have to explain it to you. They accepted the explanation in 1981. They accepted and respected the summersault in 1981.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Now that they have accepted the summersault, because he openly said that they have accepted the summersault, we can see about the integrity in these matters.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Do not curse the people for accepting the summersault. Sir, I am going to defend this Government in asides or on my feet.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I heed no warning from the honourable Leader of the Honourable House. The honourable Member must behave himself.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South, please continue.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You have not got to hear me if I am not on my feet, Sir.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I believe that this House is owed some information on the cost of the Grenada intervention. We are in Estimates Committee, and the whole purpose and function of Estimates is to give information on these matters. We are entitled to some information.

You cannot come, in all honesty, and ask this Parliament to provide additional funds without telling the people of this country what has been the total cost to date of the intervention in Grenada. It is the people of this country who are called upon to take decisions on these matters ultimately, and I think the people of this country are entitled to an explanation. There is no point simply saying it is difficult to unravel it.

There is something which is bothering me. I listened to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence very carefully, and if I understood him correctly – sometimes I may miss the nuances and the imputations – I understood him to say that the Barbados intervention was financed either in part or in whole from a vote for Youth Services.

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I said from the Capital Vote.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: From the Capital Vote for Youth Services. But he did not give the figure for the cost of that intervention. There were a few general phrases. I am now asking for specific information on that particular matter, because the invasion was said to be a Capital invasion.

There is also the question of the so-called Caribbean Defence Force. These are matters to which, I assume, the Defence Board has given consideration.

6.50 p.m.

The Minister of Defence has said that the Barbados Defence Force is weak in its officer structure. He has admitted that there are grave deficiencies in the Barbados Defence Force. It is a young force, it is a small force, it is a force that is relatively untrained. It is a force in which the equipment, material, and the other requirements necessary for a mature outfit might be lacking in many respects.

With such a force as the Minister of Defence has described, and as I have just explained, how can you give commitments to that particular force to enter into regional arrangements before it is fully or competently established to carry out its own national commitments? In other words, I am raising the question as to its readiness.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation: I think this will help the honourable Member. I have probably slightly misled the House on the question of the Youth Service and the Grenada vote. The point about its being Capital is this. *Operating*

Expenses, in Capital, is the item from which the major part of the expenditure was met, and 'Operating Expenses' made last year read: "the purchase of ceremonial uniforms." It should have continued: "and subvention to the Regional Security Force." The note was amended to include that, and an amount which had been lent by Barbados to the Regional Security Force, from funds which would have otherwise been used for the Youth Service, was then repaid from the Capital vote. I know that it is complicated. I lost myself, and that is why I lost you on the first occasion.

The Grenada operation was, in a sense, a Capital operation. It is now a Current operation, but an operation like that, in the sense, was Capital. It was more specifically Capital, because it was a Regional Security operation and it should have been paid out of a grant for *Regional Security Services.*

But the amount of $800 000 that was voted last year was for uniforms and *Regional Security Services,* but the "Regional Security Services" part was omitted from the printed copy of the Estimates. We had to amend it. When it was amended, the money could be paid from that vote back to the Barbados Defence Force, which had used unspent funds – remember that it gets a block grant; they have virement in between their different branches – from the amount given them for the Youth Service vote, to carry out the Grenada operation. They included it again this year in the eventuality that they might have, so to speak, to re-arrange the funding within their own vote to start the Youth Service. But they do not need to do that, because the Regional Security Service has been able now to repay them for the transaction which the amendment of the Capital Estimates made possible.

Have I made myself clear? Unspent Youth Service funds were actually used. They have now been paid by a grant from the proper Capital vote, and the amount of $500 000, by which I reduced the vote, the honourable Member can therefore deduce.....

Aside.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Well, I am not stating it. I am just telling you that that is material on which you can act, because I am not in a position to answer your question anymore than that.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I will just state my question again. If the Minister of Finance wishes to give the information to this Committee and to the country, he is free to do so. If he refuses, that is also his decision. I am asking again for an explicit statement as to the entire cost of that operation to date.

I will pass on. I now come to three areas, the Youth Service Programme, the National Youth Training Scheme and the Pioneer Squadron.

All along, we have been hearing about a National Youth Training Scheme or a Youth Service to be included under the umbrella of the Defence Force. We on this side are opposed to the establishment of any such programme within the military forces of this country. But before that programme is properly established, we are now hearing about a Pioneer Squadron, of persons who are underqualified for admission into the Defence Force proper.

I have heard about the Pioneer Corps and other groups of young people in places like Malawi and other African countries, and the level of political instability in those countries, and the use to which such groups have been put, cause me to question the need or desirability to establish any such programmes under the Defence Force. I will be the first one to see the need for additional youth training programmes. I would have no objections whatever for the Royal Barbados Police Force to expand its youth training programmes to include all of this youth work that needs to be done, in addition to the competent civilian Ministries and departments. I see no need whatever to involve the Defence Force in these areas, because they are manifold dangers to guard against.

Over the years, the Royal Barbados Police Force has demonstrated its commitment to youth training and to the development of civic qualities in young people in this country. Here again, we can see how resources which should be made available to established institutions are being diverted from them into institutions not created, or not established, or not appropriate, for those purposes.
7.00 p.m.

I would like the Minister responsible for Defence to clear up a rumour that is going around the place, that some large sum of money – I am hearing various figures – I have heard $10 000, I have heard $20 000, I have heard as much as $30 000, I do not know what the figure is – is being spent on, of all things, a table for the Defence Force.

Aside.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I heard that in Bridgetown this morning. You can say whether it is true or not.

Mr. Chairman, I have raised a number of questions. As usual, when I come and give information on the floor of this House the Prime Minister is wont to ask me if I want his brief, because somehow or other he believes that this information comes from some sources. I do not know where he expects it comes from.

I will pause at this stage. I hope that I get some positive responses.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for 45 minutes. I propose, for the benefit of the other side, that we go on until about 9.00 or 9.15. I beg to move that the sitting be now suspended until 7.45.

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

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

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, earlier in the day when progress was reported, it was reported that a Resolution had passed the Committee. I should like to complete that Resolution.

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

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. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED

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

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

HEAD 72 — DEFENCE AND SECURITY — $7 640 000.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): I beg to move that Head 72 — Defence and Security — stand part.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is that Head 72 stand part. Honourable Members in favour say 'Aye'.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Sir! Mr. Chairman!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What noise is this?

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot have that sort of behaviour in Parliament.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I am on my feet. I think that on the question of Defence and Security.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot entertain it now.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, the Head has been passed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It has not been passed. The Question has not been put.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Question has already been put. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central must be aware of that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Question has been put but it has not been passed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You cannot do that. I did get here just in time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member may ask that it be recommitted or something, but do not come to me with that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, is it your ruling that I did not get here on time? My recollection is that when the Question was put that I.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, you made a ruling.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am asking for a ruling.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He has given a ruling. Take you seat. That is the ruling he has given.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am asking. Was that your ruling, Sir? My recollection is that you were looking that way and I knocked here and you asked who was keeping that noise.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Sit down. Let us behave ourselves and get along. The "Ayes" have it.

Head 42 – Ministry of Transport and Works – $37 706 024.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I move that Head 42 stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, you will recall that there are a number of areas connected with this Head that we would wish to deal with. The functioning under *Subhead 1 – General Administration* – on the face of it will not excite a great amount of discussion, except that this Ministry has for some considerable time been in the public eye. One of the things which we wish to start off with is the whole question of the number of persons working in the Ministry.
7.55 p.m.

I should like the Minister, for purposes of clarity, to give us an indication as to the total staff under the control of the Ministry of Transport and Works. What is the size of the staff now? What was it at the beginning of 1984? What was it at the beginning of 1983? I should like him to give us a breakdown of the substantive staff working in the Ministry itself and the amount of staff that is working in the field, those persons who are commonly called cantonniers. How much of the work which used to be performed by the Ministry itself has been given out to private contractors? (Are you taking notes? You are supposed to take notes. I want the questions answered. I do not want any foolishness.) I would also like to know the number of persons displaced for which particular work that has been handed out.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir: I am sorry that I am not the Minister of Transport because I would ask him to bring in a question.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is not a point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You cannot tell me what is a point of order. How can you tell me what is a point of order?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. I cannot have this behaviour.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Put down a Question and I will give you the answer. Stop wasting time!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, have any of the questions I have asked so far been out of order?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please carry on.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

One of the things which has been said is that there have been lay-offs in the Ministry of Transport and Works, and the Government has questioned it, so the only way in which this matter can be clarified is to ask some questions of the Minister.

Let me deal with this fallacy which exists, apparently, on the Government side, that when you come to the Estimates you are to bring a substantive question. This is the place where substantive questions are asked and ought to be answered by Ministers who have portfolios. Do not be misled. Any Minister who does not wish to answer a question is free not to answer, but accountability is part of the system which we have.

I wish the Minister, therefore, to indicate the amount of displacement which has occurred as a result of contracts given out by the Ministry, and I wish to know precisely how much money has been saved or lost, as the case may be. I have other questions concerning this area which I would like to ask, as we come to an area such as the Transport Board, but I think that, in fairness to the Minister, we ought to give him an opportunity to set the records straight as to how many cantonniers were working at MTW in 1983 and 1984. I will show you why.

We have had many Ministers of Transport and Works under this Administration, and each one of them has had a different policy, apparently, but we had a Minister of Transport and Works who indicated....

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You have your specific portfolio, for which you have to answer.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. This crosstalk is certainly not the debate. Please address the Chair.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The last substantive Minister of Housing we had was you; and since you stopped being Minister of Housing, we have had no substantive Minister of Housing – and you have had no substantive portfolio!

The Minister of Transport and Works prior to this one, indicated that his policy was to give as many people, at the lower echelon, employment as possible. (Notice that I have not started to talk about the roads, yet.

We are going to make that a separate issue in which we will deal with the roads and the road policy. We are dealing, firstly, with the employment policy within the Ministry). The previous Minister of Transport and Works, I understand, had a policy that to the extent that the jobs could be done by the persons who were employed by the Ministry of Transport and Works, those persons would be the ones employed.

But there is a policy which the Government has been following recently, which concerns me. I feel that, without reference to political persuasion, there is something fundamentally wrong when a man goes to work on a given Friday and receives information that Friday that he is out of a job, when that man has a family at home, when that man has commitments, and when that man has been led to believe that he can aspire towards having a reasonable quality of life by both parties, in power and out of power.

When people are laid off, it is not a matter for political partisanship, or for people to make "mock sport". You never hear that they are sending home Permanent Secretaries. You never hear that Assistant Secretaries are being laid off. You never hear that technical people are being laid off. In North America, you can always hear that people in the electronics industry, and with Ph.Ds, are in the unemployment line as well, but in Barbados, invariably when somebody is going to be laid off, it is somebody down at the bottom of the totem pole. Therefore, when we raise questions about lay-offs, we are not merely seeking to make political mileage; we are trying to get a definitive statement from the Government as to what their policies are concerning lay-offs.

The honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, in his opening statement, in the second reading, gave people to understand that there will be substantial revision of salaries for the people in the upper echelons. He raised the question as to why people working in the Public Service should be getting less money than people in the private sector. I am not going to take him up on that, because that is not an unreasonable question for him to ask, although the answer he gives might be unreasonable.

What I want to know is this. How does the Prime Minister expect to say to us that he is having a surplus of $31 million, and how can the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister tell us that there is a new technological revolution in Barbados, and yet they both say that we should provide social services for these persons who, as the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) says, "fall by the wayside"? If the Government does not consider that in the development of this country a policy of laying off workers should have some humaneness about it, I wish to know whether the policy of laying off workers in the country ought to start with a Ministry which, ostensibly, is to provide employment for a large cadre of persons to do a number of works in Barbados where technology has not yet reached.

For example, if one looks at the roads, the drains and the wells in Barbados, one would see that there has been no particular improvements in the last four or five years in the roadways in terms of weeding, debushing – in fact, in terms of a whole number of areas which used to be taken care of by people in the Ministry of Transport and Works.
8.05 p.m.

If it is a financial policy which the Government is pursuing, then what they are saying to the population about their looking after the population cannot be correct. I am contending that a substantial number of persons from the Ministry of Transport and Works proper have been displaced over the last four years. I am saying that when the last Minister, but this one, was Minister of Transport and Works, he attempted to retain some of those persons, but even during his time, and since then, a substantial number of workers in the Ministry of Transport and Works have been sent home, or have been put on short week or have been given one week in three, one week in two and so on.

I will pause here and see if the Minister is going to give us any answers before we move into the substantive areas, or if one of my colleagues is ready to ask him some substantive questions on the Ministry.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to address the Chamber on this matter of the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Since I have been in this Chamber, I am now approaching the sixth year, there have always been considerable discussion about problems facing this particular Ministry. All sorts of charges have been made on both sides of the House, and those charges have included serious mal-administration. We have had the remarkable phenomenon where every succeeding Minister in the present Administration has accused his predecessor of not functioning properly within the Ministry, either in terms of giving proper political direction, or in terms of motivating the staff within the Ministry, or in terms of a fair and equitable distribution of the financial resources available to the Ministry not only in respect of those constituencies which are represented in this Parliament by the Opposition, but perhaps as many criticisms have come from the other side that they, themselves, have not been getting their fair share of the resources of the Ministry distributed within their constituencies. I can see Members on the back bench and the front bench on the other side who have complained bitterly on the floor of

this House about the mal-administration of the Ministry of Transport and Works.

A substantial amount of money is being voted this year for this particular Ministry. We on this side would like to believe that there would be a clear, defined policy in every area of expenditure. For example, will we have a situation where the professional staff in the Ministry of Transport and Works will once again be able to give advice to the Minister, which he will accept as professional advice? Will the Minister set about purchasing equipment against the advice of his professional staff and then later announce that the trucks or buses or whatever were inappropriate?

We have had situations in the not too distant past, where buses had been bought against the advice of the professional staff of the Ministry, and then the buses could not go up a hill. Recently, I think there was some problem in relation to trucks or something of the kind. These are serious problems.

There also seems to me to be a situation within the Ministry of Transport and Works where each succeeding Minister believes that, once he occupies that position, his first responsibility is to allocate the resources of that Ministry in order to enhance his own political position, and then only those people who do not displease him, like myself, would get an opportunity to get something done in the constituency. So I have to be very careful today how I attack the Minister of Transport and Works. That is my problem at the moment, because we have to start looking at some roads in St. Michael South Central. I do not know whether he is a vindicative person or not, but he would understand that when it comes to public finance there has to be a proper analysis of the situation. I am particularly looking at transport tonight, and I am going to be dealing with the Transport Board in some detail.

It would seem to me that one cannot achieve any continuity in the management of the Transport Board. That is a major defect. As the Ministers go, as they are shuffled around, it would appear that the management is automatically shuffled around at the same time. At the same time, the boards, which have a statutory responsibility, are also shifted around. There can be no cohesive policy in relation to transport emanating from within the statutory authority of the Transport Board if these persistent changes take place. There has got to be some explanation about why this is happening, and why it is that the people of Barbados cannot get a better bus service, in view of the fact that they are committed to such heavy expenditure in relation to transport.

Whenever you talk about transport in Barbados, you hear that it is the best in the Caribbean. It is also a fact that we spend more money as a percentage of revenue on transport in Barbados, so, therefore, it should be the best in the Caribbean. The basic problem is that this Government has never had a coherent policy in relation to public transport in Barbados. Some years ago, almost as though a rush of blood came to their heads, they decided they were going to nationalise the entire bus fleet in Barbados.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman,.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Man, why do you not sit down and stop being a humbug? You have been a nuisance all day.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please! The honourable Member must behave himself. Please take your seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I would like to draw to Your Honour's attention that, in my considered judgment, the honourable Member is making a second reading speech. We are dealing with Head 42, and there are items set out. We do not know what item he is dealing with, and he is making a second reading speech. That is my submission.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I really cannot accommodate ignorance of this kind.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. Please take your seat.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have just had a point of order.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, Subhead 8, Transport Board.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just give the Chairman a minute. 8.15 p.m.

Standing Order No. 64 2. states:

> "After the motion for the second reading of the bill has been proposed and seconded, the debate thereon shall be confined to the general principles of Government policy and administration as indicated by the bill and Estimates."

I cannot agree with the honourable Leader of the House. Please continue.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, for someone who has been in this House for all these years, it just shows that rocks exist in the heads of certain people and they will never learn.

Under Subhead 8 it says:

> "This Subhead provides for financial assistance to the Transport Board by way of a subsidy."

We all know that despite the fact that bus fares have gone up in this country by some 300 per cent since this Government took over office, the subsidies have risen from year to year. We also know that, despite the imposition of the Transport Levy, nevertheless the subsidies to the Transport Board have risen from year to year.

Quite clearly, here you have a situation where you are getting more revenue. You have increased the bus fares, and you have said that you have created – and I am quoting the other side now – "an environment where so many people are employed that more and more people are riding on the buses from year to year," therefore, your revenue base from bus fares must have been substantially increased. You have imposed on the country a Transport Levy, therefore, you have further additional revenue for the Transport Board. Your subsidies have increased to such a level that the Minister of Finance informed this Honourable House on 8th September, 1981, that if any external agency were to examine the public accounts of Barbados and they were to identify a single area of financial mismanagement, they would probably put their finger immediately on the Transport Board. So it cannot be a question of the Transport Board not having revenue. If that is the case – after all, we are a small country; we have not had a situation where we have had an expanded labour force or a greatly expanded population of school children – where is the money going to?

I submit that there is a need for the Government as an instrument of policy to sit down and ask some basic questions, for instance: "What are our definitive policy goals in relation to public transport in Barbados?" I need not advert to the dual situation which you have, with the private sector taking over one section of public transport in the form of the mini-buses, and making a financial success of it for the time being, and the publicly-owned sector making a substantial loss year after year and being continually financed from the public purse.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order, Sir. I believe I may need assistance from the Clerk, Sir. Please bear with me, Sir, I am appealing to you.

I am under the impression, to the best of my knowledge, that we are in what is known as a Committee of Supply. Your Honour's ruling, as far as I am concerned, shall not and cannot be challenged. However, the ruling which you gave earlier was based on Standing Order No. 64 2. PRESENTATION AND SECOND READING OF APPROPRIATION BILL, which says:

> "After the motion for the second reading of the bill has been proposed and seconded, the debate thereon shall be confined to the general principles of Government policy and administration as indicated by the bill and Estimates."

Your Honour, that is the ruling you gave and we have passed that stage. Now, to the best of my knowledge, Order 65 2. COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY, states:

> "When the Appropriation Bill has been read a second time,"

It has already been passed:

> "it shall stand committed to the Committee of Supply to which the Estimates shall then also stand referred."

That has already been drawn to Your Honour's attention. It is under this Standing Order that I rose and drew to your attention that the honourable Member was making a second reading speech.

I should like you to assist me, with the assistance of the Clerk at the Table, Sir. My submission, is that we have already complied with Order No. 64 – the general principles and policy have already been dealt with – that we are now in Committee of Supply, and Standing Order No. 65 2. is the Order under which we should be debating. I would like Your Honour to give a ruling on that, with the assistance of the Clerk at the Table.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I should like to refer to what the honourable Member has just said in order to assist him.

The honourable Member seems to forget that on the day when these Estimates were brought here in the present form, some seven years ago – when the Estimates appeared in a form where there is only Head 42, and then, for example, as in this one, there are a substantial number of other subheads – this Chamber decided that it would debate the Heads rather than the subheads. I think Your Honour will remember that.

It was always agreed on, and formed part of the convention – and we have seen it during these Estimates – that an honourable Member would make general remarks, bearing in mind the subhead to which he was speaking. We could not under Subhead 42, which deals with the Ministry of Transport and Works, stray outside and discuss other Heads. But under this general Head, a Member was free, in the words that were used in the ruling then, "to roam all over the Head."

I submit that the honourable Member is doing no more that what has been the practice with Estimates ever since the Estimates have been coming in this form, and that there is no need for Your Honour to revoke the ruling which you made.

The honourable Member only indicated how the Head should stand part, using 65 2, but 65 2, does not state how the specific debate is to be carried on. That is a matter for the discretion of Your Honour, Sir.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will report on this to the honourable Leader of the House in due course.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Thank you very much, Sir. (I will teach you a thing or two. I have been in here long enough to know about this.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I should like to draw to your attention once again that. the parameters in which I am conducting my debate relate to Subhead 8, *Subsidies to the Transport Board.* The debate centres around the need for subsidies, which is a specific subhead within the context of Head 42, and I am looking at the financial parameters which result either in an increase or decrease in subsidy. Therefore, I should like to suggest to you, Sir, that when you consider any ruling you should bear in mind that whatever I am saying now relates to a specific subhead under Head 42.

The parameters which would give birth to the size of a subsidy in respect of the Transport Board must be the revenue generated by the Transport Board and the security of that revenue. There have been persistent rumours of leakages of funds collected by the Transport Board, and there have been many accusations made against the conductors in this country. I should like to suggest that those accusations are unfair and that if there is any corruption .....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sit down! Do not be a clown! I am debating Subhead 8.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the honourable Member please take his seat.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, you have to let him know what his duties are as Leader of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I should like to draw to Your Honour's attention Head 42, (D) deals with Subhead 9, VEHICLE INSPECTION AND LICENSING, Subhead 9(E) SEA TRANSPORT and 10(F) WATER RESOURCES AND SEWERAGE DEVELOPMENT, all under the Ministry of Transport and Works.
8.25 p.m.

There is no way in this debate under this Head at this point in time where one can deal with fare boxes, leakages, or anybody carrying away money. There are enough areas in this very Head under which the honourable Member can deal with such matters. I wish a ruling on that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order please. I would like to draw to the attention of the Committee and the Leader of the House to PROCEDURE IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY, Standing Order 66(7):

> "On the motion "That the sum of $ for Head stand part;" the debate shall be confined to the policy of the service for which the money is to be provided and not deal with the details of expenditure, but may refer to the details of revenue or funds for which that service is responsible".

That is the Standing Order by which I stand, and that is the Standing Order on which I, as Chairman, rule applies to the manner in which this debate is now carried on.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Thank you very much, Sir. All I was drawing to your attention is the second reading speeches which this Rule made very, very clear.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member is not in breach of this Standing Order. Please take your seat now. Please continue.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: In view of these numerous interruptions, as a consequence of total ignorance,.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Now we are dealing with Subhead 8. Will you please stick to that subject.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I honestly believe that a Government which has tried everything in its power to reduce its subsidy to the Transport Board would wish this matter to be ventilated on the floor of this House because of the serious impact that it is going to have in various areas.

I have heard the honourable Minister of Finance say that the first mistake they made when they came into office was not to increase the bus fares in Barbados sufficiently, then when they increased it a second time, not to increase it by enough, and that they would have had to carry it to $1.00 or somewhere in that region in order to meet the current revenue of the Transport Board. Are we having leakages in terms of collections of bus fares to the extent that would generate the kind of subsidies under this Head or not? I do not think that there are leakages to that extent in respect of the collection of bus fares.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I must inform the honourable Member that he will be allowed five minutes more due to the interruptions.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much.

The second consideration is this. If there are not leakages at that level, is there corruption at any other level within the Transport Board. If that is so is the hon-

ourable Minister directing his attention towards this? We have heard on the floor of this House a previous Minister indicating that there was a need for an enquiry into areas of corruption within the Transport Board. Does that situation still exist or not?

The third factor to consider is, is it largely a question of mismanagement? It is my humble submission that there is a very high probability that the problems relating to the losses of the Transport Board, and the need for continuing high subsidies, stem from mismanagement. It cannot be said that they have not had enough revenue made available to them by way of levies or from the Consolidated Fund. It cannot be said that they have not had reasonable increases in bus fares available to them. It cannot be said that there has not been an adequate utilization of the buses available to them. It cannot be said that they have not had reasonable opportunity for a renewal of the fleet of the buses, thereby reducing their overall operating costs. Therefore, I would like to suggest that what is needed is a management structure in the Transport Board that reflects the size of the operation and reflects a need for competence and knowledge in the area of public transport.

It would seem to me that some progress was being made in this direction under the previous Minister. I do not think he was there long enough to determine whether or not his policies would have been successful. The present Minister has not been there long enough to determine what policies he may have to implement in relation to the Transport Board and whether they will be successful or not. But he has started in a direction where he has suggested to this Honourable House or outside – I am not quite sure, I was not here – that some 400 people might be sent home from the Transport Board. Would that be the solution to the problem? Is it the fact that the Transport Board carries an excessive wage bill, and that is the cause of the losses, or is it because of management problems?

I believe that there is a need for a major management consultancy team to go into the Transport Board and try to identify what are the real problems. I do not think you should start off by dismissing people and then discover, eventually, that the staff costs were not the real factor resulting in the losses at the Transport Board.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Does any other honourable Member wish to make a contribution?

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN (St. Philip South): Mr. Chairman, I believe that the last honourable Member who just sat down did not come straight out and say that the problem at the Transport Board was due to the fact that, in high positions at the Transport Board, you have square pegs in round holes. Well, I will say it for him.

I also believe that as long as different Ministers decide to take in different personnel with them at the Transport Board, the Transport Board will always be in the state that it is in today. The problem is that the workers a Minister takes in with him will not necessarily be of the quality that you need to operate the transport system in Barbados. And what we have seen in many Ministries in Barbados, including the Transport Board is that as soon as one Minister goes in, he takes in his lot of personnel with him, and the personnel who were there have to leave; and then when the next Minister comes after him, those that were there have to leave and he takes in a fresh set of people.

I do not believe that Barbados is blessed with people with that sort of ability, who you can just shift around and expect that all of them will fit into the various positions and function as they should. I believe that is basic, and I believe this shifting about is what has been causing numerous problems.

8.35 p.m.

Now I am only reflecting what was being said by persons in this community who travel on the buses very often. People believed that, under the Member for St. Michael East (Dr. D. G. Blackman), the Transport Board began to work in a fairly good manner. This Minister was shifted to another Ministry, and all the problems at the Transport Board came back, and have magnified. I believe that it has to do, as I have said from the beginning, with the shifting of personnel, and it is time that this shifting of personnel in all the Ministries in Barbados stops.

What is happening is that the work force in Barbados today is becoming a parasitic work force, because no one who is working is sure how long he is going to remain in that position. When a person gets a job because of one particular Minister, he cannot be sure that when the next Minister comes in he is going to keep that job. That is why I say the work force is becoming a parasitic work force – I do not mean that workers are parasites; if you want to put it like that, you can put it like that – because when the next Minister comes in the job will be up for grabs. I do not want to go much more into the problems of the Transport Board at this moment.

Subhead 6 (a) states that it provides for the maintenance of all roads, cane tracks and guard walls. I have stated this before, and I am going to state it again. The impression is going throughout St. Philip that that parish – and I am talking about the whole of St. Philip, North and South – is being discriminated against. I have stated in this House already that I do not believe that is so, because I recall that when the honourable Member for St. Michael East was the Minister I came in here with a

complaint, and I am happy to say that very quickly afterwards he checked out my complaint and the problem was rectified, but the roads in St. Philip are in a very poor state.

If you drive from St. Michael to St. Philip, and you take the roads through St. George – the constituencies of yourself and the honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull) – you drive on very good roads right up until you get to Chapel Plantation. Afterwards, the change in the road condition is marked. Try it one of these days. You will see the terrible change as soon as you get to Chapel Plantation, where St. Philip starts.

There is a particular road in St. Philip South, the Train Road. I know that the Honourable Minister of Transport has travelled that road already. He went through there one Saturday and the residents tried to stop him, but he did not stop. This is Train Road in Marchfield, the road that takes you from Marchfield to Four Square factory.

This road is used by lorries for taking canes to Four Square and that sort of thing. This subhead is for the maintenance of all roads and cane tracks. This road does not come under the heading of cane tracks, but it is used by lorries for taking canes to Four Square. The road is so bad that if rain falls on Thursday night the old people who live in that road cannot go to church on Sunday morning. I have drawn this to the attention of the honourable Minister on more than one occasion, but the Minister keeps saying "later on, later on". I do not know how long is later.

I could go on mentioning many roads in St. Philip about which people have signed letters and sent to the Ministry of Transport and Works. Sixty four people signed such a letter and they got back a reply stating that those roads would be fixed in the next financial year. Three years have gone and the roads have not yet been fixed.

I will mention one other thing while I am on my feet, and that is the situation at Crane Beach in St. Philip. About a year and a half ago, I sent in two Parliamentary Questions, one of which was about the Crane beach. It was not allowed. I do not know why it was not allowed, I was never given any reason why it was not allowed.

You may not know, Mr. Chairman, but Crane beach has been eroded. You cannot drive down the Crane beach; you cannot even ride a bicycle down there. You go down to a certain point and then you fall right into the sea. I am raising this here because Subhead 7(a) says that it "provides for maintaining adequate drainage standards against flooding in low-lying districts, and adequate defences against encroachment by the sea on all sides of the highway".

Because of the situation with the Crane beach, there are persons who are forced to use the Crane Hotel to get from out of the sea to the district at Crane. Recently, one fellow was arrested for passing through the Crane Hotel, and that area needs some attention. I raised this question in here before, it was not allowed and I was not given any reason why it was not allowed. If you are going to tell me that the economic situation does not permit you to fix the situation at Crane beach at the moment, I would understand, but I was never given any reason.

This is an urgent matter, and what makes it more urgent is that the other beach in St. Philip, which is Foul Bay, where the fishermen, who cannot bring their boats into Crane beach because it has completely been eroded, have to take their boats, has no lights at all. Therefore, the fishermen cannot see what they are doing at night.

I want these three things looked at: the lights at Foul Bay, the beach at the Crane Hotel, and the roads – all the roads throughout the parish of St. Philip.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on my second approach to this Ministry, there is a matter which, I believe, may be of interest to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister responsible for Agriculture. You will recall that, some time ago during a debate, the honourable Member for Christ Church East (Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham) heaped calumny on my head when he raised questions about what Duffus had said about letters of comfort. You will recall that I had sharply to bring him back into focus by reminding him that Duffus had not investigated the BMC, because he had sought to give that impression.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This is the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am coming to the Ministry of Transport and Works, Sir. You will be surprised, and you are going to be very upset too, when I tell you about the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for Agriculture, honourable Members who are always discussing the probity of their financial affairs, and the Ministers of Transport and Works. Could you believe, Sir, that any Ministry in Barbados would borrow money from a commercial bank without the approval of this Parliament? Can you believe that? That there is any Ministry in Barbados at all that has to borrow money from a commercial bank? No wonder there is such a change in Ministers from time to time, because this is unheard of, unbelievable!
8.45 p.m.

I should like the Minister to get up and explain to me, how it is possible that a Ministry in Barbados can borrow nearly $7 million from the Barbados National Bank.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Ministry of Transport and Works! Nonsense? Ask the Minister to explain it to you, because apparently you do not know anything about it. They had a loan of some $7 million from the Barbados National Bank, which has not seen the light of day in this Parliament!

You are talking about letters of comfort! This does not even have a letter of comfort with it! I am the most surprised and shocked man in the world to discover.....

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: In respect of what?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know. I do not see it anywhere in the Estimates.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are debating items under the Estimates.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Head 42.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What matter under Head 42 is the honourable Member seeking to debate?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Head 42.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What matter, what subhead, what item? I see nothing of the sort before me, and I cannot have this sort of .....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This sort of what, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What item, what subhead?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Listen, Sir, I am dealing with the entire Head, because it is the Ministry that borrowed the ey from the Barbados National Bank. I am dealing with Subheads 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No, no. I can certainly give a lot of length in these matters, but it would be out of order .....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Subhead 8. I am not out of order, Sir. Look the Minister of Finance has gone to find out what it is all about!

Who tells them about letters of comfort? This one — $6 million from the Barbados National Bank —does not seem to have a comforting letter. It is not quite $7 million, it is $6 million-plus. Let the Minister explain what is this loan agreement between the Ministry and the Barbados National Bank. Let the country understand what is this arrangement that has been made so that we in the public can understand about it. It has to do with the Transport Levy.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I see nothing at all about it here. There is nothing in the Estimates which would lead me on to what you are talking about.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You say I lie? You want me to tell you the amount? It was done under a loan agreement between the Barbados National Bank and the Ministry of Transport and Works.

This subhead provides for financial assistance to the Transport Board by way of a subsidy. It also makes provision for a levy to be collected. It also makes provision for revenue to be collected.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Prime Minister, who has just checked it out, says it is not a loan.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Boards have overdrafts. Boards have .....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No. This is not an overdraft. This is the Ministry.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Boards borrow money and that sort of thing. You are accusing the Ministry.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not an accusation. I am bringing information to the Committee.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Well, then you are talking about the Cabinet.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Not the Cabinet. The Cabinet does not know anything about this, apparently. The honourable Member just came back and said that it is not a loan chargeable to the Consolidated Fund. That is what he just said from his Chair, so he has checked it and discovered that it is not chargeable.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are not debating that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We have to debate it, Sir. There is nowhere else to debate it but in this Committee. This is the Committee of Supply, and I am discovering that the Ministry of Transport — not the Board, the Ministry — it is unheard of! A loan agreement between a Ministry and a commercial bank! — borrowed.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This has nothing to do with the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You mean they had to keep $660,000 in the accounts? What is it? Will the Minister get up and tell us what it is?

Mr. Chairman, I am very upset, because when we raise questions about how the transport funds are kept – What is the nature of accounting? What kind of accountability is in place? – nobody is able to tell this Committee how the money is disbursed or where it is disbursed.

What I am giving you now, Sir, is the tip of the iceberg. The substantive Minister on this side, the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King) is going to be discussing this in great detail, but, before we go down the road and mislead the population, we wish the Minister to tell us how it is possible for a Ministry – not a statutory corporation – a Ministry – to have a loan agreement which the Minister of Finance is not too certain about.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point. Carry on.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I would like you to get up and explain what it is, because I have never heard of it in my life. I was a Minister for five years. I sent a letter to the Royal Bank that meant nothing except a letter, and the honourable Member for Christ Church East came in here and, if I was not sharp, would have left the impression that I had done something improper. I accept what he was saying, that there was a certain amount of probity which should have prevailed, because.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): My assistance is asked in this matter. The honourable Member will surely be aware that a number of Ministries maintain below the line accounts, separate from the accounts which they maintain strictly according to the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Consolidated Fund.

The honourable Member will be familiar, from his experience in the Ministry of Trade, with the imposition of tax, not authorized by law, called a cess, of 11 cents a pound on the price of rice in order to assist Leo Leacock to bring cement into the country.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I do not know anything about it. I am not familiar with that, so do not try to get out of this infelicity now by talking about Leo Leacock. This is not a Leo Leacock skit. I know nothing of those kinds of accounts. The Minister who took over from me does not know anything about it either.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The former Minister will be aware that Ministries do keep below the line accounts, into which they pay money and out of which money is paid. It is not an entirely satisfactory system, but I must say that, unusual though it is, and exceptional though it should be, in neither the honourable Member's time nor ours, have I ever known any of these below the line accounts to go astray. For some reason, although they are not subject to the same safeguards as perhaps the public accounts as voted in the Estimates, they are generally narrow, small, and uncomplicated.

The Ministry of Transport and Works and the Waterworks have always kept below the line accounts. I said in my second reading speech that the Government is having to vote $10 million for monies advanced, basically, on account of the Waterworks. It is also on account of the old Natural Gas Corporation and somebody else – I cannot remember. The Government has to advance these monies, which represent a cash flow that never pass through the books at all, but, to settle things, the money has to be voted and dealt with in a particular way.

In this particular matter, buses had to be bought, and I believe that the Barbados National Bank may have bridged the buying of buses pending the receipt of funds from the Transport Levy Board. It is as simple as that.

The question of a letter of comfort really hardly comes into it at all. This was raised by the honourable Member, not by me. It is the letter of comfort which is objectionable, because the letters of comfort, Duffus held, may create what should not be a liability against the Consolidated Fund, by means which are not sanctioned. What Duffus held was that the letter of comfort issued to the Bank of Nova Scotia was a guarantee given without parliamentary approval.
8.55 p.m.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: It is up and down. Duffus says it has value. There are many of us who thought that it did not.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Who signed the agreement?)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: What agreement?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You had better let me continue. It seems as if you are being misled, too. It is a loan agreement, dated 31st December, 1982.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I do not exactly know what is being complained of. The buses were bought and supplied, and cash flow was provided by the bank. If a bank chooses to allow a Government department to buy buses in a way that gives it inadequate security, as far as we are concerned, that is up to the bank. I do not know why there should be a quarrel in here about it. No letter of comfort was issued and, therefore, there is no purported guaranteeing of the amount by the Government.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I do not think the Minister of Finance fully grasps the point I am making. It is not even any of those things. It is a straight agreement between a commercial bank and a Ministry. We have no provision in any financial arrangement in any one of the Governments for anything like that, and what I would like you to do is to tell who made this agreement, when it was made, what is the duration of the agreement, what is the total amount, how much has to be paid back and what are the arrangements for maintaining the account?

We are not discussing a below the line account; we are discussing a loan agreement. There is a difference. Every honourable Member in here knows the difference between a below the line account, which we never had in the Ministries, and a loan agreement. The Attorney General can tell you the difference between a loan agreement in any other form. Somebody has to explain it to us, or to the population.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: While we await that explanation, please carry on. You have about another two minutes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am so shocked that I do not even know if I wish to talk about anything else. There are some other revelations which will come out in this Head, but I would have preferred if the honourable Members on that side could explain the matters in such a way that we would understand their action.

When we start to talk about the sums of money which have gone down the drain in the Ministry of Transport, we assume that there is a certain probity in the affairs of that Ministry. When, however, we begin to discover that, notwithstanding the sums of money spent, in fact there may be, I am not going to go any higher than to say, I do not even wish to say, irregularities.....

The Financial Administration and Audit Act, 1964, is very specific on what a Minister can do, what an accounting officer can do, what a statutory board can do. Statutory boards are governed by their own Acts. The enabling Act establishing a particular statutory board deals with its powers and it responsibility. What we have here in this situation is highly unusual, to say the least, and when you hear the details of it, Mr. Chairman, which I have not given .....

Should I give way and let the Minister explain this in a rational way? The Minister of Finance does not seem to know anything about it. Can I rely on the Minister to explain it to us? If you do not know anything about it, say it was the next Minister before you. Do not get involved if it was the Minister before you, or the Minister before him, or the Permanent Secretary before the present one, but somebody has to account for it in these Estimates, because it does not appear here.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You do not understand. We are talking about a loan between the Ministry and the bank. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance apparently does not understand what I am talking about.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, we are particularly concerned about this process of capitalising or replacing the capital stock of the Ministry of Transport and Works, because we understood it to be an instrument of policy that in order to reduce the subsidy to the Transport Board, and I refer specifically to Subhead 8 again, there was the need to replace the existing fleet of the Board, which would reduce the maintenance and running costs.

It is my understanding that, after checking with the International Monetary Fund, an opinion was given to the effect that the use of suppliers' credit, that is credit from the people who supply the buses to the Transport Board, was not in breach of the IMF agreement in terms of short term borrowing. What we have found difficult to understand is that if you are seeking to reduce the subsidy by replacing your capital stock, and in that way reduce your maintenance and running costs, and you have the advantage of suppliers' credit, that is that the person who is supplying you the buses would be the person who would be supplying the credit, and that that would be guaranteed by the continual inflows from the Transport Levy, why then is there need to obtain this kind of credit from a commercial bank? It would seem to me that nothing more would be required than probably some instrument from a commercial bank indicating to the supplier that the money would be payable through the particular bank. A letter of credit is all that would be necessary.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: That, I understand, is all that was done. A letter of credit was issued by the bank.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is not only a matter of a letter of credit. That is what I thought was the situation, and that is what I thought was the problem, but it appears that, apart from that, what has been happening is that there have been borrowings from a commercial bank, and we want to know why this took place. It is very reasonable to ask this, because the Transport Board is a totally-owned subsidiary of the Government, and therefore any shortfalls in accounts will be ultimately paid from the Consolidated Fund.

That is what the subsidy is all about. The subsidy is there to make up for the operating shortfalls in the Transport Board account. That is why we are seeking a clear understanding as to how, and in what way, we are going to get this subsidy down, because you cannot be asking the people of Barbados to pay three times for the

same thing. You cannot be asking them to pay through a levy, then through a subsidy and, thirdly, through increased bus fares.

We want to hear a policy position enunciated by the Government. Let us assume that everything that has gone down the drain has already gone down the drain. We are in the 1984/85 Estimates, and what we want now is a definitive statement of policy giving us proper projections as to how this deficit, or this subsidy, will be reduced over the years.
9.05 p.m.

This brings me to a very important point. Conceptually, you can sit down and make all sorts of projections and decisions. You can say that it would be nice to have a public transport system which is totally supported by the consumers, the people who ride on the buses, that it would be socially just to have fares as low as possible, and that somewhere along the line, you would be able to provide reasonable bus fares based on that concept. That was the original concept.

You have tried everything possible, and nothing is working. It is not working financially, but if the service offered to the public was an adequate service, you could say that it would be justifiable, and there could be some substance in the argument of Senator McClean, who expressed the view some time ago in Parliament that transport could be considered as a social service.

I am not saying that that should be the policy; but I am saying that, from a socio-economic point of view, there could be merit in the argument. If that is the case, then that is the policy you pursue. But you cannot go halfway house in this business. Otherwise, as you know, you would end up with a whole heap of problems, a totally unsatisfactory service and massive losses, which is what you have now. That is what you have to face.

If you were to listen to any call-in programme in Barbados, you would realise that about 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the time on is taken up with the concerns of the public about the problems of public transport. Little do you know that not only are they paying for public transport through the subsidy, taxation and prices in terms of bus fares, but they are also paying for it by substantial output losses in industry. There are people in this country who have to get up at 3.00 o'clock in the morning in the hope of getting a bus, that is a fact, and travel to the other side of the island. I know people who live in St. Lucy, and who work in the industrial estates in St. Philip, who spend eighteen hours a day travelling so as to be sure they get to work on time frequently and retain their jobs. Those people have to be out of bed at 3.00 o'clock.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is a joke.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is a fact. I see it in my office every day. I cannot guarantee that I will be starting at 8.00 o'clock in the morning. At 8.00 o'clock in the morning one or two things happen. Either you see patients piling up there at 6.30 a.m. or 7.00 o'clock, or they come at 9.00 o'clock.

It is a problem when people have to add three or four hours to their working day in order to get to work and get back home from work. Imagine the anxieties which a young girl has when she gets up in the morning and is not sure that she is going to get a bus to get to work, and she wants to hang on to her job. The number of man hours lost at work in Barbados because of defects in the public transport system, I would imagine, amounts probably to hundreds of thousands of hours lost per year. It is not that people do not want to get, but they cannot get to work on time.

I am sure that the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite), who moves around St. Lucy – I understand he goes all over St. Lucy every day, except the day he sets aside, according to his religious beliefs – can substantiate what I am saying. I have spoken in St. Lucy at branch meetings on several occasions and this is a constant complaint that is made to me by the people of St. Lucy, who have to take two buses, and sometimes three, to get to work. That is one of the reasons why the mini-bus business is thriving for the time being – because of the defects in the public transport system.

I would strongly recommend one or two things: either decide that you are going to run a fleet of buses which is compatible with your management capacity at any given time, and as that management capacity grows, then allow the fleet to expand; or, in the alternate, if you are going all out to get an all-embracing public transport policy, recognize that this is a specialist area and that you need experts to come in and help you organize the transport system. Otherwise, you would be continually losing money.

Take the question of parts and the maintenance of buses. Tremendous savings can be secured in this area by two things: (1) If you make sure that you always have available to you in Barbados the expertise for the particular types of buses that you are using. (2) Computerization of the parts section or, in the alternate, even giving it out to private enterprise and have them stock the parts for you, if you believe that if you attempt to run that department, the losses would be greater than the gains in terms of security and so on. Preventive maintenance is absolutely important.

Most of the vehicles which can be bought nowadays, provided that the gear ratios and so on, as I understand it, are properly organized for the road and the kind of terrain that is used, can be operated in Barbados with reasonable efficiency. But the environment has to be created by the Board to ensure that when that type of investment is made, the life of the particular vehicle would be enhanced, whilst at the same time, the maintenance cost would be minimized.

If you take a simple matter like oil consumption, the type of bus which is bought, and the quality of maintenance, is very important. Thousands of dollars a week can be lost simply due to poor maintenance.

There is also the question of training of drivers, which is absolutely important. The amount of wastage of money that can be incurred because of accidents, and because of buses being taken off the routes for repairs, are absolutely important.

I will come back to the question of conductors again. You promised this country that the conductors would be like air hostesses. At the time, I told you that I thought that they would be like air hostesses at home. Now, a few months later, we hear that there will be air hostesses at home, four hundred of them, in the not too distant future.

It is my submission that the problems at the Transport Board might very well not be related to wage costs. Before you lay off people, look and see whether or not, when you project down the road, the capital savings in the programme that was started by the previous Ministers, in terms of standardization and renewal of the fleet, might not be sufficient to meet the wage bill and retain the people at work.

It is always very easy in enterprise, no matter what it is, to sent people home. If it is a lawyer's office in Bridgetown, as soon as they have a cash flow problem, they send home the secretaries.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I have never heard that.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is a fact.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two minutes more.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Doctors do it.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I know of several firms in Bridgetown that have laid off secretaries. That is the first thing they do – without even looking at the importance of their staff to their productivity. They are so short-sighted. Because they can terminate people and effect immediate savings, that is the first thing they do.
9.15 p.m.

In the long run that might not be in the best interest of even a small law firm, such as we have around Barbados, far more than in a major operation like the Transport Board. It might appear to you to be immediately advantageous, in terms of short-term savings, to send home 400 people. But if you have a properly planned long term programme, and if you have proper financial auditing and projections, you should be able to determine in what way your wage costs would relate to your savings in other areas, and you might find that you will be able to retain the 400 people at work.

I make this special plea for these 400 people, because I know that this is inflicting very serious hardships on people in Barbados. I implore you. I beg you, Mr. Minister, not to send home the 400 people. It hurts me. It grieves me even to think of the prospect of 400 people going home.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): The Democratic Labour Party is intent on concoting stories of laying off. He was not even in the house. Do you see what I mean? Here is a man who deals with hearsay, gossip-mongering, and trotting out stories that other people have invented for him. That is the stand of the Democratic Labour Party.

The position is very clear. The honourable Minister has stated repeatedly that there are sufficient retirements that take place normally. If you invent the 400, you will invent anything else. There will be retirements, there will be re-deployment and, there will be additional buses. We have spoken about all of those things.

I want to get back to the question of the loan. Under the Transport Levy Act, Section 6(1) specifically says:

> "There is established a fund to be known as the "Transport Levy Fund" into which the Director, National Insurance shall pay all moneys received by him under this Act."

Sub-section (2) says:

> "The Fund shall be deposited in an account with the Barbados National Bank or such other bank and under such conditions as the Board with, the approval of the Minister of Finance, directs."

So, obviously, what happens is that there is an account at the National Bank into which all in-flows from the Director of National Insurance falls.

Now when you come to the paying out of the money, the Act says:

"Withdrawals may be made from the Fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of improvement of public transport and the construction and maintenance of public roads, upon the actions being issued by the Board, acting on the instruction of the Minister."

So if loans are to be made.....

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let me remind honourable Members that we are running short on time, so let us have as few interruptions as possible.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member has gone past his time and I have to elucidate what I said. I said that there is a loan agreement. It has nothing to do with any deposit of any fund. It has nothing to do with any withdrawal. There is a loan agreement for just under $7 million between a Ministry of Government and a commercial bank. It is against the Financial Rules and it is contrary to the law.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat now. The honourable Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It is clear to me that there is in existence an account at the Barbados National Bank into which money is deposited from the National Insurance collections of the levy. In anticipation of the inflows into the Transport Fund, a letter of credit was issued in respect of the liability to the supplier, which the National Bank knows will be paid by the inflows coming in under Section 6. That is what they are talking about.

The honourable Member knows that the Ministry of Trade, when it used to be in charge of Consumer Affairs, not the Ministry of Trade as constituted under our Government, had a cess system arising from the difference between the cost of CARICOM cement and the cost of cement from a third country. A levy was established in respect of a third country price to bring it up to the level of the CARICOM price of cement. You could get it from Colombia or Venezuela at a cheaper price than from CARICOM, and the consumer paid one price, so you had a levy. That is what is called a below the line account. You used to do it all the time, and payments were made, because some of that money was used for other purposes.

The Waterworks Department also had a below the line account. If I wanted to develop land, I had to pay a deposit to the Waterworks Department before they would start to put in water. They used to put in what is called a below the line account. The Director of Finance deals with these matters. We had it the other day even at a statutory board meeting. At the Division of Hospitality Studies at the Community College, we had a running battle with the Ministry of Education on it. They used to do catering and they would not vote money in advance to buy the supplies and materials for the purpose of catering, so they had to open a below the line account, in which people who hired the Community College for a cocktail party would pay the deposit, and they would buy the supplies and materials out of that.

I want to see the loan agreement. We are going to find out about the loan agreement, because the honourable Member was very positive that there is a loan agreement between the National Bank and the Ministry of Transport.

Asides.

9.25 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You closed down 442 shops, when you were Minister of Trade and each one had at least two employees. You laid off 800 people.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! We are already in breach of the rules. At this stage I will report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, you cannot report progress like that, do you hear? I have to move that you report progress.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You had better move it.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: No, you had better sit down and wait until I move it. I will treat you with the courtesy, but do not get up and play you are reporting progress.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are in breach of the rules and the staff of Parliament must be considered. This is not fair.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is for my consideration.

I beg to move that you do now report progress to His Honour the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: When a circumstance arises where the rules are not clear, the ruling of the Chairman takes care of the situation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow.

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

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

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. 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 RESUMED

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

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON (St. Michael West Central): Mr. Chairman, when the recess was taken last night the honourable member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) had just completed his presentation, which, in my view, was a very well-reasoned presentation, cogently put, and consisting of sound analyses. It was really a sound analytical dissertation, but it struck me that it might have been better had he reserved his advice for "Prophet" Boxill, "Sleepy" Smith and Rameses Caddle when they occupied the portfolio of the Ministry of Transport and Works.

It always strikes me as slightly amusing that a Government which presided over the destiny of transport and works, and Barbados, in general, for 15 years, is so now well-informed of the way Government ought to be run and administered, but during those bleak times, they sat like empty sepulchres, like fir trees in winter, bare and bereft of any foliage, without being able themselves to be instructed by the wisdom that resides in their respective heads.

The Ministry of Transportation and Works has always been a bone of great contention in this country, and I suspect that this is not going to end miraculously, because politicians have a tendency to inveigh, to carp, and to hang on to trivialities, without ever paying any attention to the consequential matters that will impinge upon the charge that we all have, and that is, to manage efficiently. The Transport Board has always had a management problem. A General Manager does not make a management system, and the Transport Board has never had an efficient management structure.

I hear people talking about laying off and all these things in emotive terms. When I assumed responsibility for this Ministry, I said in this House and outside of it that I was going to bring a humane approach to management, that the first principle I would apply would be management informed by humanitarian concerns. I said that I would not set out to dislocate people at the lower echelons of the system, but that I would turn my attention, as indeed I did, on the management structure, because managers are fundamentally responsible for the dislocation of people down at the bottom.

It is because managers manage inefficiently that we always turn upon the ones below. It is because managers are inefficient in the discharge of their responsibilities that people who wash buses, those who conduct buses, mechanics and other relatively minor people in the organisation have to be dislocated. That is always an easier decision to take.

When I went to the Transport Board, I said that I was going to take a critical look at management and that I was going to make decisions. I took that look and I made decisions. Yet, I can be castigated for the decisions that I took at the management structure level. I dislocated inefficient management, yet they tell me I should not have touched it. I did not send home people at the bottom, and still I can be castigated in here.

I have said, and I will say again, that the former Chairman of the Transport Board, Mr. Glenroy Straughan, is a very effective social worker. He is one of the most conscientious social workers that I ever encountered. But I did not want a social worker at the Transport Board. I wanted a chairman who was going to be able to bring his attention to bear upon the critical aspects of management as a technical dimension. Mr. Straughan was not capable of providing that, and therefore I changed him.

The former Manager of the Transport Board is a good social scientist, steeped in social science. He had a background that dealt with teaching and social science. I did not want a social scientist. I wanted a manager who was able to undertake a critical dimension of management, and I appointed a manager.

What is wrong with politicians in this country is that they want to appeal to all classes. I cannot work that way. I have a job to do, I have been given an assignment, and I propose to carry it out using the best that I can bring to the job, conscious, always, that I represent people. It was people who brought me here, and it is people who keep us here, and it is for people that we carry out our assignments in this institution.

I determined that we needed to set critical objectives. I am not an abstract manager; I set targets, I set objectives, and the measure of my stewardship is whether or not I meet those objectives. I am not going to come in here and give you amorphous parameters and great generalisations about management, I am going to tell you to judge me on the basis of critical hard core analysis. Did Vic Johnson install fare boxes? Yes. Did he do it according to a timetable? Yes. I said June 1, and the first came on June 1. Will he deliver a schedule, the first printed schedule in the history of the Transport Board by September 1, 1984? I say 'yes'.

Judge me by those standards, not by some kind of ethereal, nonsensical, inconsequential trivia. Deal with me on hard analytical principles. Ask: "Did he meet his objective?" If I do not meet them, then deal with me as I deserve to be dealt with.

I said I was not going to discharge people at the lower echelon. Have I discharged people at the lower echelon at the Transport Board? No, not a single person has been laid off from the Transport Board in the 13 months that I have been there. We retired persons who had come to retirement age. People who have left have not been replaced in jobs that were not critical. That is a humane principle I said I would bring to bear on the Transport Board's problems.

When I assumed responsibility for the Transport Board, its deficit was $15½ million. The objective which I have set is to really reduce that deficit, so that the taxpayers of Barbados will not have to be spending millions of dollars on an inefficient system, but that they will be using their resources meaningfully, to deal with the critical issues that we have in this country.

Old age pensioners get $33 a week, and if we were able to divert $10 million of that subsidy into social security and other matters of that sort, this country would be infinitely better off. We could build schools, we could build headquarters for the Transport Board – we could do a number of other matters that we have to do and can only do if we have the resources to do them. We cannot squander our limited resources. A developing country like Barbados has to manage its resources in a way that will eliminate all of the squandermania that people seem to let pass for good management.

When I went to the Transport Board, we were spending thousands upon thousands of dollars in fuel. Why? Because of inefficient management of those resources, buying tyres as if they were buying corned beef at retail prices. We have let a contract for tyres that has substantially reduced the outlay on tyres. We have let contracts for greases and oils that have substantially reduced the cost of these commodities to the Transport Board. Even with an additional $3½ million in the wage bill, the subsidy to the Transport Board this year was $13 million, as compared to $15½ million. Fifteen and a half million plus $3 million is $18½ million so that represents a saving of $5½ million in one year. That is what I managed – and not a single person has gone home! That is how it goes.

10.15 a.m.

Asides

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I am not the manager but I am accountable in here for the Transport Board, so I can tell you what management has done.

The honourable Member for St. Philip South (Mr. H. A. Blackman) mentioned that there is no continuity in the management system. He is correct. The criteria we use to select the management staff ought to be the criteria which will be able to bear examination. Where I am, I want the best managers that I can identify at that given moment, because when they look good, I look good. When I look good, this Government looks good. That is the way we operate.

When I leave the Transport Board, I would like to feel that the staff who have responsibilities, corporate or executive duties, will be people with a loyalty – not to Vic Johnson, but to the corporation that they serve. What has been wrong in the past is that people went to serve Ministers. I do not want anybody to serve me. I want managers to serve the Transport Board of Barbados, if that is what prevails. Ministers come, and Ministers go; Governments come, and Governments go; but just as Permanent Secretaries endure, managers of statutory corporations, of the right calibre, will also be able to endure. That is what I would like to bring to the Transport Board.

There must be need for a coherent transport policy. Last night, the honourable Member for St. Philip South, the classic exponent of nonsense in this Chamber, talked about discrimination against St. Philip. Mr. Chairman, the Minister responsible.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute more.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I will come back to that, because I have all day in here and we are going to discuss, ventilate, expose everything – all day! I do not have any place to go. I will speak some more. I rest my case for the time being.

Hon. DeL. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Chairman, Transport and Works is one of three Ministries that have become political footballs in this Chamber. Sometimes it is not easy for the Opposition to discuss important measures at ease, but it is very easy for them to come in here and attack the Ministry of Transport and Works. There is hardly an occasion, since

I have been in here, that the subject came before this Honourable Chamber and we have not heard repeated criticisms and allegations from honourable Members on that side. Some of them do not understand public transport and how it operates. They maintain that, because they are politicians, they have the solution to everything, and that they have the right to get involved in every possible debate on every subject. I do not blame them, but what I cannot understand is the lack of reason that they bring to bear on some of these debates.

The Minister has already told this Chamber that he inherited bad management at the Transport Board. This is nothing strange. The Barbados Labour Party Government, on assuming office, took up a disorganized Transport Board.

I remember that, in 1976, when transport was being criticized, people were crying out about the kind of transport that they had in this country, the then Minister, Ramases Caddle, criticized the mini-buses and said that, as long as he was Minister of Transport, the mini-buses would not be incorporated into the transport system. We have the doctrine of collective responsibility, and the Minister made the pronouncement, so I am assuming that that was the declared policy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Hon. DeL. BRADSHAW: The persons who operated and continue to operate mini-buses are regarded as small men, and when that Minister said that he was not incorporating the mini-buses into the transport system, it meant that he was denying small men the opportunity to make a living.

There is not going to be any lasting solution, or any one solution to the problems involved in transport. Technology is going to be improved, buses are going to be improved, and we are going to have to look at how soon we will have to make changes to keep abreast with the changes that will take place in the transport system. We have therefore got to look towards management with foresight, so that, in five or ten years from now, we will have put in place a transport system of which we can be proud. That is what we are looking at, not a day-to-day system of management.

10.25 a.m.

I have heard honourable Members from that side criticising the Minister for dismissing the chairman and the manager. I make no apologies in saying I agree with him. I am no coward. I was informed that there were several buses, well over 70, which were not licensed, and all of us in here are aware of the incidents involving the police and the Transport Board buses. They were not licensed and the police had to stop them from operating. That was quite fair. I have no quarrel with the police carrying out their job, and they ought to do it, but what you must bear in mind is that there was a chairman and a manager. They were charged with the responsibility of effecting a proper transport policy and system, and they failed in their responsibility, not the Minister. The Minister cannot sit down in a Ministry and know what the Board is doing. Sometimes they even hide things from the Minister. The things he ought to know, they hide from him.

When more than 70 buses were pulled off the road and you did not lay off the people – and I do not agree that they should have been laid off; as I said, the manager and the chairman were the ones to be laid off, and rightly so – it meant that workers, who would normally have operated those 70 buses or so, would be within the system. They would be without the maximum amount of work, and there would be a drain on the purse of the Transport Board. All that the Minister has sought to point out to this Honourable Chamber, only to be distorted by those honourable Members over there, is that with a reduced rolling stock or fleet, with the same number of employees, conductors and drivers, it meant that the ratio would have been too high.

Those Honourable Members on that side do not understand. The Minister told them what the true position was, and they thought he meant that he should have laid off people. It is not that. The Minister has got plans, foresight, and you do not understand it. The Minister has already decided to bring in new buses so that those persons who are now not effectively deployed will be able to work on the new buses. The buses are coming in, and I have reason to believe that the Ministry of Transport and Works will, in the not too distant future, be able to bring in more people, because with more buses, it is obvious that we will have to bring in more people to operate the buses.

We are aiming at having a proper and efficient transport system, but we do not have to worry about displacement. This Government has embarked on programmes, and not only capital projects, to give people work, and it has got the foresight and the wisdom to effect a training programme, run by the National Training Board, to equip the young people, and some older people, in this country with the skills that are required. That is what you could not do. Government feels that one of the problems which has plagued this country over the years is the lack of skilled and competent people to do the job, and we have had to import persons with skills, and we are moving towards halting that situation by training and retaining people.

I want all workers at the Transport Board, in fact, wherever in Barbados, to understand that the Government feels that, in keeping with a philosophy shared by all developing countries and the people who know, the

experts, people have got to be prepared to retain at least once in their life time. We do not want them to feel that because they are conductors, drivers, masons or carpenters that they should rest on their laurels and think that is what they should go through their entire life doing. We feel that our philosophy of equipping them with an additional skill will put them in better stead.

The honourable Member for St. Philip South (Mr. H. A. Blackman) got up yesterday and reduced the debate to Foul Bay and the Crane. I am more familiar with the Crane than the honourable Member, although he lives up there. What he sought to tell this Chamber is that the road down to the Crane or to Foul Bay is in need of repair and all that. It is not only that. The honourable Member should know that there is an erosion problem. If he had any common sense, he would read – he does not understand St. Philip; by accident, he managed to win a seat – the history of St. Philip, about the coast of Foul Bay and the Crane in particular, and he would learn that there is sea erosion. The sea washes away that lovely beach, and that automatically affects the road down there. The honourable Member ought to know that, but he does not know.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of elucidation: In my speech yesterday, when I was speaking about Crane Beach, I specifically said that Subhead 7(a) referred almost directly to what is happening at Crane Beach. I read it yesterday and I will read it again. It says:

> "This subhead provides for maintaining adequate drainage standards against flooding in low-lying districts and adequate defences against encroachment by the sea on all sides of the Island."

I never mentioned anything about roads at Foul Bay.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Point made.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, I am very glad the honourable Member has now got up and expounded his foolishness, because what he has got up and raised is not anything for the Ministry of Transport and Works, but is a matter that falls within the ambit and competence of the National Conservation Commission.

The honourable Member also sought to say that this Government has discriminated against the parish of St. Philip. The honourable Member should never have made that charge. The two honourable Members, from St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) and South, have approached me on a number of occasions asking me for services in the parish of St. Philip, and I have acceded to their requests.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member will have two minutes to wind up, one being on account of interruptions.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Not only that, Mr. Chairman, but as the honourable Member for St. Philip South has said, a former Minister of this Government has assisted him with some roads.

Mr. Reynold Weekes was a Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Transport and Works for years, and he also acted as a Minister. It was his job during the Democratic Labour Party regime to do the roads in St. Philip. What do you want us to do now? Do you want us to leave out the other constituencies and run to St. Philip to satisfy you? This Government has decided to effect a programme which will benefit all constituencies, not St. Philip North and South in particular.

10.35 a.m.

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Chairman, the Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) and the Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) continue to make the point that the problems of the Transport Board, and, presumably, the Ministry of Transport and Works, are not of their making. Almost nine years after they have taken over the reins of Government of this country they continue to blame others for the problems of management of the Transport Board.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: That shows you what a record you all had.)

Mr. M. A. KING: It shows how incompetent you all are in coming to grips with the problems of management!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. M. A. KING: But it is not only the previous Administration, you are also knocking your predecessors in office. That is one of the problems with this Government. You are knocking the previous Ministers, you are knocking the previous administrators of the Transport Board, but you have brought back managers who were there in the time of the Democratic Labour Party's Administration. That is the level at which you operate.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: So what?)

Mr. M. A. KING: After nine years, you are talking about the problems of management and saying that the problems of the Transport Board are problems of management – and you are supposed to be an expert in management!

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The honourable Member must understand that this is not to be tolerated. An honourable Member must be heard in silence.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, a central point about these Estimates, Head 42, which we are debating, is that they do not at all reflect Government's expenditure on the Ministry of Transport and Works. They do not reflect what is the anticipated Government expenditure – and they cannot reflect that expenditure!

One of the problems which this Government has created by its policy is that it has the programmes of the Ministry of Transport and Works being financed from two different areas. They are being financed from the Estimates which we vote in this Chamber and they are being financed from the Transport Levy Fund. We are only seeing half of the picture here. This Parliament is not in a position to control expenditure in relation to the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Only yesterday, we found the unfortunate situation where we were not able to understand precisely what were the expenditures in relation to the Ministry of Defence and Security. One could plead national security in an area like Defence and Security and say that all expenditures and areas of national security are not necessarily to be exposed to public investigations, but there is nothing of security in the Ministry of Transport and Works. Yet, we find that the Estimates of Expenditure for Transport and Works can only be partially investigated, because only part of it is being financed out of the Consolidated Fund.

The problem which the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) raised last evening about loans being made to the Ministry of Transport and Works by commercial banks.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Did you say the Minister or the Ministry?

Mr. M. A. KING: I said "the Ministry".

The honourable Member for St. Michael West made the charge that there were funds borrowed by the Ministry of Transport and Works, and that there was no reference to it in the Estimates. There was no reference to the debt service charges which were required to service any loans which were made to finance loans taken by the Ministry of Transport and Works to finance the operation of that Ministry, either directly or to the Transport Board.

We know that, from time to time, buses costing a lot of money are bought by the Transport Board. We know that large sums of money are required to finance the purchase of those buses. We do not have any accounts showing what is the true position in relation to all expenditures, being made by the Ministry of Transport and Works. So when the Minister of Transport and Works talks about reducing the level of subsidies in the Estimates – and I believe he talked this morning about a reduction to some $13 million – he is talking about reducing the level of subsidies which are paid out of the Consolidated Fund. He is telling this Honourable House and the public of Barbados nothing about the level of subsidy and money which is being used by the Ministry of Transport and Works to fund its works.....

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: To buy buses.)

Mr. M. A. KING:..... and to fund its operations.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Not operations, man. He is talking foolishness.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. M. A. KING: What about all the recurrent expenditures which are being met out of the Transport Levy Fund?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Transport Levy Fund is being used for Capital matters, the purchasing of buses and equipment like fare boxes. It is not used for recurrent expenditure of the sort that he is describing.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: They are misleading the House.)

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: That is what you told the House last night.)

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: What?)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order,please.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: About the bottom line.)

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: There must be a bottom line.)

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. There cannot be a debate across the floor of the House like this. The honourable Member must be heard in silence. Please continue.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, I have great hesitation in accepting the statement of the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central about the disposition of the Transport Levy Fund. Let us see what the state of the accounts is in relation to that Levy Fund. I believe the Transport Levy Board is a statutory corporation.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. M. A. KING: If it is not a statutory corporation it ought to be a statutory corporation.

Laughter.

Asides.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are laughing. You should be ashamed.)

Mr. M. A. KING: That makes it all the more ridiculous. You are having substantial sums of money being collected from the people of Barbados and there are no proper accounts being offered to the public or to Parliament about the collection of those funds. Let us see the information about the collection, disposition and use of the Transport Levy Fund. Let us see what those funds are being used for. Let us see what charges are being used to sevice debts and loans, because I say that loans have been made to the Ministry of Transport and Works. Let us see the accounts if you have them. Let us see what is the true position in relation to all of the money which is being used by the Ministry of Transport and Works.

You made the statement that the funds which are being used by the Transport Board are being used to purchase capital equipment. What about all the road improvement programmes which you talked about as being funded by the Transport Levy? You are saying that you are funding road improvement programmes out of the Transport Levy, and then you are talking about reducing the expenditure in the Capital Estimates.

The whole point is that we do not know what the position is. I am charging you, and accusing you, of concealing from this Honourable House and the public the total level of expenditure.....

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order: You cannot accuse anybody in here of concealing matters from this House and from the public of Barbados. That, I submit is unparliamentary.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No. That is an exhibition of ignorance.)
10.45 a.m.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, as long as we do not have the accounts showing the disposition of the monies used by the Ministry of Transport and Works in their entirety, the total programme of the Ministry of Transport and Works, the estimates of expenditure, cannot be effectively analyzed. To that extent, I accuse the Government of concealing the appropriate information from us.

Asides.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No, please. The honourable Member was engaging in talk across the floor with another honourable Member.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member made a point of order concerning a matter that I raised last night, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You can come again. There will be another occasion on which you can raise this, I cannot entertain it now. We are wasting time. The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) accused the Ministry of a lack of proper planning and a lact of effective management. He was right. This morning, the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, in dealing with the question of management, talked about what he conceived to be the lack of quality in the management which he displaced. I wonder if the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central can tell us something about the quality of the management which he has introduced to replace that which he has displaced. Can he tell us, for instance, whether being an Adventist Minister is sufficient qualification for a position in the Transport Board? Why was it necessary, for instance, to bring back a manager about whom you were very critical in past times, who had served under the Democratic Labour Party administration, a man whom you and all the other Members on that side had accused of buying a lot of old Seddon buses?.....

Asides.

Mr. M. A. KING: Yes, all of you. You have brought back a manager whom you have been very critical of.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will have to give the honourable Member an extra minute because there have been too many interruptions. Please continue.

Mr. M. A. KING: The real problem in the Ministry of Transport and Works is that they have become so confused over the years with the constant changes in the political direction of that Ministry that they have failed to come to grips with the critical areas which need to be attended. I am not only dealing with Transport and Works.....

Asides.

Mr. M. A. KING: You talked about management, everybody talked about that, and management has had its results in a whole lot of areas.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. KING: Do you want to hear something about the details? Why do you not pay some attention to developing the tenantry roads? You have passed legislation in this House providing for the development of tenantries, and providing for people who live in tenantries to buy lands in tenantries and you have done nothing at all about developing the roads in tenantries for people to get exit and access to their lands....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. M. A. KING: Not only in Vauxhall, but in all other areas.

Mr. B. M. Taitt and Hon. H. deB. Forde rose.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have three honourable Members on their feet.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, no matter how much the Opposition may wish to talk non-stop, sometimes they must give way to listen to the voice of wisdom.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Then, why are you standing?)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Because the fools, like the honourable Member, are sitting down. That is why I am standing up!

Sir, the Transport Board comes before this House like a recurring decimal, and almost everyone becomes an expert on this subject overnight. I have said before that there is probably only one Member in this House who ever had the responsibility of looking after the day-to-day running of buses, along with his relatives, and that happens to be me. But that does not give me the right to feel that I am an expert.

I want to begin by making one point very clear. The running of Transport can only be paid for in one of two ways. One way is by bringing the Transport Board under the aegis of the Public Utilities Board and allowing a fare rate to be set so that the Transport Board can earn enough revenue to pay for its day-to-day outgoings, to provide for depreciation, and to build up a sufficient capital stock. I hesitate to mention the question of profit, because one of the points the Government will have to bear in mind is whether or not, given the social structure of Barbados and the distribution of jobs for employment, it would wish to operate the Transport Board as a profit-making exercise.

The other way is to give some indirect subsidy to answer the social implications that arise out of the structure of our society. What cannot be allowed forever is the Transport Board to be run off the Consolidated Fund, with the Fund like a milch cow. If it is run out of the Consolidated Fund, invariably it will mean additional weight on direct taxation on the public of Barbados.

Honourable Members know that it is financial nonsense to have statutory boards, which are bearing down, invariably, on the Consolidated Fund, and which are rendering a service for which people are not paying a reasonable rate. Therefore, the Government's programme to reduce direct subsidy is, in many respects, a correct programme. It has resulted in spreading the weight of the cost of transport, not merely among the users of the services of the Transport Board, but among the non-users. The Managing Director in Bridgetown, who drive to town in his private car, is still making a contribution to the purchase of buses and the running of the Transport Board through the Transport Levy. If the Opposition is not satisfied with the levy, they must come up with an alternative method of financing which is more equitable. But it seems to me that by having the levy, the only persons whom you can genuinely argue against would be visitors to our island, who do not pay the levy.

There is nothing, in my view, either financially or sociologically wrong with seeking to finance the development of the Transport Board out of a special levy fund. The argument of the Opposition today is that the details of that fund are off-budget and are not shown in the Estimates. Obviously it is off-budget, but it is misleading to make the public think that the Parliament has no control over the operation of the Transport Levy Fund. The Transport Levy Act, 1982–6, places a duty on the Board, through the Minister, to have their accounts properly audited, not only by an independent auditor, but also by the Auditor General. It is open to the Public Accounts Committee to ask for the accounts to be brought before the Committee and scrutinised.

The accounts have to be submitted to both Houses of Parliament. It is also open to any honourable Member in this House, who knows his duty, to direct a series of questions to the Minister concerned about the operation of the Fund, and more than that, it is open to any honourable Member to start a debate at any time, by private motion or otherwise, on the operation of the Fund.

The Fund has been operating for a little over a year, and already, one sees that there is a growing reduction in the direct charges of the Transport Board on the Consolidated Fund. I welcome that. I think we are going in the right direction. The Board which looks after the management of the Fund not only has representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the management of the Transport Board, but a representative from the Barbados Workers Union as well, and I think that it would be less than charitable to insinuate that these gentlemen are misusing their positions and not being fully accountable in a manner that one would expect a Board to function.

If the honourable Members would take the trouble to enquire, to ask proper questions and get the information, they would see that the Transport Levy has been used for two main purposes. It has been used for refurbishing the Transport Board. The honourable Minister spoke of, I think, 160 new buses. In my view, he needs more, and I think he is going to have to use the levy for some time to replace buses that still date back into the 1940s. When I spoke some time last year on this subject, I was surprised to see that we had a bus from 1948 still existing at the Transport Board, some from the 1950s and Seddons that are of no use, and which cannot really their weight because of the gradients in Barbados. In a small country which is not supposed to be hilly, they have proved to be totally useless. It is obvious that it will take years – not two, three, four or nine years – to replace the stock. In my view, we will be replacing the stock and having a proper programme for the continuing refurbishment of the transport stock over a developmental period of some 20 years.

The colossal mismanagement of transport in past years has come to roost. The Public Utilities Board was never allowed to fix a proper rate, because it was politically inconvenient to the Government of the day. Therefore, it fixed a rate and then looked for a way to give an indirect subsidy to the two private enterprises which, eventually, were virtually run out of business. If you talk to the owners of those enterprises, you will find that people like the late Mrs. Ermie Rock had to use her other resources to keep the buses going. It was unfair rate making.

It is bad economics for us to continue to give the impression that people should not pay a reasonable rate for the service being provided, even if you keep out the profit element. Some of this is creeping into the Telephone Company, too. We are keeping the local service at a low rate, while loading on the cost to the overseas calls. Eventually, we are ging to build up the impression in people's minds that they do not have to pay a reasonable rate for the use of the telephone, and we are going to get into trouble. We must let the people know that if you need a first-class service, it has to be paid for either by the users direct, the users with an amount of subsidy from non-users, as is happening with the Transport Levy, or direct taxation.

The Minister has some very interesting features in his programme, and it would be a great pity if we hear only the negative, which is being stressed by the Opposition, and not hear the positive. For how many years have we had a most disgusting main terminal in Bridgetown? The Fairchild Street Terminal is a disgrace to a progressive country like Barbados. For the first time, that problem is going to be tackled; it is going to cost $3 million. It is obvious that the money for that has to come from somewhere. If you go to Speightstown, you will see that the terminal there is not up to standard. Once again, the Government has projected the use of the Transport Levy Fund for improving the facilities available to commuters in that area.

If you have a look at the training schemes being implemented at the Transport Board, you will find that there is a genuine effort being made to retain workers, so that rather than people remaining all the time merely washing buses, they are graduating up the ladder of the scale and being made more useful. This has been done in the past.

I know that as soon as you have fare boxes it would probably catch the headlines. I support the introduction of fare boxes in Barbados. I think that it would have some disadvantages, if one looks at it from the point of view of not phasing the fare boxes without dislocating workers. But it is obvious from the Minister's statement that he is fully aware of this, and is making every attempt to minimise any dislocation of the work force by the introduction of fare boxes. Barbadians go abroad. They will see fare boxes being used in the United States and consider it a good thing, but, politically, they shy away from introducing something like that, which, in the long run, will redound to the benefit of all the users of the system, and the country as a whole.

I believe that wherever technological changes can be implemented without sociological fall-out, a sign of good management of the government is to use those technological changes immediately, and the Transport Board is one such area. Today at the Transport Board we still have the old system where there are not adequate days for dealing with buses that have broken down. The area of the Transport Board headquarters is not adequate enough to plan a proper system of maintenance to be undertaken there. The Minister, and the one before him, has made it quite clear that Government is looking at the acquisition of new headquarters for the Transport Board. When this comes about, it will have the facilities to allow a driver having problems with a bus to drive right on to the bay, have the engine lifted out and replaced by a new engine, and have the bus back on the

road, rather than having 36 and 56 buses tied up waiting for repairs.
11.05 a.m.

My friend, the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King), who normally makes very sensible statements in this regard, seriously cannot believe that we could have answered these problems in the period of seven years since we came to power, particularly in a period when you have had one of the worse recessions in the world. Within that time, we have not only identified the problem, but we have started to alleviate the problem, and I do not believe that any of the Ministers who have held the portfolio can be criticized for the efforts they have been making to right the problems of transport in this country.

The Opposition cannot quarrel about the levy. The only reason the Opposition wants to know the terms of the levy is so they can go out and shout that you are collecting x million dollars from the taxpayers of this country, as though that is going to be the end of the matter. They will not say that the money has been used for the construction and repairs to the Swing Bridge, for repairs to Bridge Road, for road improvements in the constituency of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes), the Belmont Roundabout, and in other places: Bagatelle, St. Barnabas, Cave Hill, Belair, Dodson Road, Lammings, St. Joseph; Woodbourne in St. Philip, – I believe that has either started or is in the process of being started – Sayers Court, Oxnards, Licorish Village, Paradise, Gaskin's Road, in the constituency of the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, Silver Hill A and Silver Hill B, Rock Hall, St. Lucy; Belfield, Waterford, Lowthers, Ealing Park.

I say this to the Minister. As the representative for Christ Church West, if they are quarreling with you – and I am here putting the case for you – fix the roads in Christ Church West. I will then tell the people that the levy is being used to fix roads in their areas, because I support the levy and so do my constituents. We want the levy used not only for improved bus services, as is happening, but also to build and repair tenantry roads in our area. I do not believe that any member of the Board or any member of the Government has personally profited from, or used, the Transport Levy.

The honourable Member talk about debt charges for the Levy. It is obvious that if you have a levy fund established by Statute and you wish, in those circumstances, to finance it, you are probably going to have interest charges. I rather believe that when the Minister lays the accounts, you will find that the interest charges have been on the credit side rather than on the debit side. The Fund has probably built earned income during the period of time in which plans were being made for its disbursement.

I want to know from the Minister whether or not he has been able to recruit enough engineers and professional persons to assist him with pushing his programme as rapidly as he would want. There is no doubt that we have a shortage of people in this field, particularly at the supervisory level, and it may well be that the Ministry may have to increase the giving out of work to the private sector. It seems to me that if this is done in respect of tenantry roads as well as some of the main highways, it could improve progress.

I am satisfied, to sum up, that the Minister, like his predecessors, is doing all in his power to put right the problems of the Transport Board, that the programme being charted by the Government and by the Ministry is the correct programme; that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the Transport Levy, and that its use, to date, has been to the benefit of the country as a whole; and that it is a misleading fallacy to suppose that you will run an upgraded and modern transport system without having to meet the reasonable cost of so doing, either off-budget or on-budget, either by subsidy or direct taxation.

The only arguments there can be are whether or not the money is being properly used, and, secondly, whether or not the Government is aiming to have a profit-making enterprise. I do not think that the Government is aiming to have a profit-making enterprise. The massive programmes of the rehabilitation of the transport fleet and roads, call for a major effort. That major effort is being executed, and I congratulate the Minister and his predecessors on making that effort.

Thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member may congratulate.....

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

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Why do you not sit down? I have not spoken yet in this debate, and you are jumping up all the time.

Mr. Chairman, roads, the Ministry of Transport and Works and, generally, matters of housing, are very much emotive issues, and people in Barbados, particularly the representatives of the people, consider themselves to be experts in these areas; and, therefore, whenever Heads like these come up at Estimates or any time, a lot of play is made of these important areas.

A lot has been said this morning by the Opposition in connection with the Ministry of Transport and Works, with particular emphasis on the Transport Board and what is happening there. There have also been a few com-

ments on the road system in the island, especially in St. Philip.

It was my good or bad fortune, when this Party was returned to office in 1976, to assume the role of Minister of Communications and Works, as it then was known – and I prefer to be known as the Minister of Communications and Works, rather than the Minister of Transport and Works – and at the time I carefully analysed the position with respect to the Transport Board and the various problems which beset that operation. I concluded that it was not necessary to have three separate concessionaires – the Transport Board, the Rocklyn and the Elite – and since the Government had committed itself in its manifesto of 1976 to the electorate and they endorsed that manifesto, I decided to set about, with despatch, to implement that part of the manifesto – the total nationalisation of the bus service in this country.
11.15 a.m.

Whatever may be the problems then and now, I will maintain that I did the right thing, and I hope never to see a situation where transport will revert to the chaos of the past. Only persons who lived with the system at that time know of the total confusion which existed. For example, a person who lived in Bathsheba, or in Martins Bay, or Pie Corner, St. Lucy; or Belleplaine could not get a bus after 7 o'clock going from Bridgetown to these outlying areas, and I thought in my wisdom – the Opposition might say lack of wisdom – that I should completely revolutionise the whole system of transportation in this country.

At the time the Democratic Labour Party was turned out of office, it had completely run out of ideas. That party did not understand that there was any possibility of introducing a new system and extending the hours of the bus service. There were students going at Cave Hill, there were nurses who were going to classes at the hospital and elsewhere, there were students going to evening classes, and people who were working late at night, and these people found it extremely difficult to get to their homes. They were writing letters to me day after day, telephoning me, coming to see me – and all the problems were poured into my lap. I took the decision, and I asked the Government to endorse that decision and the Government agreed, to nationalise the country's bus service.

Having taken the decision to go ahead, I looked at the existing rolling stock, although there was hardly any rolling stock with which to work. I discovered that the predominant bus unit in the Transport Board system was the Seddon unit.

The Seddon bus was not particularly known anywhere in the Caribbean; not even in England where it was manufactured. The Seddon name was introduced to Barbados by Sir Carlisle Burton, then, I think, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, who on a visit to Bermuda saw the bus service over there, thought it was a good bus service, and recognised that the Seddon unit was being used. And not realising that Bermuda is a small place, and comparatively level, with hills unlike those in Bathsheba and St. Andrew, and not taking into account the engineering part of the unit, he decided to mention that Seddons were being used. Mr. Clifton White, who was then the Deputy Chairman of the Transport Board, heard about the Seddons, wrote the Seddon Company in Britain, and introduced the unit to the Transport Board; and until I came and discovered the unsuitability – I do not want to use another word, I almost said something else, of the unit, the unit was constantly on order to the point where nearly all the units in the Transport Board were Seddons.

There were massive problems at the Transport Board. The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King) said that he does not know exactly what the problem is; he hears people talk about management. There were numerous problems; it was not only the management of the Transport Board. There was a problem with the Board itself, and the Government of the day permitted the rot to set in.

The Seddons were introduced by Mr. Clifton White, and let me tell you something, Mr. Chairman. These Seddon buses cannot run beyond three months, or three and a half months at the most, without having to replace the front tyres. If you put a set of tyres on a Seddon today, in three to four and a half months' time the tyres are eaten off. There is no operation in the world, not even in Kuwait, that could afford to spend money that way on any operation for transportation.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) talked about the question of allowing the Transport Board to come back under the Public Utilities Board. It might be a good thing, but I would hope that we will never dream up any thought of having the transport system in this country going back into the hands of greedy sharks. It is one area, like water, that I would never like to see the private sector put their hands on again.

The problems of the Transport Board can be overcome, and they are on their way to being overcome, but you have to put massive injections of funds in the transport system in order to provide for its needs. You have to be able to carry out preventive maintenance. The fleet must not only come up to scratch in terms of your to-day optimum unit, but you must have constant replacements; you must have a number of units available so that you will not have to run a bus into the dust. If your optimum number should be 300, you should have at least 330 or 350 units. Buses are not cheap, and you have to

pay for them; and no person should quarrel if Government sets about to get money to spend on units.

I heard quibbling yesterday in connection with the money being borrowed from the banks or money taken from the banks and talking about facilities and letters of comfort. That is common everyday practice. It is not like the letters of comfort that you gave to the banks to bring in a few bags of rice for the BMC. This is a serious and big operation where you do this for the convenience of your transactions. Parliament has approved the purchase of the units and the money just accommodates the transactions, and the banks are always willing to accommodate you. This is elementary. You are only trying to make a mountain out of a molehill and score cheap political points, but you are doing it at the expense of the travelling public.
11.25 a.m.

Just shortly before we came into office, the bus fare for journeys to the farthest points in this island – to Pie Corner, Belleplaine, Bayfield – was sixty five cents, and there was a tiered system of bus fares. A proposal was put to the then Cabinet that there should be a unified bus fare of fifty cents. Dr. Caddle resisted it, and offered to resign if the Democratic Labour Party did not go along with him. He held them to ransom. Although they knew that it was impractical, especially with one Seddon bus alone costing them nearly a quarter of a million dollars a year to operate – and they were saddling the country with Seddons every day – they still went along with the twenty-five cents bus fare.

I took the decision – and any sensible businessman would have done it – immediately on coming into office, to stop one hundred Seddons which were ordered. It was impractical. As a result, we were left holding the bag.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two minutes more.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: They are talking about the management structure. When we came into office, we had only a manager. You did not have a personal manager, you did not have an engineer, you did not have a financial controller.

Aside.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: You cannot tell me what to say in here. I say what I want to say. You are very sensational. You get up when you like and you trot out all kinds of sensational things, and nobody tries to stop you.

When I left the Ministry, we had made provision for a manager, an engineer, an accountant and financial controller, also a traffic manager and a personnel manager and they were nearly in force at the time.

Aside.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: We were not looking to put our friends in there. We were looking to put good people.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West asked when the Minister was speaking not long ago: "Who got rid of Mr. Hill?" Nobody sent home Mr. Hill. Probably, Mr. Hill did not feel comfortable at the time. I do not know. I know that I found him to be a very good and able administrator. I would have asked him to come back if I had returned to that Ministry. We got on well together. I wish that all the good men who are there are allowed to stay. But, like the Ministry of Housing and Lands, I should hope that my colleague in the Ministry of Transport and Works would not fail to remove dead wood from where it is. In the interest of the country, it has to be so.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE and Mr. B. M. TAITT rose.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot have two honourable Members on their feet.

Asides.

(*Aside:* Speak, Roy.)

(*Aside:* You spoke already.)

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Taitt, sit down.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I have made three attempts to speak.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. Lucy has caught my eye.

Asides.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Do not argue with the Chair.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You want me to get into trouble, that is all.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot have two honourable Members on their feet.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I should like to warn honourable Members that I cannot deal with asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know you would send me out, any minute now.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the honourable Member please be seated. Will the Member for St. Lucy please continue your speech.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE (St. Lucy): Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to support Head 42. There are some people, no matter what you do with them, who do not intend to hear, nor do they intend to see. I would say that from the year 1976, this country has been transformed as far as communications and works is concerned. When you look around and see the changes which have taken place in this country during the last three or four years, when you think about the road works in this country – the Spring Garden Road.....

(Government benches: Yes!)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: .....the St. Barnabas Road.....

(Government benches: Yes!)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: .....the Speightstown By-Pass.....

(Government benches: Yes!)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: .....the Oistins Development.

(Government benches: Yes!)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE:.....it is too much to compare with what little the members of the Democratic Labour Party did for the fifteen years they were in power.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Carry on.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, some of my friends who are back here now from the United States of America, Canada and England do not even know how to find Speightstown now, because of the by-pass road!

Laughter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I am surprised that up to this stage of the debate you have not heard the members of the Opposition talking about pot holes. We know that from 1976, there have been a lot of big projects in this country. We have a cement plant in the north of this island costing $200 million. We have a sugar factory, costing $27 million, which was built in the north of this island. Those are some of the biggest projects we have ever had, and will ever have, in Barbados, and they have resulted in heavier machinery and trucks on our roads.

Before 1976 the heaviest truck for which you could get a license was one that carried eleven tonnes. Today you could pay for a truck which carries as much as fifty tonnes. So would you not expect then to have pot holes in the road, Mr. Chairman? The roads are being worked.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Yes.)

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order on the Government benches.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I should like to commend the various Ministers for the work they have been doing from the time we came into power. A member on that side spoke about the amount of people employed at MTW. I should like to tell him whilst moving around Barbados, I saw road works being done in St. Philip; in Tom Benn Gap, Clarke's Gap and the Whim, all in St. Peter; at Checker Hall in my constituency, in Belair and in Black Rock and Grazettes. If we have so much work being done, I think it would take an expert Minister to do that and not have people working. We have an expert Minister and we have people working.

11.35 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, I heard one of the honourable Members on that side refer to the management of the Transport Board as "square pegs in round holes." I do not believe that. It is easy for someone to get on the floor of this House and criticise the poor civil servants who cannot come in here and speak for themselves, but I definitely believe that we have some good civil servants.

I would like to commend the director of the Transport and Works. He is trying his best. Anytime you make a call, he is always willing to co-operate to see that everything is progressing as you would like it. But sometimes you have problems with the roads. The maintenance staff may come today and fix the road, and tomorrow morning a pipe bursts. Nobody can blame the manager for that. Nobody can blame the Road Works staff for that. That is something that is beyond our control.

Mr. Chairman, when you see people criticising for criticising sake, I think that is unfair. But I am very glad to know that we have a very sensible electorate, one which knows right from wrong, and they would not allow Members from that side to come and fool them when they know whether a Government is doing something good for them or not.

They talked about the transport system. A few days ago, we brought a Bill inside here to pay a few salaries and improve the Transport Board. Those same Members over there criticised it. They did everything in their power to stop it, but, thank God, it was passed. I was very happy, because I know that it will improve the bus service.

I should like to give a very honest comparison of what used to happen, and what happens now, as far as transport in the parish of St. Lucy is concerned. As you all know, when I give you any information I always give an honest report, because my church comes first, and I am not about to come in here and lie. Before 1976, you would get buses at 5.30 a.m., 6. a.m., 6.30 a.m., 7.30 a.m., and 9.00 a.m., after which there was a break until 12 noon. Then you got one at 3.00 p.m. and the last at 6.30 p.m. Now listen to the progress. Since this Government came into power you got an early bus at 4.45 a.m., and buses at 5.30 a.m., 6.15 a.m., 7 a.m., 7.35 a.m., 8 a.m., 8.45 a.m., 9.30 a.m. and an hourly service from 9.30 a.m. until 3.30 p.m. After 3.30 p.m., Mr. Chairman, we have a three-quarter-hour service from 3.30 p.m. up to 7.30 p.m. again; and then after 7.30 p.m., you go back to an hourly service up to 12 midnight. The last bus leaves at 12 midnight and it reaches St. Lucy at 1.00 a.m. the next morning.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order. A Member must be heard in silence.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, the last bus leaving St. Lucy to go to town on nights now is 10.30 p.m. In the old days, the last bus used to leave for town at 5 p.m. on afternoons. What a contrast!

There are some Members on that side who are trying to fool the people of this country. I am sure they cannot fool the people of St. Lucy anymore. They were fooled then for 28 years, but the days for that are gone. Years ago you could not hear of anyone from St. Lucy working at Sam Lord's Castle. We all know that people in Barbados always say that the people in St. Lucy are the most serious workers – when you put them to work, you do not have to watch them. But when you sent them too far, they did not have the transportation. But you do not have that anymore.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke about girls getting up at 3.30 on mornings. That is true. But the girls get up to do shift work. Years ago you would not see anybody leaving St. Lucy at 10 o'clock to go to Christ Church, or in town all the other places, to work. But nowadays, people in St. Lucy can apply for work anywhere in the island because we have transportation.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to let you know a little more, and I want to be fair in my speech. The last bus coming from Bridgetown on nights leaves at 1.45 a.m. This stops at Speightstown. If you had a problem, you could move from Speightstown to St. Lucy, which is very close. But in the days prior to this Government, the last bus to Josey Hill and Indian Ground, those two places, left at 4.30 in the afternoon.

So you can see that all the money this Government is asking for will improve the transport system in this country. We are getting something for our money. When I give you all these extra routes and extra hours drivers and conductors are working, you would know that that is twice as much workers as we used to have in former days.

I would like to touch a little on some of the questions asked by honourable Members, and I will start with one of the questions asked by the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King). He talked about lack of management. Would you say that bad management could improve the transport system from that stage to one like this?

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) asked a question of the honourable Minister in relation to Subhead 6(f):

"The rental of vehicles and equipment in cases of emergency or when as a result of mechanical breakdowns the Ministry's vehicles are not available".

I do not think the honourable Minister could reply to everything Members from that side ask. I would like to answer this one. Years ago, I would go to certain sites, because, as a taxpayer, I always tried to be very interested in what was going on. I would see twenty-five men waiting on material. I would ask "What is wrong?" The men would say, "Brath, our truck is broken down, so we have to wait until a truck comes." Now that kind of thing used to go on for three weeks, and you had twenty-five men sitting down and doing nothing, waiting for a truck because theirs was broken down. So I would like to commend the Minister on taking such a stand, the rental of vehicles, to save men from wasting time and to keep the work of this country going on. That is what you call a saving for the country, but the honourable Member still asked a question about that.

The honourable Member for St. Philip South (Mr. H. A. Blackman) spoke about lights at Foul Bay, asked the honourable Minister for some lights for that area. He is my friend, and I would like to give him a little advice, because I am very interested in fishing. I would like to let that honourable Member know that you do not ask the honourable Minister of Transport and Works to put lights at a fishing bay – you ask the Minister of Agriculture. I had the same problem at Half Moon Fort. I always called on the Ministry of Agriculture when the lights went off, because I always say that we should have lights to help our fishermen.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two minutes more.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Yes, Sir.

To turn to roads again, I had Ministers from that side who visited a piece of road in Checker Hall in St.

Lucy about twenty-five times, and they just wasted fuel looking at that road. Do you know what a Minister from this side told me? He said: "I am not a time-waster, and I am not even visiting the road. I am going to send the Communications and Works down there to fix the roads for you." Thank God, Mr. Chairman, those pieces of roads are all fixed. I am appealing now and hoping that the honourable Minister will come and fix about three more for the people this year. I should like to thank him very much in advance. I know he will do his best for me.

I thank you.

11.45 a.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, when the Minister responded this morning, the Minister did not reply to the very serious charge which I made last night, which I wish the Minister specifically to address his mind to when he speaks again.

The honourable Member for St. Andrew, who was Minister for Transport as well, suggested that to talk about the concept of discussing a loan with a commercial bank was to seek to score cheap political points.

It is, indeed, the very essence of the representational system. In 1964, this Honourable Chamber passed the Financial Administration and Audit Act, which determines how public monies are spent and disbursed.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I would just like to ask, on a point of order .....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am sorry. I am going to make this point first. Under the Financial Administration and Audit Act, public monies include revenue .....

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order: I find that the honourable Member is continually repeating himself in this debate. Further, I should like the Member to address himself to the question of a decision which the Cabinet made, to which I referred on Monday, on a matter to waive the very piece of legislation which he is now addressing.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the idiocy of that statement does not require response, because a Cabinet cannot decide to waive law. If the honourable Member checks with the Attorney General, or if he takes the information from the Deputy Prime Minister, he would know that no Cabinet in Barbados has the power to waive law. The reason they do not wish me to speak about this is because I am charging, I have charged, and I continue to charge, that the Government of Barbados has illegally and unlawfully allowed the Ministry of Transport and Works to borrow money from a commercial bank.

There is nothing in the Financial Rules of this country which allows a Permanent Secretary to sign a loan from a commercial bank on bahalf of any Ministry. I am saying and charging that they borrowed $6.3 million from a commercial bank illegally, unlawfully and irresponsibly. I wish the Minister to respond to that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member will certainly agree that this is exactly the line he took yesterday, and that the same argument is coming out now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. This is not the same argument.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I just want to warn the honourable Member with respect to repetition.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This is not repetition. I am bringing to the Minister's attention that he has not dealt specifically with the point under the Act. I am saying that this morning, the Minister, and subsequently another Minister, sought to suggest that the Board had borrowed the money, and I am saying it is the Ministry – contrary to the law. When the Government itself breaks the law, it is the responsibility of this Parliament to call them to account; and in discussing the policy relating to transportation in this country, I am saying and charging that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and the Government, have to respond to the population as to how they can unlawfully not bring an accounting of the Transport Levy Fund to the public.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! Order, please. The honourable Member who is on his feet seems to be complaining that the honourable Minister has not yet addressed his criticisms and his arguments of yesterday.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He misunderstood them then, and I am just making sure that I clarify them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The debate is not yet over, and I would hate for the honourable Member to waste his time on repetition, because I may have to intervene and stop him.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The question of illegal use of money in the public Treasury cannot be repeated often enough, and the Government has to respond to it. I am going on, Sir, so that you will not stop me.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: So that I will not have to stop you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: So that you will not find any reason at all to stop me, because if I cannot say it in here, I am going to call a Press Conference and demonstrate that they have a five year loan, contrary to the law. I will demonstrate that the Government has acted illegally and unlawfully.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There cannot be any libel in this. I am surprised that the Attorney General agreed to it. He may not have known about it.

Mr. Chairman, let me raise another point, since I am not certain I will get another chance to speak again. The honourable Minister took it upon himself to tell the public that he has regulations for the Road Traffic Act. He promised us a Road Traffic Act and regulations at the end of 1983. He told us in January of 1984 that he would bring them shortly, and now in March, he has not yet brought them to this House – but he has managed to tell the Press all about the Road Traffic Act.

Speaking, therefore, on the basis of the regulations which he has submitted, I want to draw something to his attention. He has now made provision for licensing to take place only at certain specified places. We have been hearing a lot about how this is a service economy, and about how we are trying to attract more tourists, and I wish to ask some questions relating to the proposed change of venues for the issuing of temporary driving permits and so on, which will now, as I understand it, be concentrated at MTW in the Pine and at the airport.

There will be a Monday to Friday service only, as I understand it, from 8.30 to 4.30 for issuing licences. We have not got the information in front of us, so I have to go on what is reported. I want to know what will happen to clients who arrive after 4.30 p.m., who have business appointments and who would like a vehicle for immediate transportation. I would like to know what will happen to clients, mostly the CARICOM people who come here, who decide to spend a weekend in Barbados, let us say, who arrive at 5.00 p.m. on a Friday and leave at about the same time on a Sunday. Are they not to get hired cars any more? Will they not be able to drive in this country?

After a person arrives in Barbados and spends possibly an hour in an immigration line, does that person need to spend another hour trying to get a permit to drive in Barbados? If all the people who arrive in Barbados have to get their permits from the airport, you can begin to see that there is going to be a long line of people waiting.

We have a situation where it is clear that people who are in the Sandy Lane area now do not like to go to Holetown, furthermore having to go up in the Pine to get a permit. In other words, a tourist who happens to go past the airport and go into the north – to Heywoods, if any tourists go there at all, or Sandy Lane – will then have to go back to MTW in order to get a temporary permit to drive in Barbados.

11.55 a.m.

With several stations servicing licenses and permits in Barbados at the moment, there are several long waits for people who attempt to get permits. That is going to be further exacerbated, and the question is, 'Who will serve the entire St. Michael area?" I hope the Minister will be able to give us some answers to that.

I cannot myself imagine bringing a client from Sam Lord's Castle to MTW to get a temporary driving permit. I hope that the information which has been put out is incorrect, and that they will now be depots or points throughout the country where clients, tourists, or whoever, will be able to get a driving permit. Otherwise, the very purpose which this centralisation is designed to serve will be dissipated.

Mr. Chairman, so much for the Road Traffic Regulations. I look forward to the moment when they are brought into this Honourable Chamber so we will have an opportunity to examine them and see if we can add to them. I would have thought that it would have been in the interest of the Minister to circulate those draft regulations as widely as possible so that .....

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He says that they have been circulated. Obviously, he does not consider that the honourable Members in this Chamber are worthy of getting such regulations. Obviously, he does not consider that we can give any assistance, although he, himself, said that the regulations would be thicker than a large briefcase.

I want to deal with this whole question of the repair of roads. I have spoken about it in the past and I want to say, for the Record, that I consider it immoral, highly immoral, that the only way any sector of this community can get road repairs is if that sector happens to fall within the constituency represented by the particular Minister of Transport and Works at that time. I say it is immoral when the people in St. Michael West can hear in advance that it is not the intention of the Minister to repair any roads in that constituency.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I rise on a point of order: I do not think that it is a fair accusation. The honourable Member will recall that, only a few days ago, the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, his colleague, praised the Government for fixing all the roads in his constituency, and he went on to say that it was because of his efforts. How can the Member for St. Michael West now say that it is immoral that we only fix roads in our constituencies? That is not really fair.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the honourable Member please take his seat.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that it is immoral for any Minister to say to any representative of any constituency that he will not be getting any roads during the time of his sojourn in that constituency while the Minister is Minister. I am saying further that it ought not to be the case in Barbados that you have to turn a Ministry from representative to representative in order for areas to be completed.

We had a situation where in the constituency of St. Michael South Central, under the Democratic Labour Party, all the roads in that constituency were fixed. We then had the situation where in the constituency of St. Michael East all the roads in that constituency were fixed. Now, in St. Michael West Central, all the roads in that constituency are being fixed, and the rest of the people in this country, particularly in St. Michael West, cannot get their roads fixed. That is immoral. I have nothing more to say on it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order. A Member must be heard in silence. Order, please. Go ahead.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Minister gets up and give me a commitment that he is going to fix Hanschell Road.....I am not even going to get into that. I am tired. I came in here and spent a lot of time on that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order, please.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of explanation, if the honourable Member will give way.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not giving way.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Is the honourable Member aware that during the time of the Democratic Labour Party, the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition, told the then Minister of Transport and Works, Mr. "Sleepy' Smith that he was not to fix Third Avenue and Fifth Avenue in Hart's Gap because I was the sitting Member?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member, who is a Christian, should know that a sin committed six years ago or 10 years ago.....

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I said the honourable Member who is a christian, not the honourable Member for the City.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Continue.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I get very emotional about the roads, because every honourable Member in here knows that I have been told that my constituency will not have its roads fixed. And the honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull) is the only one who has the courage to support me when I say that there should be a national policy on road building, and that every member of this community should have an idea, in advance, how soon he might expect that the roads might be fixed. If that were done, it would stop people from harassing other people about roads.

I believe that there should be a grid for the country, in the same way you have a scale model of a proposed $3 million bus stand, which shows the roads to be built or repaired. I am recommending to the Minister that he provide a plan for road building and road repairs that can stand the test of national scrutiny. Let the people see it so that we who have to represent Passage Garden, Hanschell Road, Hindsbury Road and all of those little alleys where the people have been making contributions and paying taxes, from time immemorial, can feel that they, too, are part of this country.

I am going on to make another point. The Prime Minister got in here, and, for the Press, allowed it to go forth, that the Waterworks Department, now the Barbados Water Authority, caused disruption to MP1 and MP2, and other foolishness like that.

The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that it is bad policy on the part of the Government, as a whole, that has caused there to be no coordination in the digging up of the roads, and I think it is unfair to use the only department in the Public sector that works and functions properly.....

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is only for the gallery.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This is not for any gallery. You yourself know that the Barbados Water Authority is one of the few corporations, in any Administration, that works efficiently, and the Natural Gas Corporation, of whom my colleague is chairman.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, if the honourable Member will give way, on a point of order: Did I hear him say that the Barbados Water Authority is doing an outstanding job? Is this the same Water Authority that got lambasted in here a couple of days ago for its inefficiency and how they could not get some part? And is the same person talking?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No. It was the Prime Minister who said it.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: No. You came in here.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order. Two honourable Members are on their feet. The honourable Leader of the House, please take your seat.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point I am making is that the Government is immoral. It is the Prime Minister himself who came in here and said that it was a disaster; so if you are castigating the Prime Minister in his absence, you are free to do so.
12.05 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute more, and that is because of the interruptions.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I will be back. I am going to be speaking on Transport and Works for the rest of the day, and if no one wishes to speak, I will speak, because there are a number of matters connected with this Ministry which we are going to have to bring to the public.

I have not touched on the Transport Board yet, but I am going to finish by saying this. The honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) must have been deliberately misleading this House when he said that when he became Minister there was no personnel officer. I will remind him that Hallam Fields was the Personnel Manager; and the honourable Member had to know that. It would take a very strange mind to be able to come and stand up and tell this Honourable House that they had no personnel officer.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now we are hearing that he was a yard fowl. If you are talking about yard fowls, the Barbados Labour Party Ministers who have been to the Transport Board have behaved like the old serial, "Have Staff, Will Travel". The honourable Member for St. Andrew carried his people wherever he went; the honourable Member for St. Michael East (Dr. D. G. Blackman) carried his people wherever he went, and now the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) has brought in his people. I would not call them yard fowls; I will say they are your Christian friends. I will get back to that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chairman is very happy to see that in the Estimates, the element of parish pumping has returned.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT (St. Michael North East): Mr. Chairman, I am sorry that the honourable Member who just spoke put a case for roads in the way that he did. I could join him and put a case for myself, but I believe that if I did that, I would be considered a little myopic. When I look at the Physical Development and Environmental Plan, which is enunciated in the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party for 1981, I find solace in the fact that sitting Members in Parliament should not be short-sighted with regard to road improvement or road construction within any one area of Barbados. I believe that the development which has taken place over the last six, seven or eight years in road construction is such that any Barbadian should be proud. But, every road in every constituency in Barbados, cannot be fixed or constructed or serviced at the same time, and if you have to have a guideline, I believe you would have to go to the Physical Development Plan.

I was amazed last Sunday to see a full major road work repair programme in the Martindales area. Sunday is a day for over-time, and one would hardly think that this is a partisan approach, in as much as that area is represented by an Opposition Member. I would have felt very relieved if that was perhaps in the Bush Hall area, but looking at the Development Plan, Mr. Chairman, the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party says on page 12:

> "The Party has as its philosophy that the entire physical environment of Barbados must be uplifted and those facilities which have been virtually unchanged for up to 100 years modernised."

None is so blind as those who cannot see the development which has taken place in areas such as the Spring Garden Road. I do not want to dwell on that, but that is a living testimony of the Government's commitment to the creation of new concepts in road improvement for the people of Barbados. When you look at what is taking place right now in the Wildey area, I say that again the Barbados Labour Party has again created new vistas for the people of Barbados. The broad countryside of St. George, St. Thomas and St. Joseph, and perhaps some parts of St. Peter, can be viewed as you rise the little incline leaving the CBC complex, and that is a massive improvement. The people of Bush Hall cannot personally say they have benefited from it, but overall the people of Barbados have greater access, in shorter time, when travelling on these new developments as they crisscross Barbados.

The Barbados Labour Party is committed, according to the manifesto, to give the people of Roebuck Street a rehabilitation plan. The manifesto says the B.L.P. has successfully undertaken the Fontabelle/Cheapside rehabilitation scheme. It was completed in 1982, and that again is living testimony that the Party has performed. Yet the people of Hanschell Land cannot say they have benefited from that, and that is in the constituency which the last Member who just spoke represents.

The Party is further committed, Mr. Chairman, to implementing a similar plan for Roebuck Street, which would include the creation of the Country Road/Roebuck Street/Halls Road section in an inner ring road linking Bay Street to Westbury Road. Roebuck Street, according to the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, will be provided with improved pavements, derelict properties will, if necessary, be acquired by the Government for re-

habilitation, and use will be made of the swampy lands adjoining the Weymouth site. Also, the Greenfields and Nelson Street areas will be redeveloped to provide better housing for the residents. The same principles of area development which have so beautified the Halls Road/ Martindales Road junction will be applied to other streets in the City. All of these plans are in the pipeline.

I believe that all Barbadians can feel proud with the development in the St. Peter area, the by-pass road leading to Heywoods. That was formerly swamp land; it is now there for everybody to enjoy. But what the people have got to understand is that all the development and all the changes that we so cherish cannot be implemented at one and the same time. It takes time to make a loaf of bread, and it will take time for the physical development of Barbados to attain the height in every district that we would like to see. I believe that the Government has the total beautification of the island at heart, and in the process of time this will be undertaken.

Another area under this Head of Ministry of Transport and Works which I would want to speak on is in relation to guard walls. I would like to bring to the notice of the Minister and the Government the need to do something to reconstruct the wall at Codrington House, which is posing a threat. Certain parts of the wall are bulging, and are likely to fall into the road. Codrington House is now the headquarters for the National Conservation Commission, and that wall is as high as 20 feet. It poses a danger to pedestrians as well as motorists travelling the Codrington/Bow Road area, and I am afraid that, with high winds or torrential rains, there is every likelihood that that wall could crash into the road.

I would like to address this next matter directly to the Minister. I have been knocking the door of the Ministry of Transport, and I have been calling on the technical officers there for some assistance – perhaps I may be a little parochial right now – but I think there is a need to get the area around the Stadium cleaned up. There is constant flooding from the slightest amount of rainfall. There is a need for street lighting in that area. There is also the pressing problems of muggings and some rapes in that area in so far as poor lighting is concerned. I have spoken to the Minister, I have spoken to the officers in that Ministry, and I would like to see some action. I am tired of waiting.
12.15 p.m.

Equally so, there is rampant flooding in the Skeetes Road/Jackman area. Under the administration of the Democratic Labour Party, the former representative for the St. Michael North East constituency had a difficult time trying to get through to the Minister or Ministers of the day to have that Skeetes Road area fixed. I have also been promised that something will be done. I am tired of waiting. I would find it very difficult to go back to the people in 1986 and ask for any political consideration unless that road can be done. They need a little patronage just like anyone else.

I believe, like the last Member who spoke, that there is indeed a need to look at some of these tenantry roads. Hanschell Land has for years been without a representative in Parliament, but now they have one, and they need to have something done. I do not believe that that area should just remain in that state because he is not on our side. The people have to pay taxes just like anybody else. Some consideration should indeed be given to these tenantry areas.

Mr. Chairman, this Head which we are discussing encompasses some areas of the Port which I should like to discuss. I do not know if I have time. If I do not have time, I would rather give way to someone else, and perhaps discuss it later.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have five minutes more.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT: Five minutes. I believe I should be able to cover some ground in this area.

The Port Department is undertaking a massive development of some of the infrastructure needed to facilitate the number of cruise liners which call here. It is expected that about $2½ million will be spent on the redevelopment of such areas as, in particular, the Customs Hall, the development of which has not kept pace with the airport.

We have a situation where at the Bridgetown Port, on an average day, there are two thousand people passing through, and there are only two toilets to accommodate the number of people. These toilets are also used by the Customs and Immigration staff. I therefore think that the Government will have to seriously consider giving immediate assistance in getting that programme off the ground.

There are complaints coming in from owners of the vessels that ports within the Caribbean are doing nothing to assist them with their marketing strategies. They have named the particular ports, and Barbados has fallen into that ambit of criticism from the various cruise liners.

We should like to see within the Port a bigger parking area for the taxis and other vehicles which come in there. Perhaps there is room for a little post office. Perhaps there is room for a banking facility. There is also a need for more telephones. People want to make overseas calls immediately after they reach Barbados, but there is just one pay phone within that area.

I believe we are embarking on a very important programme of trying to get more cruise line business here. We are thinking of registering vessels in Barbados under the Shipping Incentives Act, so that a successful fly-cruise operation, on a seven days Caribbean cruise, could begin and end here in Barbados. We are trying to do what Puerto Rico and Miami have successfully done, that is, to register vessels, have passengers fly across the United States and from Europe into Miami, and then take cruises through the Caribbean. I think that Barbados' geographical position makes it ideally suited for such cruises, and if we, under the Shipping Incentives Act, can encourage owners to register vessels here, I believe Barbados can become a very serious economic hub for such operations.

Later this year, there is at least one vessel coming to commence such an operation, but involving the unheard of Caribbean states, like Tobago, Grenada, St. Vincent and St. Lucia; perhaps it will go as far as Guadeloupe. These states are not used in the marketing programmes of the larger companies. A Caribbean cruise is usually thought of as going to the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Miami and, to a lesser extent, Barbados and Venezuela. But the cream of the Caribbean is often by-passed, and we are looking very seriously at offering incentives to attract more of the cruise vessels here.

Another vital thing is the Port costs. These are prohibitive as far as some of these operators are concerned. Sometimes on weekends the full Port cost can be $7 000, and it can cost a vessel some $2 000 for the water, with the overtime charge alone in excess of $600 to $700, just for eight hours. This is a deterrent to people who want to bring their vessels here because the costs are cheaper in other Caribbean countries.

One good thing which would come out of this operation, if this proposal comes to light, is the fact that ships would be looking to take a full supply of fish from Barbados when they arrive here. They will be also looking for concessions such as boutiques and will be looking to buy foodstuffs, vegetables and fruit.

The operation, generally, is looking very healthy, but I want the Minister of Transport and Works to be aware of the development that is needed to assist these fly-cruise operators which want to originate their tours in the Bridgetown Port.

I will speak later on some aspects of the Transport Board, because Members do not seem to understand the very serious implications of transport. It is not a question of bus fares or people getting laid off. Transport is more complex than that, and I should like to address that a little later.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I believe the honourable Minister wishes to respond to some of the queries that have been made.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, honourable Members have been raising a series of questions, but they have not been too anxious to hear any responses to those questions.

When I made my first intervention early this morning, I was in the process of outlining, for the benefit of the honourable Member for St. Philip South, that the programme as carried out by the Ministry of Transport and Works is not a discriminatory one. With respect to road works, in looking through my schedule of roads completed, I see here that a new road was completed at Woodbourne, St. Philip, during the Financial Year at a total cost of $176 676.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South, who has been wisely keeping quite in all .....

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Although the road he just mentioned is in Woodbourne, St. Philip, that road is not in the constituency of St. Philip South. It is in the constituency of Christ Church East Central.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Nonsense! On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member does not know the boundaries of Christ Church East Central. No part of Woodbourne is in Christ Church East Central.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I am sorry, Sir. Christ Church East.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the honourable Minister please continue.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I hope the honourable Member for St. Philip South is not of the impression that I go around measuring constituencies' boundaries to see where to put a road.

I see in this report a road in Woodbourne, St. Philip. I see here road works in Odle Road for $126 000. I happer to know Odle Road. That is St. Michael North West. (Mr. L A. Weekes) the honourable Member for St. Michael North West is there reading. He is keeping quiet, because he understands that we do not carry out a discriminatory programme in the Ministry of Transport and Works. I do not know whose constituency Six Roads is in, but there are road works in Six Roads Housing Area.

12.25 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: In order to get that road fixed, I had to pretend that it

belong to that honourable gentleman over there. They fixed it believing that it belong to the honourable gentleman over there. Ask him if that is not true!

Mr. A. TRUSS: On a point of order, Sir:. The honourable Member for St. Michael West has misrepresented the truth. I know nothing of any road in his constituency. I know nothing of any transaction between the Ministry of Transport and Works. I cannot say that he is telling lies, but I can say that he is guilty of a terminological inexactitude.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am having no talk. I will have the honourable Minister. I am having no points of order on points of order.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Minister has given way, Sir. I want to hear about the roads in Christ Church West.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member please take your seat. The honourable Minister please continue. You are making it very difficult for the Hansard Reporters.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I believe it is necessary to respond to these charges. The honourable Member for St. Michael West clearly misled, or attempted to mislead, this Parliament by suggesting that we are,.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Minister has given way, Sir. On a point of explanation: The honourable Minister said that I attempted to mislead Parliament, and I want to restate that part of my speech so he will understand. I said that if a Minister said to me that he does not intend to fix any roads in my constituency, that that is immoral. That is not misleading Parliament. His colleagues agreed with me. I will not say what has been said to me, because I do not think that the Record should so show. I hope he does not force me to put that in the Record.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The honourable Member for St. Michael West must know by now that I am not afraid of anything he will have to say. I have stood up to you on two consecutive occasions. I will stand up a third time and, if you are wrong, a fourth, and, if you are wrong, a fifth.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South is keeping very quiet; he is reading his newspaper. Why? Because we have Bayville, $279 117 in road construction.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: He says that he is not complaining, and that seat is not held by the Barbados Labour Party. What we have to recognise is that it is not possible for us to do every single road at the time it is needed. You heard the honourable Member for St. Michael North East (Mr. L. L. Sisnett) say here today that he will not be patient for much longer; he wants roads done in Skeetes Road/Jackmans area and in other parts of his constituency. He is a member of this side, but he is complaining! The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) is threatening me because he feels that I am neglecting him – and the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) is only waiting! What we are attempting to demonstrate is that we do roads on a national basis. But the people of West Central have waited patiently for years. They have never had anything of any consequence done for them. The people in Scotts Terrace were in a washed-out condition, disgraceful by anybody's standards. As a worthy representative, would the honourable Member expect me to leave them in darkness? No!

I want to deal with a few other matters that we have to consider. It has been charged in this Chamber that the Transport Levy Fund is a cowboy fund without any controls by which to administer it. The Transport Levy Board was set up by Statute in 1982, with the following people constituting the Board: Mr. Andrew Gaskin is Chairman, a highly respected engineer who, I believe, works at the Mobil Refinery. He was appointed by my predecessor in office and, because I have great regard for the qualities of the man and I am satisfied with his contribution and work, he continues to be Chairman of the Transport Levy Board. The Chief Technical Director of the Ministry of Transport and Works, Mr. Cedric Archer, is a member of the Board. The present General Manager of the Transport Board, Mr. Hugh Hill, is a member of that Board. A person representing the Ministry of Finance and Planning, nominated by the Director of Finance and Planning, is a member of the Board. There is a member nominated by the Barbados Workers Union, Mr. Bobby Morris, and secretarial services are provided by the Ministry of Transport and Works.

This Board is charged with the responsibility of preparing accounts. The auditors are Messrs. Cooper and Lybrand, and within the next couple of weeks, the audited financial statements will be presented and laid in Parliament. The Auditor General is responsible for overseeing the accounts as well. This is not a situation where a Board can do what it feels like doing. The Minister of Transport and Works authorises expenditures through the fund, and he has certain responsibilities to the Minister responsible for Finance and to this Parliament.

The buses that were purchased have all been purchased through the Transport Levy Fund, and there has

been an arrangement through which the Transport Levy Board has been able to make certain arrangements with the Barbados National Bank for the temporary underwriting of the purchase of buses. All of the procedures through which we have gone have been examined by the various competent authorities; they have pronounced upon these matters and have satisfied themselves that the procedures through which these buses were ordered and purchased are in keeping with the standards and regulations set up for the Board.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Including the loan.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: There is no secret to it. The Transport Board gets supplier's credit from the Barbados National Bank for the purchase of the buses. That is no secret.
12.35 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member is misleading the House by suggesting that there is some arrangement. I have said, and I am saying, that it is a five year loan agreement. He must address his mind to that. It is a five year loan agreement that was unauthorised!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There has been no breach of the Standing Orders. Please take your seat.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: And I am suggesting, Sir, that that five year loan agreement or whatever it is has been duly authorised by the competent persons who oversee Government's finances and are responsible for making sure that these things are carried out in the way they should be carried out. There is no mystery to it, and I am not going to feel any responsibility to stand here and make any big, long palaver about this matter. These transactions have been carried out according to the regulations, and that is that.

Now, Sir, I would like to address my mind for the moment to a few matters that have to do with other questions that were asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael West. Yesterday evening he mentioned the matter of layoffs when he was talking about the lack of policy in the programme of the Transport Board.

The honourable Member for St. Andrew, who first assumed the portfolio of the Ministry of Communications and Works for this Government, started the systematic replacement of the fleet, using a programme that was scheduled to be turning over on a yearly basis.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is the Leyland man).

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I do not care who he is. There is nothing illegal about driving Leylands in Barbados. Leylands have served the Barbados transport service almost from its inception. When I was a young boy, the Transport Board had Leylands, Tiger Cubs and Mercedes Benz buses.

The Minister responsible for Transport and Works during the 1976–81 Government, the honourable Member for St. Andrew, started a systematic programme that was designed to cure the ills of the Transport Board. He instituted a programme which was laudable then, and continues to be laudable now. It was he who introduced the programme of the universal take over, if you will call it that, of the transport service in Barbados, so that we could have a Government operated transport service.

He was succeeded by the honourable Member for St. Joseph, and the honourable Member for St. Joseph continued the systematic programme of buses. He introduced the Mercedes Benz buses again.

The honourable Member for St. Michael East, while he was Minister, continued with the systematic replacement of transportation, identified a number of problems that the Transport Board was experiencing at the time, and addressed his mind to a solution of those problems.

I have come and I am continuing the policy. My strategy, my methodology, may be different; the policy remains unchanged. That policy is to bring to the public of Barbados the best possible transport service, supported by all of the technical and managerial components that go together to make an efficient transport service.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Not according to what he said in here).

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Never mind what he said in here, I am talking about the present Minister of Transport and Works dealing with a coherent policy that has been initiated by the Barbados Labour Party.

It takes time for all these initiatives that have been taken to climax into a faultless programme. We will never have faultless programmes, but when you look at it, any thinking individual will recognise immediately that a great deal has happened at the Transport Board.

We have approximately 212 units operating now. Of those 212 units, some 111 are new buses, purchased within the last two years. Right now we have 30 chassis in Barbados, and 20 additional pre-fabricated units are coming here, which will give us a total bus complement of approximately 262. By the time those get here, some of the struggling Seddons and old Bedfords will give up the ghost, so the system is not going to be settled with 50 new buses. Next year, again we will have to buy more

buses in order to get the fleet at a stabilised level, to be able to give the service we want to give.

Sir, I want you to listen to what we have been able to accomplish. In April to September 1982, we spent $644 000 in overtime. Between April to September 1983, that figure was down to $378 000; cut in half. Between September 1983 and February 1984, the figure has been reduced to $178 000, and by now and the end of June we will have eliminated almost completely that curse of overtime, which has been adding $2 million to the subsidies of the Transport Board every year.

The deficit at the Transport Board up to the year ending December 1982 was $15 401 000. At the end of December, 1983 the deficit was $15 032 000. From April 1983 to March 1984 the accumulated deficit will be $11 874 895. That is the true picture.
12.45 p.m.

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

Mr. A. TRUSS: Sir, yesterday I wore a dark suit and you failed to recognize me about three or four times. Today, I am wearing a bright suit and this is the fourth time I have gotten up, so I am very happy to have finally caught your eye. Tomorrow, I will have to wear a white suit to make sure I catch your eye.

This matter of Transportation and Works, under Head 42, has been a political football since 1954. For the last 30 years, the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party have been passing this back and forth, and I think the time has come when we must seriously look at this situation, as serious legislators, and take it out of the ambit of the political arena and deal with it sensibly.

In 1976, in the Estimates which were laid by the Democratic Labour Party, House of Assembly Debates, 2nd Session, 1971–76, the honourable Ramases Caddle, who was the then Minister responsible for Transport and Works, at page 6677, admitted:

> "There is a lot more to be said and a lot more to be done for the transport system."

He goes on to say:

> "There are ptoblems at the workshop. There are problems in administration and public relations, many problems which will have to be resolved and which will have to be discussed in this Chamber at some other time."

He goes on further to talk about the real problems, that every time you solve one problem in the Transport Board, another problem pops its head up.

During the Democratic Labour Party's regime, there was the Richardson's Report and there was the King's Report. The brother of the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central was responsible for the latter report. There have been at least three different studies in the last 30 years on transportation in this country, and yet, every year, you get that side criticizing us – and while we were over there, we were criticizing them.

The real truth is that we must begin to run the Transport Board like a business and take it out of the aegis of the political arena because we are in this situation today, and let us be factual, to a large extent, as a result of the political decisions made by the political directorate in the dying days of the Democratic Labour Party Administration in 1976, when they took it upon themselves, on the eve of a General Election, to reduce bus fares to twenty-five cents for political propaganda purposes.

In 1976 bus fares were sixty-five cents and seventy-five cents. If you went to Ellerton, St. George, you paid sixty-five cents – and you had to travel in a board bus, a chattel bus, not a real real bus like we have today. Today, in 1984, nine years later, with inflation and everything else, the cost of transportation in this country is seventy-five cents, ten cents more in nine years, so I believe that these criticisms must stop.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) said yesterday that the best Minister of Transport and Works that this Government ever had was the honourable Member for St. Michael East (Dr. D. G. Blackman). Today he said he was the worst Minister because he fixed every road in his constituency.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am sure you will give away.

Mr. A. TRUSS: I am not giving way.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I am sure you will give way on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Come back on that. I cannot take a point of order now, not under those circumstances.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What did I say? I said I am sure he will give way on a point of order. He is accusing me of something which is not quite true. I just want to set the Record straight. I did not say anything....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has not given way.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member has spoken at least four times on this Head. He will have another chance. I have not yet had the opportunity to speak for more than five minutes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two honourable Members cannot have discussion on the floor of the House like this. I am the Chairman.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, the point I was making is that even though in 1954 we faced serious problems, and perhaps political decisions were made – because a labour party Government concerned with the social aspects of the society, and concerned about the fact that the people who live in the country districts should have been able to find work in the City of Bridgetown, at no less a disincentive as the people who live in Christ Church and St. Michael, had to take the cost of transportation into consideration – the Democratic Labour Party went even further by bringing transport into the political arena, by reducing the bus fares to twenty-five cents – a ridiculous figure in 1976!

In 1976, the Transport Board had 130 buses and employed 695 persons. Today, the Transport Board has 260 buses, although only 212 of them operate from time to time, and they employ approximately 1 700 people.

We had a situation where the Rocklyn Bus Company and the Elite Bus Company were the private concessionaires in this country. And under the concessionaire system, under the Democratic Labour Party regime, when they reduced the price of bus fares to twenty-five cents, they paid the Rocklyn and Elite a subsidy based on the difference between the twenty-five cents and the sixty-five cents – and all the Elite and the Rocklyn had to do was to produce the stubs! I will not accuse anyone of dishonesty, but all the people at the Rocklyn and Elite bus companies had to do was to produce stubs to the Government. That cost the DLP Government $350 000 a month. They did not even have to put a bus on the road. They could keep the buses at home, tear off the stubs, produce the stubs to the Government and get paid.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: There is a Standing Order concerning the relevance and content of an honourable Member's speech. What the honourable Member is saying is grossly inaccurate. Having been a Minister in that Government, I am aware that that was impossible. It was not merely a question of presenting stubs; they had to present detailed information to the Public Utilities Board.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member will have an opportunity to make his contribution.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Sir, I said that I would not cast aspersions on any one's character. I am just talking about the shoddy way in which the Democratic Labour Party dealt with transport.

I had the honour of serving on the Transport Board when we came into power on September 2, 1976, and I am aware of the problems. I am not accusing him or anyone else. I am just saying that no proper system was established, and that the political directorate, in order to win the elections in 1976, reduced the bus fares to twenty-five cents.

Barbados is well served by the transportation system, which has to deal with a population of 250 000 and between 250 000 and 300 000 tourists a year. The Transport Board has 212 operating units out of a maximum of 260. There are also 170 minibuses and 1 200 maxi, mini and regular taxis, but with the scarce resources available to Government, we are trying to ensure that, at least, people are moved to and from work by the Transport Board.

For several years, not only now, but, as I said, from 1954, for 30 years, make no mistake about it, the financial structure of the Transport Board has always been incorrect, because there has always been a Government subsidy. The revenue from the transport system over the years has been barely enough to cover current revenue, that is, wages. Ordinary wages, the cost of salaries, were all that could be covered by the revenue raised by the Transport Board.

What about replacement of the rolling stock, maintenance of the buildings and the expansion of certain places? When we came into power, when the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) was made the Minister, Weymouth was the only depot we had. He created Haggatts, Mangrove and Speightstown, and improved Weymouth.

We had a situation in 1976 where a bus had to drive from Weymouth at 5 o'clock to St. Philip in order to bring the people from St. Philip to Bridgetown at 6 o'clock. The bus would go up there empty. We do not have that problem anymore.
12.55 p.m.

There was a situation in 1976 that when a bus had a flat tyre – as I saw myself – an empty bus had to carry a tyre to the full bus. They did not even have a land rover or a vehicle to do that job. The honourable Member for St. Andrew will bear me out on this.

I am not passing the buck, Mr. Chairman, I am not blaming the Democratic Labour Party. But let us not be dishonest. Let not the Democratic Labour Party come into this Honourable Chamber and point an accusing finger at this Government, as though when we came into power these problems suddenly appeared. They have existed for 30 years. The Democratic Labour Party had 15 years and could not correct them. We have had only eight years, and we are trying to correct them, but it may take another 15 years before we achieve that goal.

The real problem is that we have been caught in an inflationary spiral cost in relation to the operational cost of the Transport Board. A combination of certain factors have been responsible for the deficits over the years. The Minister, who has just sat down, explained the sum of money spent over the years, and for this year, 1984–85, my understanding is that the deficit will be in the vicinity of $13 million.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 2 p.m. today.

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

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

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. 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. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED

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

When the sitting was suspended, the honourable Member for St. Michael Central was addressing the Chair. The honourable Member may continue.

Mr. A. TRUSS: The point I was making when we took the break was that there is a comparative difference between the 1976 and 1984 programmes of the Transport Board. For example, in 1976, there was a total of 19 million travelling passengers. That has grown to some 45 million, so you can see right away the tremendous amount of problems which have to be dealt with at the Transport Board.

Bus building has now become a major industry. In 1976, total bus construction in this country was only eight buses, and that was the high point during 1971–76. Last year, we built 120 buses. Acme Manufacturing is doing a very good job in bus building. I believe 50 buses have been allocated to them this year alone. We are creating employment, so when one hears the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) talking about laying off people at the Transport Board, I really must say that one has to look at both sides of the coin.

I should like to refer briefly to the Economic Report of Barbados laid in this Chamber in 1976. One must remember that during the period 1975–76, the Democratic Labour Party was in power. On page 1, the summary says that "data derived from the continuous household sample survey suggests that the unemployment rate fell from 22.5 per cent at the end of 1975 to a little over 15 per cent at the end of 1976." So last year was not the first time that Barbados experienced unemployment of 15 per cent. It is perhaps the highest it has been since the Barbados Labour Party came to power, but, nevertheless, I do not believe that Members on that side should be pointing an accusing finger at the Members on this side in relation to unemployment.

In relation to bus breakdowns, in 1976, when a bus broke down in St. Philip, St. Andrew or St. Joseph, that bus had to be towed back to Weymouth. Today, as a result of the depots at Haggatts, Mangrove and Speightstown, these cover, generally speaking, any bus maintenance problem that has to be attended to, and does eliminate a lot of the costly expenditure that we were subjected to, in and before, 1976.

We all know that rolling stock is a problem. We cannot blame the Democratic Labour Party, as I have said before, and I do not see why the Democratic Labour Party should try to blame the Barbados Labour Party. There is a problem, and the problem is based on the fact that Barbados has very few, if any, natural resources at all. We are always proud of the fact that the only natural resource we have is the people. So with the scarce limited financial resources which we have at our disposal from year to year, one cannot expect the Transport Board will get all.

The life of a bus is basically 20 years – if you buy a good bus, not the Seddon. The Seddons, bought by the Democratic Labour Party, had a life span of three years. They ate up tyres and gave you four miles to the gallon.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order. I wonder if the Minister, I call him Minister because he is the Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Finance, will admit that the Barbados Labour Party bought 27 Seddons in 1977. He is saying that we bought the Seddons. You bought 27 in 1977!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member knows that is not a point of order.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Let me reiterate my position. I have said before that I am not blaming the Democratic Labour Party, but if they bought Seddons and did not examine the performance of the Seddon bus, that is bad management and planning.

When we came into power, the Seddons were already on order, and there is continuity in Government, whether the same Government takes over or another Government takes over, as the honourable Member for St. Michael South knows. We had to take over the sewerage plant. He signed the agreement – and guaranteed increase water rates. We were committed to that. By the same token, if the Government changes in 1991 or 2001, or whenever, the Democratic Labour Party will have to take over certain basic things to which this Government, the Barbados Labour Party Government, had agreed.

As I said, the average good bus has a life span of 20 years. The Barbados Labour Party has systematically, since 1976, gone about changing the rolling stock, getting rid of the old buses and trying to replace them. We are still saddled with the 100 Seddons, and this is why out of the 260 buses, we can only have 212 on the road at any one given point in time.

It is not a question of apportioning blame. What I feel, and the honourable Member for St. Michael South agrees with me, is that the time has come for us to stop making the Transport Board a political football. We have serious problems in the Transport Board, and if you have a social conscience, if as a socialist Government you feel that the people in St. Lucy, St. Andrew, St. Philip and St. Joseph are entitled to work in the city of Bridgetown at no less a disincentive than the people of St. Michael, then there is a need for some subsidy. That is one approach. The other approach, of course, is to take transport entirely out of the ambit of the political arena, place it under the Public Utilities Board, and let them set a fair price so that the public of Barbados can pay a fair price, because we are only charging the public of Barbados ten cents more than was charged in 1976. Bus fares are 75 cents today and they were 65 cents in 1976. Let us be realistic. Even as a member of the Government, my personal view is that the bus fares must show a realistic balance between what the cost of running a bus service is and what the actual payment for a bus ride is.

2.05 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Wind up, please.

Mr. A. TRUSS: There are political decisions which have to be made. We made some political decisions, too. The Democratic Labour Party made a political decision to reduce the bus fare to twenty-five cents. We made a political decision to have old people, over the age of sixty-five, travel on the bus free. We made a political decision to subsidize children travelling on the buses. These are political decisions. You cannot have your cake and eat it too.

So let us not get involved in this whole business of blaming one another and having the whole Transport Board issue pushed from the DLP to the BLP and then back to the DLP. There are serious problems, and I believe that, as legislators, we should sit here and try to solve the problems. I believe the Transport Board's problems can be solved if a business approach is applied to them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. A. TRUSS: I will take my seat, Mr. Chairman, but there are other items which I should like to deal with later.

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

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS (St. James South): Mr. Chairman, I want to make one or two brief comments on something the last speaker said. It would seem to me that his whole speech was concentrated on making the Transport Board an economic proposition, and that, indeed, is contrary to the policy which this Government tried to follow.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Which Government?)

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: This Party, when it was in power.

Mr. A. TRUSS: On a point of elucidation, Sir.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: I will give way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member has given way.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Thank you, Sir, I said that that was a different approach. I did not want to give the impression that that was this Government's policy. Our policy on transport is quite clear.

Perhaps the Democratic Labour Party's policy is identical to ours. You cannot accuse us of subsidizing the transport system if that is your own policy. If you are going to advocate a different policy, that is a different matter. I am not advocating a different policy. I was just saying that you could have a different approach. But that is not the policy of the Barbados Labour Party.

If you have a policy of subsidy, therefore it stands to reason that the taxpayers of Barbados will always have to subsidize the Transport Board. Let us stop playing with it like a political football and realize that this is the policy of the Barbados Labour Party; or if it is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party, then that is the policy.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir. That is the impression I got from what he said. I do not think he can quarrel with my impression of what he said.

He contends that we had a higher bus fare in 1976, sixty-five cents. That is not entirely true. It was ten cents at certain points and the highest fare was sixty-five cents. So that is only half of the coin. You must give the whole picture. As a matter of fact, he said it was reduced to twenty-five cents. That is also true. But it is also increased to twenty-five cents, so one can say that there was an increase and there was a decrease.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You cannot speak with your hand in your pocket.)

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: It is not true to say that we had the children's fare at $1.00 per week. I believe that they have increased it to $3.00 per week.

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: People do not speak with their hand in their pocket.)

Aside.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: As I was saying, these are misleading statements, which need to be corrected. He said that they subsidize school children's fares. In some respects, they increased them to 300 per cent, and only on the basis of a parent showing that he or she has three children going to school, does the parent get a rebate. It does not even necessarily apply to the child who is paying the highest bus fare – the rebates is in respect of the oldest child. In other words, if there are two children going to school and they are catching two separate buses, the fare would have to be greater than for a child catching one bus. But if the child catching one bus is the oldest child, then that child gets the rebate. To my mind, it should be left to the parent to decide which child gets the refund.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is the most obnoxious thing that I have ever heard in here!)

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: The honourable Member said that the old people are travelling free on the buses. That is not entirely true either. When the Democratic Labour Party formed the Government of this country, they travelled free throughout the day. Nowadays, they can only travel free outside of the rush hours. As far as I understand it, that is when old people do not want to travel anyhow, because that is when the sun is hottest, between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. So that is no point.

It seems to me, from what the last speaker said, that he was correct in saying that Government sees the Transport Board as an economic proposition rather than a social proposition or a combination of the two. That is why we have increased bus fares for children and we have increased the bus fares for old people, increased in the sense that they cannot travel at any time on the buses without paying. If they are travelling during rush periods, they have to pay. If you were paying nothing before and now you have to pay something, there must be an increase.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: They have a choice.)

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: But the choice is no choice. Old people, because of their sicknesses, when they are going to the hospital, for example, are not going to go at 10.00 o'clock. Their appointments are usually at 9.00 o'clock, so, in many cases, they have to leave home before 6.00 o'clock. And it is unfair to impress upon the old people of this country that you are doing them a favour. It is no favour at all. You have taken away what they had before.

I want to come to another point in respect of the Ministry of Transport and Works, and this is in relation to Subheads 6 – 8. These deal with drainage, lighting, sidewalks and so on, and in particular, I want to look at the Spring Garden Road Highway, because this has given a number of people great cause for concern.

The drainage situation there is such that if the rain sets up, you cannot go around the roundabout. The number of cars that stall there when that area floods is amazing.

I believe that a number of people have complained about the lighting on the Spring Garden Road. If my recollection serves me right, that road has been opened more than a year ago. At night, it is difficult to drive on the Spring Garden Highway. For some unknown reason, the number of accidents occurring on the Spring Garden Road are out of context with what happens in the whole country. As a matter of fact, I think that, to date, about five people have been killed on the Spring Garden Highway. The last fatal accident occurred a couple of weeks ago at the Black Rock intersection with the roundabout. It seems to me that some serious investigation has to be carried out on that Spring Garden Highway. I do not know about speeds, but, for sure, there is a need for lighting and signs on the road.

Some time ago I asked about the problem with the markings on the road. At night they do not reflect. It

could be that the markings on the road need to be painted with a very reflective paint so that people could see where they are going.

One of the problems is that we in Barbados are accustomed to sidewalks which are slightly raised above the ground – I believe they are called shoulders now. The shoulders are becoming narrower and narrower as the grass encroaches upon the shoulders. This means that sometimes, because there is no reflection from the paint and because what was once a rather broad shoulder has now become narrower, people are forced to walk closer and closer to the road. It might be a good thing if you are able to get reflective paint, and also if you are to maintain the grass on the sides.

I believe that it was Cumberbatch's Nursery that handed over the verges to the Ministry. It is only two days ago that the roundabout was properly taken care of since it was handed over. I am not quite sure what the problem is, the Minister would know what is wrong. Ever so often a few people try to cut the grass, but it has now encroached on the shoulders of the road, and soon from now people will be walking in the road.
2.15 p.m.

The next problem relates to Pile Bay and the Spring Garden Highway. As I understand it, you are not supposed to use bicycles or push carts on that road. There are a number of fishermen living in Pile Bay – it is a fishing village – who have to cross the highway to get to the sea. I am not quite sure how those who have bicycles are going to get onto Brighton Road, or the Spring Garden Road itself, unless they put the bicycle on their shoulders. If they own boats and they carry their engines in push carts, I do not know how they are supposed to get to the beach either. These are problems which should be looked into, because they are serious problems and you are affecting the lives of people.

I can appreciate that we want to have high-speed highways in Barbados, but we have to look at the routes these highways take. As far as I can recollect, highways in developed countries pass through wooded areas and only through villages where people have cars and can transport themselves. It is never a situation such as this one with Pile Bay. Therefore, you have to give careful consideration as to how you affect people's lives.

The need for sidewalk lighting is not only relevant to the Spring Garden Highway. It has always struck me as strange that on the Sandy Lane Road, between the Telephone Exchange and what we call Cemetery Road, there are no lights whatsoever. I believe you will appreciate that there are a number of people who walk that road nightly – I know the Minister passes there on his way home and sees the number of people who walk that road – and it is very, very dark and dangerous at night. From time to time, not only visitors to the island but people who work at the hotels and homes have asked me why it is that they cannot get lighting on the Sandy Lane Road. My explanation is that possibly there is some covenant which prevents it. But the Government can put lights in for the people because Government does not necessarily have to obey or adhere to the covenant. Lighting in that area is necessary for the protection of this community, and I am asking that, too, to be taken into consideration.

I speak now more specifically of the constituency which I represent. As I understand it, there should be lighting in Paradise Heights. There is also no lighting in the second phase of Haynesville, which was handed over more than three years ago. I believe the Minister could use his goods offices, to impress upon National Housing the need for urgent lighting in Haynesville and in Paradise Heights, and in the area next to University Drive as you are going up Cave Hill. These are matters which people are concerned about.

I turn now to a comment which the last speaker made on the question to repairs of buses. He tried to give the impression that during the Democratic Labour Party's period of office, it was very difficult to get buses repaired. I wonder if he is aware of the fact that there is now no maintenance crew on hand on Saturdays and Sundays, as I understand it, and if there is a breakdown on Saturdays and Sundays, you have got to wait until Monday to get the bus fixed. It is not a question of changing tyres; it is a question of a bus on the road until Monday morning. You have cut back overtime and it is creating severe problems for the travelling public in this country on Saturdays and Sundays. There is nobody to repair the buses on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Transport Board is a 24-hours service, or nearly a 24-hours service, and, therefore, the highest degree of maintenance can be carried out on Saturdays and Sundays, when there are fewer buses in operation. I would not suggest it, but if you want to take a rest period, it would be better to take it in the week, because there are more buses available for repair at the weekend than there are during the week. That is also another matter which you should look at carefully.

It would seem to me, as far as management of the Transport Board is concerned, that you have gone full circle. You started with a manager, who was fired, but you have recently rehired the same manager – and it would appear that efficiency might now return to the Transport Board. It means that at least you are seeing that there was some wisdom in the policy of this Party as far as transportation is concerned.

You spoke of the number of buses which you have on the road. I believe you said that there are 220, of which 111 are new, which gives the impression that there are more buses now than there were before, I would like you to give consideration to putting more buses on the road for school children, because there are a number of school children, for example, who live in Prospect, who go to St. James Secondary, and who get to school at 10.45 a.m., having stood on the road from 7 a.m. It is amazing! When I pass that road sometimes on my way to work, I have to take children to school.

I have asked them why they are so late. It was my belief that they would come out for the bus at 8.45 a.m. to get to school at 9.00 a.m. But too many children have explained to me that they are on the road from 7 a.m. but they cannot get a bus. I really am not quite sure if the scheduling for Highway 1 is correct, because if you travel along Highway 1 any time from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m., you will see children, who go to Coleridge and Parry, St. James Secondary, Alexandra and St. Lucy Secondary, on the road.

Asides

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: It is not for me to call the headmasters. It is for you to investigate why they are there. If you will investigate, you will see that they are not trying to play truant.

Mr. Chairman, I will come back to this subject later.

Asides

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, I just want to raise three points. The first one concerns a programme which, I note, is missing from this Estimates – the *"Rural Electrification Programme"*. Within recent times, we have been making a desperate effort to electrify Barbados. There are a few people who are at a distinct disadvantage because of where they are living. In an effort to provide housing for themselves, some people had to put their houses in the back, off the beaten track in the only places they can get. The Light and Power Company has been asking these people to pay $900 for a pole in order to get electricity – and then turn around and pay Light and Power. That is wrong.

2.25 p.m.

Not too long ago, I saw in the newspapers that the Light and Power Company said that the poles cost them between two and three hundred dollars, but they are charging these people $900 for a single pole if they are in places outside 110 yards. So if the Minister needs to interject a small sum in the Estimates to complete the electrification of Barbados, all of us would be thankful, and we would vote for it so that the people who do not have electricity would be able to get it.

I am not going to speak very much on roads, but the Minister must know that the introduction of the levy has made it very difficult for representatives, because, quite rightly, the people are contending, unlike before when their taxes went into the Consolidated Fund and you could not earmark any amount of money for travelling, that they are now paying a transport levy. We are saying that if the people are paying a transport levy, that levy should be allocated fairly to all 27 constituencies, according to their contributions. I am not dealing with the allocation of the rest in the vote. What you do with that is the Minister's business, although I believe that he should share it around. My contention, however, is that those people I represent and who have been paying their part of the levy, have not got a commensurate proportion of works done, in keeping with the purpose of the levy they pay.

There is a road called Gaskins Road. The Minister is very clever in Gaskins. The only road he has done in St. Philip North is Gaskins, and all he has done in Gaskins is to use three drums of colas, two loads of grit, and a roller over it for two mornings. That is my allocation from the levy. There are places, like Vineyard, which I have taken his officers to see. You cannot get into Vineyard at all if it rains. There are no street lights in Vineyard. Vineyard is the only part of St. Philip where if it rains people cannot get home, unless they take off their shoes and walk through the canes. In 1984, that is not fair to anybody in Barbados, and I am demanding that Vineyard be done next year.

When the honourable Member for St. Andrew spoke, he quite rightly said that people speak of housing and transport in very emotive terms, but I believe that we have the right. If you check from 1976 till now, you will discover that the Transport Board has had subsidies of $55.9 million, plus the bus fares which, let us say, is another $55 million – a total of $110 million. Is it asking too much to expect a reasonable bus service in 1984?

I heard the Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite) talk this morning about all the buses he is getting. He is very fortunate. At the Mangrove Depot today, you needed 52 buses to service that sector. They had 36 buses to serve routes 10, 12, 16, 7, 10A, 19, 9, 26, 9A and 7A – routes in St. Philip North and South, St. John, part of St. George, part of Christ Church. Is it fair to expect that if you are only sending about 60 per cent of the buses that the people could be satisfied?

If you do a cost benefit analysis of the loss in productivity due to people not getting to work, you will see that you are being penny wise and pound foolish

by not providing the necessary transport for the people to get to work and produce. The problem of the lack of maintenance on weekends has already been drawn to your attention. I can always tell when it is a Monday morning, because every bus stop from my home to town is crowded with people. Any of us who drive through the country can tell when it is a Monday morning. The shortsightedness of preventing a few mechanics from working over the weekends is going to cost the productivity of Barbados thousands of man hours that people have to pay for, including the Government and private enterprise, to save a few dollars in maintenance crew. As a management man, you would know that is not right, and I expect that you will do something about it.

Let us take the 32 buses they have coming to St. Philip. I believe that you should send your more efficient units on the far routes. This is the only system I know where you take the most inefficient units and send them on the far routes, therefore causing your overhead operational cost to be higher, and you take the efficient units and put them around town to run at 60 per cent passenger capacity. What kind of system are you operating? No wonder my colleague is beginning to believe that there is something wrong with the distribution of buses and the allocation of the roadworks in Barbados. I have to associate myself with my colleague.

I am not going to hold up this Head any longer, but we must be emotive on this side because of the type of plans you have been putting through and the pressures we have been getting from our constituents on these two matters. I expect that the Minister at some time very, very shortly, will at least let us see a little improvement in the areas of which we have been speaking.

Thank you very much.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): I will be very brief, Mr. Chairman. What people do not understand is that this current Minister is a very sensible and perceptive Minister. Like myself, he used to drive a luxury car, a Toyota Crown, and the first thing he did when he was made Minister of Transport and Works was to get rid of the Toyota Crown and get a land rover, so that when he travels on the roads for which he is responsible and drops in the pot holes, it would not make any difference to him – he is in a land rover! So he is bound to be insensitive to the problems facing the country.

I just want to clear up a few points. The Member for St. Michael Central (Mr. A. Truss) gave the impression that under the Democratic Labour Party, there were no vehicles at the Transport Board to go to help in the repair of the buses which broke down through mechanical failure or problems with tyres. That is simply not true, because the fleet at that time included land rovers. There was nothing called a "wrecker", but they had land rovers to go to vehicles which were broken down. I do not think we have to make these kinds of cheap points.

The problem is – and I have a very unorthodox approach to this particular problem – I do not believe in any single fare operation for the Transport Board. I do not think the economics of it works out, and we have had enough experience of it to see that it is not giving the Transport Board the necessary revenue to meet its on-going operations. That is one area that has to be looked at.

Another area is that the Government seems to be incapable of running a nationalised transport service. I do not know if it is too big for them to run, or if the whole operation presents insurmountable problems. I will take the approach of the calypsonian Chalkdust, who spoke to the Trinidadian Government. He told them; "If you cannot run the country, call in to Kirpalini". I will give you some advice now. If you cannot run the Transport Board, call in Ishi Kessaram, or somebody like that, to run it.

2.35 p.m.

But the problems in the Transport Board are symptomatic of the problems in all of the statutory boards. I am still waiting for somebody to get up in here and tell us how much the statutory corporations, the ones which are supposed to operate on commercial lines, are costing this Government. Most of them, if not all of them, are running at a very heavy loss, and we seem to be going on and on as though there is some bank into which we can put our hands, mount up losses, and then dig into the pockets of the taxpayers, either by direct loans or by giving guarantees for loans, in order to bail out these operations which are supposed to run at a profit.

It is clear that there is need for a complete examination of all of the statutory corporations in this country, because all of them that are supposed to be running as commercial operations are running in an uncommercial way; and there may be many reasons. At the Transport Board itself, we have had a massive turnover of staff at all levels – at ministerial level, the level of general manager, traffic manager, personnel manager, accountant, parts; you just name them! The management consultant, expert in management, will tell us that one of the indicators of dissatisfaction in any operation is a high turnover of staff, and if you are going to use that indicator, the Transport Board is a massive candidate for being inefficient.

There is also this. If you look at it, and I am going from facts, the operating subsidy given to the Transport Board, in 1975/76 was just over $1 million. Under this Government, that subsidy climbed to some $14 million or $15 million, and that is an indication of what has been

happening. In addition, therefore, to the problems that you are having, the taxpayers of this country are being called upon more and more to subsidize a service which the inefficiencies with the management and ministerial policy decisions have failed to come to grips with.

There is no point blaming any past Administration. I am not even going to blame you. This is a national problem, which calls for a national solution, and we have got to approach it in that particular way. Do not come with all the cosmetics and the pieces of plasters that you are going to apply, because it calls for a radical solution.

I have one final observation. I am contending that, in this country, without buying one additional bus, there are enough vehicles to move the people of Barbados from home to work, and to recreation spots. The question is, are we prepared to look at our lifestyles and our operating procedures and come to grips with this problem, and stop taking up hard-won revenue, which we have to earn both locally and by foreign exchange, to purchase equipment, rolling stock, spare parts, tyres, which we have to import? I submit that if we do an examination, we will find that there are enough vehicles, of all kinds, to move the people of Barbados to their places of work and recreation at peak hours, where there is the heaviest demand.

Can we sit down and think about these problems?

Thank you.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I need to address my mind again to some of the questions that have been raised, because as they ask these questions, it gives me the opportunity to enunciate the programme of the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Last night, about 8.35 p.m., the honourable Member for St. Philip South stood on his feet and he said: "The work force at the Transport Board has become a parasitic work force." I am shocked! I am aghast to hear an honourable Member, who is seeking to give us solutions to the problems of the Transport Board, stand up and, as one of his lead statements, call all of the members of the Transport Board parasites!

Our view is not that the work force at the Transport Board is a parasitic work force. It is 1 700 people, sensitive, caring humans, some of them misguided enough to vote for the honourable Member for St. Philip South, stupid enough, in spite of the fact that he describes them as parasites; to walk through wind and rain to go and vote for that honourable Member, whose only statement of substance that he could manage, in a whole twelve-minute contribution, was that they were nothing more than parasites!

We on this side are sensitive about the staff of the Transport Board and, as a measure of our caring and our sensitivity, we have instituted, for the first time in the history of the transport service, an industrial safety programme, which has as its centre point a modern medical unit staffed by a trained nurse. That was not available at the Transport Board before.

I will give full credit to the honourable Member for St. Michael East (Dr. D. G. Blackman) for making that significant contribution to the Transport Board just before his portfolio was changed. It was my responsibility to inaugurate it, but he was the man who presided over the setting up of a nursing station, headed by a qualified nurse, to look after the needs, not of parasites, but, as a matter of fact, to make sure that the comfort and safety of the workers at the Transport Board was guaranteed.

As a further measure of our sensitivity and concern in making sure that the workers of the Transport Board are in a position to make their contribution to the transport service, we have a training programme, conducted at the Polytechnic, which members are required to attend. They are lectured by competent people, from various disciplines in this community, on matters relating to industrial relations, safety in the work place, and on matters relating to the way in which they are supposed to deal with the public. We expect that the out-turn of that training will be that we will have the kind of staff which we have been aiming for, a staff that will not be describable by the honourable Member as parasites, but a staff that will be able to be identified by all those who use the transport service as persons who are caring and sensitive and solicitous in so far as the needs of the travelling public are concerned.

2.45 p.m.

The Transport Board has never had an effective security service, and only a few weeks ago we heard of an armed robbery at the depot in St. Philip. Within the last year, this Government has gone ahead and instituted a programme of training security guards to man the various stations, and to provide security services at the Transport Board right around the clock. These guards are trained with the help of the Royal Barbados Police Force, and that is another significant contribution. This is what we mean by identifying as significant all of the important management components that are essential to providing a complete transport service.

The honourable Member for St. James South (Mr. N. K. Simmons) talked about old age pensioners competing for scarce seats. The honourable Member was complaining that we do not now have a programme where old age pensioners who ride the buses can ride at their own discretion whenever they feel like. This Government has taken the rational decision that it is not in the best

interest of those old age pensioners to be competing with people who are going to work and school children at rush hour for limited transport space. Anybody who sees the buses at rush hours will know that they all move full; and because they move full, old age pensioners travel at risk. They will get squeezed, they may even get injured, and we feel that their business, which is not business that has to be conducted at 8 o'clock in the morning, can be conducted at a time when there is not that kind of stiff competition to board the buses.

He mentioned that we have a programme that has resulted in the buses breaking down and being left alongside the road until next morning. I returned to Barbados in 1973, and even under the Democratic Labour Party, I cannot recall seeing a bus sleeping by the road. I state this categorically: no Transport Board bus has ever had to sleep alongside the road during the time of this Government. We have skeleton maintenance crews whose duty it is to make sure that no bus stays out. When a bus breaks down, they go and bring it in. In as much as the weekend service does not require the same number of buses as you would have during the week time, it is possible to operate on a reduced complement of buses during the week-end, and that is precisely what we do. We reduce the complement of buses, and therefore there ought not to be any difficulty with buses being ready for Monday morning duty.

The honourable Member joined with the honourable Member for St. Philip South in condemning us for what they call discriminatory practices. I am not sure if he associated himself with the parasitic statement, too.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of order....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable Minister give way?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: No, Sir, I am not giving way. I am not talking to him. I am talking with the honourable Member for St. Philip North. Does the honourable Member for St. Philip North want to be associated with the parasitic statement, too?

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of elucidation....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Minister has indicated that he does not intend to give way.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I am not giving way, I want to deal with this business of buses being operated on a discriminatory basis.

I went into the bus stand one evening not too long ago and I saw a mass of people waiting to board buses. It turned out to be a large group of people waiting to board a bus for Bayfield, St. Philip – I believe that this is in St. Philip North. I asked the people in the Transport Board what was the reason why this large mass of people were waiting, and they told me that they did not have any bus to send to Bayfield. While they were saying that to me, they had about seven Mercedes buses parked on the fringe, and I asked them what they were doing with them, and they told me those buses are not supposed to go to Bayfield.

The honourable Member would be pleased, I am sure, to learn that I, myself, directed that those buses which were parked there should carry the people to Bayfield. Four bus loads of people were dispatched to Bayfield, St. Philip. It is nothing to do with the Government's policy. I took it upon myself to direct on the spot that those people be sent home.

I have repeatedly given instructions that any bus that is owned by the Transport Board must be made available for duty to carry people wherever they live in Barbados. I am not interested in running a partisan bus service. This is not a political matter. This is a matter of dispatching people during rush hours to home and getting them to work in the morning time; and whatever bus is available to do that duty, regardless of what the road conditions might be, I have directed that these buses must be deployed as needed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member has been mistakenly misleading himself and the House. It was the honourable Member for St. Philip ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the honourable Member tell me which Standing Order is being breached?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It was not a breach of a Standing Order, but it was the honourable Member for St. Philip North that went down and gave the order for the people to be dispatched to St. Philip.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The honourable Member for St. Philip North complained that he was not getting any consideration in so far as road improvement is concerned. If he travels St. Philip, he will know that, started just a matter of weeks ago, was a major road rehabilitation project in St. Philip.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: It is not important? People have been killed on that stretch of road, and you are complaining about people getting injured on roads that are dangerous. That is not in St. Michael, it is in St. Philip, and it is going to cost well in excess of $1 million to straighten out that neck of road.

2.55 p.m.

(Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: You all changed the boundaries and put it in St. Philip.)

Asides.

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

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: This is the airport to Rockhall Project. Is Rockhall in Christ Church?

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: You cannot elucidate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable Minister give way? The honourable Minister has indicated he is not going to give way.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The honourable Member for St. Philip South elucidates many things that he has said. Anything he says is going to put him in further darkness. So it is nonsensical for him to talk about elucidation!

He wants me to go and do a road down in Train Road. Train Road has about seven or eight houses.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He was born out there. His grandmother has land out there. I used to go out there and pick dunks.)

(*Aside:* That is the road that leads to Foursquare.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Asides.

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

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The honourable Member for St. Michael South made a useful intervention when he said that he did not believe that it was necessary for us to buy any more buses because there are enough vehicles in Barbados now to transport people back and forth. The Transport Board's fleet is supplemented by a cadre of mini buses. We have a programme that makes it possible for minibuses to operate as a complimentary service to the Transport Board service.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute more, because of the interruptions.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: There is no transportation system in the world, private or public, that is able to deal with rush hour traffic satisfactorily, and we will always see a bulge and what appears to be a shortage of units at rush hour time. What we need to measure, Sir, is how efficiently the units that we have are deployed over a period of time, starting, as you heard this morning, as early as 4.15 a.m. If people would catch the buses as they are laid on, there would not be the kind of bulge which you see at 7.00 or 8.00 o'clock in the morning. But people want to wait until the very last minute to catch that one bus that would get them to work at 7.50 a.m.; and if they miss it, they go in and complain about the Transport Board. It is not the Transport Board, because the Transport Board has put on early buses which all of them should make an effort to take. But nobody wants to go early – everybody wants to wait until the last minute.

I shall make another intervention, Sir.

Mr. A. TRUSS and Dr. R. C. HAYNES rose.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, Sir,.....

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, yesterday evening, I tried to address this debate at the level of policy in relation to the Transport Board. Much has been said in relation to the gross mismanagement, largely due to political interference, at the Transport Board. There can be no doubt that in a situation where you have had three Ministers in a very short space of time running the Transport Board, the overall policy must reflect the defects in thinking and the bankruptcy in outlook of the entire Cabinet. I believe that the most damning speech made on this Head was made by my good friend, the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite). He spoke well of the conceptual position of the Government when it decided to take over the private transport fleet, when he was Minister, in fulfillment of a manifesto pledge, which was clearly not properly thought out as to what was the significance of what they were doing.

I am going to tell you the broad problems which you have. You have taken over a socio-economic service with an open-ended demand which you have not carefully projected. That is the first thing.

Certain remarks made at this point by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. HAYNES) were order to be expunged from the Record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not quarrelling with the present Minister of Transport and Works, because he

might just stop the work in Bridge Road and not do the work in Carrington Village. I am quarrelling with the entire Cabinet. I am quarrelling with the policy decisions that have resulted in this situation.

No one could quarrel with the basic conception of utilizing the entire public transport system in Barbados. It is a question of implementation of policy and failing to understand certain fundamentals. I have already charged that you have nationalised a service that is elastic in demand.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Just like medicine.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Just like medicine. That is right. So the demands will rise, and you will not be able to make proper projections as to what your capital and current outlays would be over the years.

You took over a rolling stock and sought to superimpose on that a capital investment that has created innumerable problems – parts that do not match, workshop space that is insufficient, mechanics trained to handle one category of buses and who cannot handle another category of buses. All sorts of problems were created in that takeover.

What is the purpose of nationalising a transport service? It is to meet the social and economic needs of the community.

Have they been met? The answer has got to be "no". You have not met the social nor economic needs of the community. There are social inconveniences today as a consequence of what you have done in relation to the Transport Board. These are facts which you have to face. This is an Estimates debate, and it is important to examine your policy errors, and unless you look at your policy errors, you will never find a solution to the problem. So the first thing that went wrong relates to the question of elasticity of demand in relation to a socio-economic service that you were taking over.

Secondly, if you were to look and see exactly what has happened, you would see that, although you have not met the social and economic goals of the public transport system, you have created an environment in which a private sector can provide a public transport service far more efficiently than you are providing it. There is something wrong when you have created that environment.

Do you know what your goal was? Your goal was to nationalise and take over the total public transport service. But you have knocked out one set of private sector people and taken in another set, and you have created the environment in which they can function and your own public sector service is not functioning.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I must remind the honourable Member that his speech so far has nothing to do with the Estimates before this House.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am dealing with the subsidy, Sir. That subsidy will go down only if there is a proper policy position in relation to the Transport Board.
3.05 p.m.

I am sure that, today, you have four times the revenue from bus fares that obtained before you nationalised transport. Bus fares have gone up by 300 per cent and, on top of that, there must be at least another 25 per cent intake from the other utilization of vehicles. So your total revenue from bus fares must have gone up by over 400 per cent. Your input from subsidies has totalled over $50 million since you nationalised the service. You have had the benefit now of two and a half years of Transport Levy, approximately $30 million. Yet, of all that, you are unable to meet the needs of the people of Barbados, and you have failed to address yourselves to the fact that there is a fundamental flaw in your approach to public transport. You have to deal with the problem.

The Deputy Prime Minister knows perfectly well what is the problem at the Transport Board. I know that he has not got into this debate so far because he clearly understands that what has happened has been a monumental waste of public funds. He cannot get up and put on record a position that is substantially different from mine. I challenge him to get up and not talk around the subject, but to deal with what he considers to be the elements relevant to a reduction of subsidy, and see whether or not, conceptually he would differ from what I am saying.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Anyhow, you are empty headed!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you addressing the Chair?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Yes, Sir, but I did not say that you were empty headed. I would never say a thing like that.

How are we going to get around this problem? The question now is to find a solution. I would suggest that, in the present circumstances, Government must recognize and define the role of the minibuses. There are a lot of people who have a significant capital investment in that area, and their role in the public transport system has to be clearly

defined. The second step Government has to take is to define clearly what are their goals, within the context of the existing private and public capital outlay for public transport in Barbados. Government must look carefully at how it can properly meet its capital and current expenditures, with the least burden to the community as a whole, and see what social elements of its programme it can accommodate within that context.

I cannot tell you on the floor of the House what size of fleet would be necessary for that. We know exactly what would be the broad considerations in relation to the fleet, such as standardization. I do not want to go into the kind of lesson that I gave last night on the question of how to deal with these things.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: But you did not speak last night. I spoke before you, if you spoke at all.

I have tried hard on the floor of this House not only to criticise Government's policy, but to be constructive. I am begging you, in the interest of the taxpayers of this country, to sit down and look and see what is the total investment in the private sector in public transport today, look and see what is your investment, and look and see how you can programme this over a number of years so that, at the least cost to the people of this country, they can obtain the maximum benefits. When you have done that, you will have the macro-data with which you can establish a proper management framework. Then, you have to determine the type and quality of management that you need in order to execute those policy decisions.

That has not been done. What has been done is that you have been fooling around year after year, grafting on concept after concept. You never started out with any fundamental overall management position in relation to the changed policy in relation to the Transport Board. That is why you are in this kind of trouble. You have thrown away about $100 million behind the Transport Board since you have come into power.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Sir, there must be an end to this debate. The more we listen to the honourable Members on the other side, the more we are convinced that their object today is not to make any meaningful contribution in this area. Their object is to obstruct and to filibuster. The honourable Members have been constantly repeating the same thing all the time. The Democratic Labour Party has no policy in relation to this matter. The last speaker has just spoken, and all he did was regurgitate the same thing that all of them have been saying all the time.

Our position is very clear. The Government has a plan of action for bringing to all sectors of the community, access to a transport service partially provided by the Government in the form of.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. The honourable Member is repeating what has been said by about ten Members on the other side. He has said nothing new. Please ask him to take his seat.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It will take 300 buses to implement our programme. So far 225 have been bought since this Government came into power. We have finally got rid of the incubus of the Seddons around the Transport Board's neck. As I understand it, 50 more buses are on order, 30 to be constructed here and 20 more to come in ready-built. We still need another 50, because by the time those 50 come into operation, you will lose some of the existing ones. That goes for the fleet. It is no wonder that we are able so far, with the new, reliable equipment to have extended the service from 4:00 a.m. until 1 or 2 o'clock the following morning.

In 1976, when I first became Minister of Trade, there used to be complaints from industrialists about the late time people used to arrive at work. By the time we reached the point when we wanted to introduce a second shift as a part of Government's policy, the position was clear that before you could amend the law, you needed to improve the hours that the buses would run. It was during the time of the present Deputy Speaker, as Minister of Transport, that the hours of the buses were extended. So, slowly but surely, the plan is coming into operation. The Transport Levy was introduced to provide an off-budget method of financing this plan. Barbados is not unique in this, because honourable Members will remember that the Great London Council in England introduced one. The only distinction between theirs and ours was that, theirs being a local authority, the House of Lords struck it down on the ground that they needed special parliamentary provision to implement it. Well, we have the parliamentary provision.

We heard from the honourable Members from St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite) and St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) and others about the range of the extention of the bus service. It is not true to say that the Government is lacking a plan.

3.15 p.m.

As far as the minibuses are concerned, as is well known, just as in your air transportation, it is necessary

to have a supplementary service at certain peak times, so it is in your ground transportation and they only provide a supplementary service. There were 182. I do not believe that there are 182 now.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: He says there are 193. If that is the case, over the course of time the difference in numbers has not been significant, but look at the difference in the quality. Anybody who was living in Barbados in 1976 and who is living in Barbados now, who is truthful and honest – not like the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, you have to get somebody else – can see the difference.

Let me look at the minibuses in the DLP time and the minibuses in our time. Ours are a joy to behold. The old broken down, decrepit looking buses, truck conversions with all of the undesirable features of a bigger vehicle, that were in existence were licensed by them. One of the most important contributions the Deputy Speaker has made to transport in Barbados is the introduction of those provisions in the law relating to the rigid enforcement of standards for public service vehicles.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: He has gone to higher and better things. I would like to be fired like that. I would be better off financially.

Public service vehicles have been painted in specific colours. A number of things have been done. We only have to be a little more patient now, stop the exaggeration, look at the cost structure.

I am amazed when I hear some of the things said by the other side about cutting out overtime on weekends. I say that it is a national scandal that you have to pay overtime to certain sections of the work force in a service industry in Barbados and not in all. If the doctors got overtime for working on weekends, Barbados would be bankrupt, because, right now, with them getting normal pay, they are trying their best to drive Barbados into bankruptcy.

Monday to Sunday should be regarded as normal working time in certain services, with rotating shifts. The Minister and the Board are perfectly correct in pursuing this concept. The 40–hour week must be a 40–hour week in certain service industries in Barbados which services extend from Monday to Sunday. The cowardice of the Democratic Labour Party in not facing up to this issue has cost Barbados thousands of dollars. We will not be pushed back into that position by the honourable Member for St. James South.

Barbadians must recognise that if we have to have our cost structure in a competitive position with the rest of the world, we have to look at some of the restrictive practices that we have. If on Saturday and Sunday you have more time for maintenance of the buses, let us have more mechanics then, but less on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. There should not be any overtime for that; it is unfair and unreasonable. You do not pay the doctors overtime for operating on Saturdays and Sundays, and you know they are the most unreasonable people you can find.

We have to face up to the fact that the number of employees per bus at present is too high. Sooner or later, we will also have to face up to the fact that the electronic revolution that has taken place means that there are new methods of collecting money. Banks have had to face up to it. Nowadays, all over the world, you have automatic telling machines. Soon you will have a plastic card that will have a number of journeys on it, you will be able to push it in as soon as you get into the bus, it will register, and you will have hostesses looking on.

(Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: You do not even have them on Caribbean Airways).

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Have you never seen that you can go to some airports in the world and buy a ticket by just dialling a number?

(Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: In which bus service?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: In Sweden and in other countries that have experimented with it. I am not saying that the electronic revolution has reached the stage where they have perfected a system, but I am saying that it is possible, with the advances that have made in relation to the cash machines for banks, with the ones that have been made in the supermarkets, where you can pass a card under a laser reader and it can register stock and various things, that the same thing is happening in relation to bus fare collections. We are in the intermediate stage. We have the fare boxes, and I want the Minister to tell us what improvement there has been, if any, since they introduced fare boxes.

You cannot run away from these problems. The Labour Party is willing to face them. We will redeploy people. Obviously if we are introducing electronic machines, instead of mechanics you will need other people to repair the very machines, but they have to be trained. Why are we running away from the fact that there has got to be a retraining exercise? Barbados had 23 or more sugar factories at one stage. We only have six now. The sugar industry used to employ 22 000 at one stage, it employs 6 000 or 7 000 now. All communities go through these changes in employment. The honourable Member was a

civil servant at one stage – now he is a politician and a teacher. These things are happening. Why must we be afraid of these matters?

I know the day will come when we will have sea transport between Oistin and Bridgetown, just as we will have it between Speightstown and Bridgetown. One of our problems is that we cannot introduce all these things at the same time, because they impact on employment, and they also impact on Barbadians' well known resistance to change. Barbadians hate change, but if you are strong enough to introduce changes, they are the first to see the potential and the benefits of the change, and we will be doing that.

I do not mind what they are saying over there, because none of them has come forward with any alternative policy to the one we are implementing. All they are looking forward to is making a lot of noise, scoring a lot of cheap political points and, as usual, concocting a lot of things that are not in existence. We are not afraid of them. The changes will continue and they will be implemented, and the public will appreciate and benefit from the fact that we have moved the transportation system in Barbados from what it was to what it is today – a joy to behold, but not yet perfect.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if you will recall, in my presentation last night I mentioned that as long as the Ministers in the Barbados Labour Party Government continue to take in their own people as soon as they are shifted into a particular Ministry, persons in high office, in management positions.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order: Are you implying that Mr. Hill is someone who concerns us? I see him as a person on whom we can depend for some expertise.

3.25 p.m.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I will continue. As long as this sort of situation continues, where respective Ministers move in with their own management people,.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The Manager of the Transport Board is all management people,.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what does the honourable Member rise.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: As soon as a Minister moves in, he moves in with his particular man.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, as long as this situation continues – the Honourable Minister for Housing has complained about square pegs in round holes at Housing, and that is why he had to move in with his persons.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, let the honourable Member try to make a point.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman.....

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

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: To put the Record straight.

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

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: The House is not to be misled, and I want the honourable Member to sit. I rise on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot have two honourable Members on their feet. Your point of order.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Philip South is imputing dishonest motives to me. I would like him to explain to this Honourable House, and to you, Sir, what he means. I wish he could take good advice from the honourable Member who is now sitting immediately to his right. He is like some happy Jack. One only has to wind him up.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I will continue, Mr. Chairman. As long as Ministers go into respective Ministries and move the people in management positions and put in new people, the question of the work force being parasitic will continue. I will explain it, as I explained it last night.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I believe we had that explanation last night.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I am in a management position, let us say, at Housing, and I believe that my capabilities allow me to function well in Housing, but a new Minister is brought into Housing and I am moved to another Ministry, where I personally believe that I cannot function as well in that Ministry as I was functioning in Housing, it means that I can never be too sure how long I am going to remain in the new position. I am saying that if you keep shifting, shifting, the work force in parasitic, and the honourable Member knows who I mean when I say that it is a parasitic work force.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I have the highest respect for a man by the name of .....

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir.

I object to him referring to anybody in the Ministry of Transport and Works as parasitic, and that includes a man called Mr. Collymore, and, in Housing, Mr. Redman, the manager. You see what a clown you are now?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I will go on. The honourable Minister of Transport said in here today that the new major road that he is building, just to the east of the airport, is in St. Philip. I would like to explain to this Honourable House that the sign that says, "Entering the parish of St. Philip" is beyond the road he is building. If he is saying that because of the electoral changes that took place just before the last elections, Charnocks has now become part of St. Philip South, I would understand, but it is not true to say that the road which you are building is in St. Philip. It has now become part of the St. Philip South constituency, and that is not what you said.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I will go on, Mr. Chairman. The honourable Member for St. Michael South East said in his presentation today that with the purchase of new buses, there will be increased employment. I personally do not believe this is so, and I will explain why.

At the Mangrove depot in St. Philip, the last time – two Saturdays ago – I counted the buses which could not move, there were 41, and my information is that at the Transport Board .....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: They cannot be moved at all?

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: They cannot be moved unless you pull them. My information is that at the Transport Board at Roebuck Street, there are twice or three times that number. You keep hearing about Seddons in a way which would make you believe that the Democratic Labour Party was the only Party that purchased Seddons. This Party purchased 27 Seddons in 1977/78.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, it is not true!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. I would like to hear from the honourable Member.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: What the honourable Member for St. Philip South said is not correct. Any money paid out by the Government was to honour any debt created by the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I will go on, Mr. Chairman. As I said, there were 41 buses at Mangrove Depot which could not be moved. My information is that at the Transport Board at Roebuck Street there are thrice that number that cannot be moved. If you are purchasing buses, to replace those buses, you will not need more staff, and there is this. Three weeks ago, a Saturday morning, I came to town on a bus, and the bus driver told me that that was his second day's work for the week. So you are trying to give the impression that because you are bringing in new buses, you are going to create new employment, when the bus drivers that you have are only working two days a week and the buses that you are bringing in are to replace old ones.

To deal with Crane Beach, I have said on more than one occasion that the problem at Crane Beach is an erosion problem. I quoted the subhead, and I do not believe that honourable Members should say that I am asking for roads on Crane Beach. It is not a question of roads. All I am saying is that I put in a Parliamentary Question and it was just not allowed – and without any reason. If they had told me that the economic situation did not allow them to fix Crane Beach at that moment, I would have understood.
3.35 p.m.

On the question of Foul Bay and lights, I never asked the honourable Minister to put lights at Foul Bay. What I said was that because of the situation at Crane Bay, the fellows with boats now have to come in at Foul Bay, and Foul Bay has no lights. So, whoever is the relevant authority, I am asking if you will look into the situation and put in a light or two at Foul Bay. It is as simple as that.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) mentioned that we over here are expecting the Barbados Labour Party Government to do all sorts of things in nine years. Mr. Chairman, a Government is in power for five years and then it comes back for another five. This Government needs one more year according to the honourable member, because he said nine years, so by his reasoning it needs one more year to have two terms. Ten years in power is almost a life time, and he needs ten years to carry out changes at the Transport Board!

I have said, and I will say it again, that the problems at the Transport Board cannot be settled by just sitting down in here, nor can they be settled by the Transport Levy. There have to be fundamental changes

at the Transport Board. In fact, the problems will never be settled by the Barbados Labour Party.

I began yesterday by saying that there were square pegs in round holes in certain management positions, and at other Boards in Barbados as well, and I will repeat it forever. You mentioned that it already exists in housing, so you know what I am saying is true.

Let me talk about roads again, because there are two roads in St. Philip about which persons have written to the Ministry of Transport and Works for over two years. People have gone out of their way to write letters and have them signed by 40, 50 and 60 people who are affected by these roads, and they have been solemnly promised by the Ministry of Transport and Works that when the next road building programme begins, those roads will be done. This was over two years now, so when I come in here and complain, it is nothing political. If persons complain to me that if the rain falls they cannot go to church on Sunday mornings because the roads are that bad, then something needs to be done.

In respect of the Train Road, the Minister admitted to me that he passed through the Train Road, and he said "Blackie, it is bad in truth!" He told me that about two months ago. So I am not coming in here with any standpipe politics, neither am I trying to grandstand. When I am speaking, I speak of what is affecting the people in St. Philip. It is a simple as that.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to delay the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, as he is rearing to go, but I wish to move the debate away from transport to some of the other problems to which his Ministry caters. It is obvious that the Ministry is a very important Ministry as seen by each one of us in this House, particularly those of us who may be seeking re-election, because several of our constituents obviously yearn for good roads, good lights, adequate drainage and proper transport and it is for these reasons that it is called the bread and butter Ministry. Any Minister who holds this portfolio has a serious responsibility placed on him. It is obvious that he cannot answer all of the needs simultaneously, and it is obvious that it is difficult for every politician to explain to constituents that we cannot, within a limited period of time, fix all of the numerous problems which have been surfacing.

I wish to focus particularly, however, on the question of drainage. I believe that we have tried to widen our roads by fitting in the natural drainage alongside the road, and whilst this has probably eased the problem with small roads, it has in itself created serious problems for letting off the storm water from Barbados. In addition, of course, there are some areas in which flooding has increased because of the nature of the development which has taken place in these areas, and natural water courses which have been altered by the development which has taken place in Barbados.

The last significant study on drainage was done in 1970. Despite that study, I do not think that any serious attempt has been made to deal with the flow of runoff water all across this island. In my own constituency, the problem is in the nature of an avalanche, it is not merely a trickle, and I hope the Minister takes note. There are serious drainage problems in the whole of the Clapham area, even more serious problems in the low lying area aback of the Pavilion Court, particularly in Second Avenue, Harts Gap; indeed extremely serious problems created by the new development in Rockley Meadows. I understand from the Town Planner that although there has been compliance with town planning requirements, it is obvious that at the time, the opinion given by the technical people from Transport and Works had not fully adverted to the problems of draining which would have occurred in this area.

There are equally serious problems in parts of Forde Road, and certainly in that area of Worthing which runs from the Worthing Road back to the Graeme Hall swamp.

I have used the examples in my constituency not for the purpose of parish pumping, as it is called, but to illustrate that in a small land mass, the areas of flooding and drainage have now become unmanageable. I believe the Minister needs to give urgent consideration to an overall study of the drainage problems of Barbados, and what is more, not merely do a study – because sometimes we do studies and we do not follow them up, as has happened here with the 1970 study – but to take urgent corrective measures to put right what is a very serious problem indeed.

I do not know if the Government is aware of the way drains, built under leave rights, which the Crown has running through certain seaside lands in Hastings, have deteriorated, and I will express an interest here. In a property belonging to my late mother's estate, the Crown has a major drain draining from all the way up in Brittons Hill right through the Garrison and that area into the sea off Palm Beach. Never in any of my years have I seen any Crown servant pay any regard to what is happening in that area. It is obvious that the problem is serious, and it calls for a serious approach and urgent corrective measures.

3.45 p.m.

I believe that Christ Church West is probably one of the worst areas for these problems. Mr. Chairman, I see that you want me to put in a plea for St. George North. At least St. George North is still an agricultural area and some of the water goes to grow the crops. In mine, some of it does not even run off into the sea. Most of it goes into people's homes in the low lying

areas, whether it be September Square, 8th Avenue, Harts Gap, or one of the other greatly affected areas.

I have repeatedly written to the Ministry on these problems. I have had rather polite replies from the very polite people who are in charge of the administration of the Ministry, but I have not had any positive action. I do not know what more I can do, other than raising the money myself from somewhere and attending to the problem. But I do not think it is a problem we can continually ignore.

I recognize that, in the Development Plan for the next quinquennial, the Government has said it is paying attention to the problem, and among the areas highlighted are the areas of Bayville, New Orleans and Clapham. But I think that not enough attention has been paid to the other areas, certainly the worst areas of Christ Church West.

The second point that I should like to refer to is one that has been touched on by almost every person who has spoken, and that is the question of tenantry roads. I have already, earlier in the debate, given my wholehearted support to the far-sightedness on the part of the Government in instituting the Transport Levy. I believe that those levy funds, as I also said, are being properly used. I wish to underscore, however, that there must be an overall plan published annually for the benefit of the public of Barbados, not politicians vying for office, showing the development plan which Government has for tenantry roads.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Thank you. I support it.)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Since I left the Government, I do not know of one tenantry road that has been fixed in Christ Church West. There is a misconception that Christ Church West is a middle class area existing in Blue Waters, Hastings, Marine Gardens and Balmoral Gap.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I must be the only unbeatable Member on this side. You had better keep quiet.

Mr. Chairman, as an aside, I will tell the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) that even with the limited majority he has, and even if there is a 50 per cent swing against the Government, I would be returned. He need not talk. That is because of my constant endeavour to rectify the problems in my constituency, and not only at election time. I do my work in a serious manner and I study all the problems. If you go through certain areas in Christ Church West – and I suppose this too is symptomatic of your constituency, Mr. Chairman – you will find a lot of dirt tracks. You will find this phenomenon in Dayrells Road. Honourable Members may be surprised to know that between Worthing View Road, Amity Lodge Road and Rendezvous Road, there is an area that, up to 1980, had no lights at all. I managed to get some lights installed there. There are no roads. There is no main water main going through that area. In fact, the basic utilities like latrines and so on are missing.

This constituency was looked after by Mr. Peter Morgan for many years, the honourable Sir Edwy Talma for several and, for a short period, by the honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Mr. Maurice Ward. I am sure that in their time they, too, have made representation.

I think it is unfair to the 1 400 to 1 500 people who live in this area that they should have these substandard conditions continuing. I am raising these problems, because people believe that these problems do not exist in a constituency like mine. Before Bonnett's was attended to, a survey showed that 54 per cent to 60 per cent of the people living in Bonnett's did not have running water, latrines, electricity and so on, and that area is pretty close to all of the different rich areas.

I want the Ministry officials to know that, in due course, I am going to publish every letter I have written, and every reply I have received, in a booklet and circulate it to the 8 900 people who are in the constituency of Christ Church West, the biggest constituency among the twenty-seven constituencies in this island. It is not good enough that I must be continually writing and begging for basic amenities for people who are paying more Transport Levy and more tax than the constituents of many of the Members in here, including the constituents of the honourable Minister.

I hear the Opposition talking, but the Government has probably spent millions of dollars in the constituency of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. I go to the parish of St. John and see the constituency of the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition being finished. That same man, who was Minister of Finance, once told his Minister of Communications and Works not to repair 5th Avenue Harts Gap because he was not going to give the money – he knew they had voted for me, and I suppose he did not like the Grant family up there – and that nothing would be done until he said so. I say these things to remind the honourable Member for St. Michael West that partisan politics did not begin now – they began a long time. It is a wrong attitude, and that is why I have always opposed it, and that is why I speak very strongly on these matters on the floor of this House.

When the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) was Minister of Communications and Works, he dealt very fairly with everybody. Every-

body got a share, and, at times, he did not look after himself. But I know that when "Sleepy" Smith was Minister of Communications and Works, he looked for everything to fix up in his constituency. As he said, if he did not fix it, he would not have won by the seven or seventeen votes that he won by.

(Asides: A pack of cigarettes.)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Maybe he bought a pack of cigarettes or something of the sort. Maybe he was right, to some extent. But you cannot ignore the genuine needs of other areas.

I told the Minister I was going to raise this matter publicly on the floor of the House. I am doing this not as a criticism of the Government, since I think that Government is showing more and more interest in these matters, but to bring home forcibly to him, to his technical directors and whoever sets the list of priorities, that I am not going to ease up writing the Ministry, raising questions in the House and making a rumpus about the failure of Government to address the problems in that part of Christ Church, especially when I see that in one constituency, more money is being spent than I believe ought to be spent in that period of time, whilst other persons are ignored.

You have to spread the funds more widely if the Transport Levy is to be fairly distributed. Christ Church West has a stronger case than the constituencies of most of the other Members who have spoken in here. There are more of us paying tax, if you analyse it, and more of us paying the levy, and we are getting less of the pie. I am dissatisfied with that.

I want the Minister's officials to know about my problems. They are here, Sir. They are very nice and very polite. They, not the Minister, answered my letters. But I want more than an answering letter saying that my letter is acknowledged. Why can the barbergreen machine not come up just into Christ Church West and we must just get white marl, but I can see it in Martindales Road working on a Sunday, when Martindales Road was not in a bad state of repair? Why must my old ladies suffer, and be unable to get out?

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I do not want to hear anything from the honourable Member for St. Michael West about MPs, because I think that when he was in power, he should have attended to the Eagle Hall tenantry. I am not putting a plea for him on this occasion. I know he wants me to plea for him.

He was afraid to stand up to his Prime Minister. But my Prime Minister understands plain talk – he gives it and he encourages all of us to speak our minds. Yesterday when I characterized the Leader of the Opposition in a certain way, he had to play up to him. I do not do that. When I have a matter to discuss, I state my case to my party and they know where I stand. It does not mean that I disagree with policy, because our policy is right. It means we have a lot of problems. But we have to spread the pie, and, in relation to tenantry roads, I want to see positive action in Christ Church West.

I will end on a note of congratulation to the Government. I believe that this Government has shown a tremendous amount of imagination in the programme which it is projecting for road development in this island. There is no doubt that no major road development took place in Barbados over the fifty years before we have come into power. The Wildey Highway, the Speightstown Highway, the highway plan from St. Andrew to St. Lucy and the many roundabouts are all massive projects of which any far-looking and far-thinking country can feel proud.
3.55 p.m.

It is significant that the Barbados Labour Party has not only conceived most of these projects, but has executed them.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member for St. Michael South knows that I have said "most", but the important point is that we are executing all of them.

When I hear the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central talking about the Public Debt reaching $1 billion, and that taxation is being increased, I believe he is telling the country only a little part of the truth – not the whole truth. The money is being spent on that infrastructure which is so vital to project Barbados into a fully developed society, and which will allow us to make proper uses of our resources. The Government is, therefore, doing a significant job in this area, and the only complaint I have is with the limited application of it in my own constituency.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for fifteen minutes for a tea break.

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

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

ON RESUMPTION

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

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

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

The question that Head 42 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – HEAD 84
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS (as amended) – $4 150 000

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Chairman, I will not detain this Committee long on this Head, but I cannot let this opportunity pass unless I address this Committee on a matter of interest to my constituents, the people of St. Michael North, particularly the people of Lodge Hill and Cave Hill.

At the end of 1983, the residents of Lodge Hill and Cave Hill received a New Year's present in the form of a letter informing them that Government intended to acquire all or a portion of their land, as the case may be, for the purpose of constructing a highway.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Man, you talked about that already).

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I will talk again and you will not stop me. As a matter of fact, I might even talk longer than I had earlier intended, if that is your attitude. You either have to hear me out or leave. It is as simple as that, so you make up your mind on that. You can either sit through it or get out of the Chamber. You cannot stop me, you will not be stopping me, nothing like you.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, as I was saying, the people of Lodge Hill received letters about the acquisition of a portion of their lands for constructing a highway in that area. I have drawn to the attention of the Ministry that, in fact, it will do hardly any injustice whatsoever to the concept of constructing a highway in the area if the road is shifted a bit to the north. As a matter of fact, Sir, I have since acquired a plan of the proposed highway, and if the proposed highway linking up at Warrens was just carried just 20 yards further north, at that point the highway would be routed through the canes and just aback of the houses in the Cleremont area, and it would not be necessary to uproot anybody – or, at most, not more than one or two persons. As it stands now, a number of persons will be affected, and I think I have to bring this to the attention of this Chamber.

I have asked a Parliamentary Question, which has not been answered, but I must bring it to the attention of the Chamber, because the people in Lodge Hill feel very strongly about it. It is just a realignment, it is not that the people in the residential area would not use the road, as the Prime Minister has informed me. The people in Lodge Hill will still use the road, but the realignment of the road along what are now vacant lands is necessary so that people will not be disturbed, because the people are worried, with no idea of where to go.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Speak to the Member for St. Philip North about it. He is the surveyor for the job).

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I will speak to him about it – on your instructions.

I am again appealing to the Government, particularly the Minister of Transport and Works, to have another look, because it does not involve any great amendment to the plan as it stands.

While I am on this, I also want to speak about some development that apparently took place at the top of Hinds Hill nearly two years ago. Some roads were put in on lands that were either formerly part of Husbands Plantation, or still part of Husbands Plantation. Since then, nothing has happened. The roads were oiled, the rains have come, and the roads have been almost washed away. Nobody has had the opportunity yet to use the roads, and they are in a terrible state. What is there now are triangles, rectangles and so on.

I do not know what the Government intends to do with this area. I believe the intention was to relocate some wayside garages in that area. But the roads are still there, and I would like the Minister to tell us what is proposed to be done with that area of land that they have put roads into.

I have to put in some words for some constituents as well. The roads in the Rock Dundo Park area of St. Michael North are in a terrible state of disrepair, and I am hoping that the Minister might have a look at those roads and use some of the Transport Levy, or even some of the

funds that we have voted here today, in order to carry out some repairs to the roads in the Rock Dundo Park area, as well as repairs to a road in the Whitehall area, not far from Rock Dundo Park, called Medford Road. It connects Whitehall No. 3 with Whitehall No. 1, running parallel, to Whitehall main road.

I hope that the Minister can attend to these matters in the interest of the people of St. Michael North.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT (St. Michael North East): Mr. Chairman, it is amazing that some rules should hold good for some and not so good for others. I sympathise with the last speaker for trying to put a case for a few people, as he said, in his constituency, who are going to suffer some dislocation because of the proposed highway from Black Rock, which will be passing through Eden Lodge and some other parts of St. Michael. But what amazes me is the fact that the honourable gentleman would like to advise the Minister that he could shift the road a few metres this way and a few metres the other way, and only if the Minister could by some device realign the proposed boundaries for the road, his constituents would be happy and they will all live happily thereafter.

What he has got to realise, is that Barbados is going through a phase of development, and under this phase of development, the people of this country must suffer some dislocation. By the same token, I would surmise that the Spring Garden Highway could have been shifted a little to the left, going in a northerly direction, by which nobody would have been dislocated and we would be utilising what I would consider the sea front. There would have been no need to dislocate those persons whose houses and properties had to be acquired.

There were acquisitions at Spring Garden. Similarly, there were acquisitions at Oistins. Many Barbadians suffered as a result of the Speightstown Bypass Road. They did not actually suffer, they were relocated at the expense of the Government, and I believe this is exactly what will happen in Eden Lodge and the other areas which will be affected by the new road.

Progress in Barbados will come, and the people will have to understand that it is for a better Barbados that these dislocations are taking place. The Government does not set out to disrupt anyone's home. Premises were acquired for the building of the Wildey and St. Barnabas' highways. Other premises will have to be acquired, so I do not see how the Ministry of Transport and Works could tediously just try to realign their overall plan to accommodate two or three people.

It is unreasonable for the Member to want the Government in this case to reconsider the plan, which has already been decided on, just for the comfort of a few persons. I cannot support that, Mr. Chairman, and I would advise the kind gentleman to talk to his people. Let them fall into the national plan. They also have a part to play in the total development of Barbados.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I am amazed to hear the honourable Member speak. It has not been suggested by me that the Government should forgo setting up this road because the people might be dislocated. I never suggested that. I want to make that clear.

I do not know what criteria is used by Government when it is establishing roads in any area, whether it is that the road must go through some land or houses owned by one or two people. I would believe, however, that when Government is establishing a highway, such as this one, it would set out to do it with the least amount of damage to the least amount of people, and my suggestion is precisely in line with that consideration. I am not suggesting that Government should not build the road. It is only a matter of shifting the road a few metres away from where it is proposed to build it.
4.30 p.m.

I am well aware that the price of development is that some people will have to be affected, but when people are affected, then you have to make adequate provision for them. The people at Checker Hall, up to this day, are complaining, and the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite) knows this, that Government has not been able to relocate them as they were made to believe. As I understand it – I may be wrong on this – they were made to believe that Government would relocate some or all of them. Some of them are still there and complaining, four years after, and saying that they have not been resited, as they were promised.

But, Sir, I am not even dealing with the question of the promise of relocation. I am really dealing with the principle that if you can avoid having to relocate people, as is possible in this case, that the Government should set out to do this. It is not just a question of relocation, because relocating people is not as simple as it seems. People who own homes and whose homes have to be removed forcibly, suffer traumatic experiences, because they are uncertain of what can happen to them until the house is removed.

Sir, in this case, this can be avoided. It is not necessary. And it is not just two or three people – it is a number of persons, and I am again appealing to the Government. It is in their hands. They can do what they want to. They can put the bulldozers to the houses and remove them if they want to. But, in the interest of the people, I am suggesting that they have another look at it.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): After hearing the honourable Member, on two occasions, talking about relocation, one would think that the Government is pursuing a policy of ignoring the wishes of the people and deliberately dislocating people, thus creating some kind of hardship.

I want the honourable Member to understand that those persons who have been relocated so far are happy. Whenever people get notices of pending acquisitions, they are always upright, particularly when members of the Opposition go out of their way to tell them that the Government is wicked and it is going to create some hardship. That is what members from the Opposition have been doing, creating seeds of discord by misinforming people.

Government, so far, has acquired land in Spring Garden, St. Barnabas, St. Lucy and St. Peter to make way for highway development. Persons from the Spring Garden area were resited at Black Rock. There are all happy. Persons who were moved from the Speightstown area were all resited at Battaleys in St. Peter. Persons who were moved from the St. Barnabas/Mt. Friendship area were resited at Mt. Friendship Heights.

What is not being told about this relocation is that the people who are resited are given better facilities than what they had before they were resited. They are given waterborne facilities, built-in cupboards, painting inside and outside, proper house lots and, in some cases, brand new houses. Some of them had no house spots at all. Now, the people resited are living comfortably and are all happy.

Do you pass along the St. Barnabas Highway and see the homes or those people who have been resited? That is the sort of thing that we do when we resite people. People are proud of, and happy with the Government, and you are here quarrelling.

I want the residents of Lodge Hill to listen to me and not to you on this occasion. They are going to be well taken care of; they will adequately compensated for their properties and those who are relocated or resited are going to have it done properly. That is how the Government proceeds with its work.

You mentioned St. Lucy. I know of some of the problems associated with that particular matter in St. Lucy. Members of the Opposition, and two lawyers, who were DLP candidates during the last election, went down there and told the people not to move. One afternoon, when I was Minister of Housing, I called my office, and I was told of a stone which had gone through the roof of a house as a result of some blasting at the cement plant. I went down there only to discover that there was a member of the Opposition, a candidate who faced the polls in 1981, who had told them not to move. I was trying to convince them, for their own safety, that they should move, but despite my appeal, the lawyer, from that side, told them not to move.

The Government acquired a portion of land from the Checker Hall plantation to resite those people, but we felt that it would be too near to the cement plant, and that as the cement plant expanded, the people would have to move once again. Government in its wisdom, then decided to look a couple metres away from the existing site and to provide an alternative site for those persons. But it takes time to complete the process, because you acquire the land and then you have to put in roads and other infrastructural services. Government is not unmindful in this regard, so I do not want you to come in here and misrepresent the position as far as Checker Hall is concerned.

I would hope that those persons in Lodge Hill understand that other persons have been disrupted by way of resiting and acquisitions. It happens in every developed country. Last year, when I visited England, I found that in the town of Huddersfield, Blackpool, there were a lot of acquisitions, and people had to give way for development. This is happening in Barbados, and I would like the Opposition to let people know that. As we go on, we have to look for wider roads because of the economic activity that is anticipated.

We are now in the North. We are having industries located down there and housing developments. It means that, as we expand in this area, new services will be needed. As a matter of fact, we will have to look into all aspects of development, because it will mean a strain on the transport system, on the water system and other utilities. You must compliment the Minister not only for looking at the transport system to complement the development that is taking place in housing and in industrial development, but for the other services, like the water services, because that too will have to be expanded.

I hope honourable Members will understand that we are not thinking in terms of tomorrow or next year, but we are thinking about development in terms of the next twenty years ahead, development to take us into the 21st century. I hope that honourable Members from that side will not seek to gain cheap political mileage, but would go out there and tell the people what the Government is doing in terms of development.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, under the last Head I did not use the opportunity to discuss roads or lack of lighting in St. Michael Central, because I thought it was best to deal with it under this Head.

Under this Head, which is Capital, I would like to congratulate the Minister responsible for Transport and Works for setting up the basic infrastructural development

as outlined in the Development Plan. I believe it is important for the economic growth of Barbados to have a sound plan of access and bypass roads in order to develop the basic amenities and to provide a proper road service network system, so that goods, services and people can flow freely.

Highway rehabilitation, as I understand it, is far-ranging and wide, and will take us probably straight into the 21st century. The last person who spoke said that we are not considering today or tomorrow, and that is correct. We are looking ten, fifteen, twenty years down the road, because we think it is very important that the infrastructure of Barbados be developed in such a way as to improve and continue the expansion of the economic base in Barbados.

The major road works projects being undertaken at present are the access roads to the industrial estates and the Speightstown By-pass Road. The access road is designed to link the airport to the seaport by way of existing roads and planned industrial estates. The Spring Garden Highway and the St. Barnabas Road are two sections of an overall plan. A third section, which will connect Warrens to Spring Garden, will be started soon, and the final sections will be those from Warrens to St. Barnabas and Wildey to the Grantley Adams International Airport. Within the next three to five years it is expected that these access roads will be completed. I congratulate the Minister and the Ministry of Transport for the insight and projections which they have made to ensure that Barbados is taken into the 21st century with a sound infrastructural development network of roads.

Two sections of the Speightstown By-pass road have already been completed. The third and final section will go from Speightstown to Checker Hall, and that should be started, if not in this financial year, at the very beginning of the next financial year. Highway rehabilitation in the north will also cover the access road from the 'Arawak Cement Plant to Greenland, and include Farley Hill, Benn Hill, Mile-and-a-Quarter and Checker Hall.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I must tell the honourable Member that we have heard all this before. Please let us get ahead with some further contribution.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Thank you, Sir. As you have said, we have heard this before, but not from me; perhaps from somebody else.

I would like to appeal to the Minister responsible for Transport and Works to try to do something about the Station Hill Main Road. It is a road that is used by a lot of people coming from St. George South and St. George North. The road is in a very bad state of disrepair. There is need for betters roads in Deans Village, Goddings Land, Waterford Housing Area, Savannah Road, indeed in Park Road, First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenue. The potholes are so large that if the Minister were to drive his land rover through there, I do believe the land rover would disappear.

Military Road, Bank Hall Main Road, Mansion Road, Bank Hall Cross Road are roads that are connected to the City of Bridgetown. The flow of traffic passes through Eagle Hall Corner, Bush Hall Main Road, Bank Hall Main Road and Station Hill Main Road. These are roads that are crucial to the flow of traffic in and out of the City of Bridgetown, and I appeal to the Minister responsible to pay some particular attention to these roads, not only because of my parochial interest, but in the interest of all Barbadians concerned. The other roads I have mentioned, though they may not be as important to the total development of Barbados, are certainly important to the people who live in the area.

There is a need, in my opinion, for the Ministry of Transport and Works, while they are developing the basic infrastructure of Barbados, to co-ordinate activities between the National Petroleum Corporation, the Waterworks Department and the Barbados Light and Power Company. Too often in the past, and in the present – and hopefully it will not happen so often in the future – we have seen situations where the Ministry of Transport and Works will complete a road and very shortly after the completion of that road one of the utility services will come along and dig it up. This some times happens by accident, because if there is a burst natural gas or water main, or if there are problems with a Light and Power main, some work has to be done. But time and time again I have seen a situation where the efforts of the Ministry of Transport and Works and the utility companies have not been co-ordinated in such a way as to ensure the minimum amount of problems for the people that have to use a particular road. If this is done, it would also ensure the further stretching of funds, for the Ministry of Transport and Works would not have to go back and repair a road after they have beautifully barbergreened it.

There is a policy within the Ministry of Transport to try to co-ordinate these activities. For one reason or another, on which I hope the Minister will shed some light, it does not appear as though at all times this is possible. Speaking on behalf of the National Petroleum Corporation, I assure you that we cannot go into an area unless permission is granted by the Ministry of Transport and Works. They are the people who will tell us whether or not they plan to do work in the area, and if they plan to do work in the area, they will give us permission to go in and lay our mains. On the other hand, if they have just completed the road, they will refuse us permission to go into that particular area.

4.50 p.m.

I have appealed to the Minister privately, and I am now appealing to him publicly, as well as to the Ministry of Transport and Works to try, in the development of infrastructural network of roads throughout the island of Barbados, to co-ordinate the activities of the National Petroleum Corporation, the Barbados Light and Power, the Barbados Water Authority and MTW when they are planning or repairing roads.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Unless the minister wishes to reply, I will put the question.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Put the question.)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I will not be long.

I want to address my mind to the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves). He talked about the road alignment for the new industrial access road. As a matter of fact, the preliminary examination into the feasibility for that road alignment took into consideration an alignment that would run in the general area that he has just suggested. The problem with that alignment is that it would cost $1 million more to construct because of the additional length of road, and the benefits to which he referred cannot be identified.

There is going to be a dislocation of residents, but I do not think that you could describe them as being disadvantaged or, in any way, badly put upon. The fact is, as the honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) indicated, that those persons in the tenantry who are in fact going to be affected by this road alignment will be substantially better off than they would have been if they remain in that present position. All those who do not now have proper water-borne facilities, water toilet, a wall structure to the back of their houses and so on, will have them when they are relocated. It seems to me that he ought to be grateful that his constituents are going to be materially advantaged by virtue of this particular alignment.

Furthermore, we do not propose to move them outside of the area to which they have become familiar. We have identified the area that was originally intended for the wayside garages, which is just slightly north of where they are now, for that relocation exercise, so they would still be in their communities. I hope that that will set his mind at rest.

We have not gone into it callously. We have weighed the economic and social benefits to be derived from that particular alignment. We feel that the economic benefits are substantial – $1 million – and that there will be substantial social benefits, because all the residents who are going to be removed will get better benefits than they had before.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Just a minute, Mr. Chairman.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: The debate has started again.)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am addressing myself to the problem of the alignment of the Airport/Harbour Artery Road.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Is that the new name now, Artery Road?)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: National Artery Road. It is just going to border St. Thomas. It will be a few meters away from St. Thomas, but I regret that it will be more like a couple of hundred meters away from St. George. The Belle and Salters will be the nearest.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Which part of St. Thomas?)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: It is not going to go into St. Thomas. The St. Thomas boundary actually runs from the middle of the junction on Clermont Road and Warren's Road to the adjoining road on Clermont House. It would not quite go as far on the proposed alignment, although it would on the alignment suggested by the honourable Member for St. Michael North.

He can correct me, if I am wrong. He is suggesting that the road should go to the north of Clermont. I have already written to the honourable Member setting out my views on this matter, and he will be familiar with them. But for the sake of the general public and the rest of the House, it is worth saying a few words about what goes into the planning of highways of different sorts.

This is not a freeway. It is a road intended to have limited access, but it is not a free way to be built through virgin territory to get from one point to another. It is going from the Harbour to the airport, but it is an industrial access road, designed to give access to industrial sites along the way. In some places, notably the spur from Top Rock to Warners and Rendezvous, its purpose is almost solely suburban. Although that section of the road will be built to a very high standard and there will be limited access, it is intended really to help commuters get to Bridgetown.

Once it is accepted that the road does not have a starting point and an ending point, but is intended to serve purposes in between, you have to look at a series of factors – the economic return of the road and the actual cost benefit of the road. It is always possible to build a road through virgin land, but the further away you take it from houses, factories and other populated

areas, the less is the economic return on the road. The further the people in those houses have to drive to make use of the road, the more, in most cases, the road will cost. Most importantly of all, the less it impacts on housing and factories, the less it will be used, and the point of this road is that it must be used.

There were deep analyses of two areas of these considerations. One is the section of which they are speaking, and the other is the section from the Cable and Wireless building to, roughly speaking, Kendall Hill. I will deal with the second one. There were three alternatives suggested to go between Cable and Wireless and the general Kendall Hill area. One was to go through virtually undeveloped land, pass Elizabeth Park, without impacting on any houses, go pass the Kent junction and through some cane fields. That road would have been the cheapest and indeed, the shortest – the cheapest because there would be no acquisition, and virtually no houses to be moved, and the shortest, as a matter of geography.

The next alternative was to widen the Sargeant's Village road, go between Intel, and punch your way through to the airport that way. That would have been one of the shortest possible routes, but that was rejected because that would have impacted on too many houses. It would have caused great disruption in Sargeant's Village, and some disruption in Vauxhall, to the Intel Factory and to the high quality housing to the east. Therefore, that was rejected.

The route eventually chosen in possibly the longest, but it is the most suitable route, because it will generate the most traffic. We are going to the west and building a roundabout at the top of Rendezvous Hill, moving the housing and the stretch of Highway 6 between Courtesy Garage and Rendezvous, and making some adjustments. At one stage, in fact, we had almost decided to shift the Drive-in, by moving the screen, but we have decided instead to use Highway 6 and just keep it as an ancillary feed-in road. That will generate traffic that now uses Highway 6, but it will also generate traffic that now uses Highway 7. So the rate of economic return on that route which we have chosen is much, much greater than on the other two routes, although they are shorter and, in one case, much cheaper. It will carry much more traffic, and you do build a road to carry traffic and, at the same time, to save time, gasoline and wear and tear of motor cars.

The number of people who will use that road is so much greater that the extra kilometer that they have to drive in its by-pass function, is swallowed up, many times over, in the saving of gasoline for all the others who will come down Highway 7 and, when they get to Top Rock, just go on a new, modern, four lane highway straight through to the Courtesy/Wildey/Cable and Wireless area.

I have dwelt on that to illustrate the principles which informed the selection of alignment. Applying those principles to Lodge Hill, you can very readily see that if you put the road to the north of Clermont, a great number of people, who live in Lodge Hill, will not use the road. They will drive to the British American Tobacco Factory, drive down Highway 2, a clogged-up, crowded highway with many bottlenecks, including the major bottleneck at Eagle Hall, and a great deal of the advantage of the road will be lost. People who live in Lodge Hill are very unlikely, if they want to go to Bridgetown, to drive, so to speak, backwards, out beyond Clermont, a half mile or more, and wait to enter the new highway. The highway, necessarily, has to go where traffic is going to be generated.

5.00 p.m.

The honourable Member for St. Michael North may not be so familiar with his constituency as to see all the developments that are going on, but he should know that there are developments going on in the Green Hill area. He perhaps will not know that Town and Country Planning permission has been given for a major industrial development at Warrens, but he can expect to see a great number of factories being built there. The promoters said that they had eleven factories lined up, but I think, perhaps that that may have contained an element of wishful thinking, although, certainly, a number of factories are going to be built there. Very close to the line of the new road, Barbados Shipping and Trading has also made application for the release of many acres of lands – not now in agriculture; it is really just open, rocky land – for substantial construction projects, warehouse projects and the like.

The mere fact that this road is going to come from the top of University Drive and go fairly straight through to Warrens, has already, we believe, created the prospect of 600 to 800 jobs in new industrial establishments within the next two years. In those circumstances, it would be unreasonable for the honourable Member to expect that because six large middle-class houses in Lodge Hill will be affected to the extent that perhaps the residents have to move – I do not think it is six families would have to move, but it is possible – that the convenience of a half dozen house owners is going to stand in the way of the Government making it possible, within an area not now used for agriculture, at no expense to the Government, for 600 jobs to be created. That really would be unreasonable.

I will tell the honourable Member this. I think I know all the people who are affected. As the honourable Member would know, some of them, I can say, are close personal friends of mine. I have known one for over fifty years, and two particular friends live there. The chief argument that they bring, or at least we amuse ourselves by saying that this is the strongest argument is that the

road will now divide their houses, and if they want to walk to see each other, they will have a great difficulty.

All of these matters arise, but these people who live next to the road understand that there is going to be no question of the value of property falling. There has never been a highway in life which has reduced the value of anybody's property. The value on the house falls – but it falls on the house and it multiplies by five as a potential industrial site. Anybody who owned land in Fontabelle at the time when the Deep Water Harbour was built is aware of this. There were enormous outcries by people whose houses vanished entirely, and people whose houses were bought by the Government, and, in one case, I know that the ultimate compensation paid was virtually exactly ten times the value which the person had put on the house in the early Fifties. This, I am sure, will be as true in respect to the new highway as it has been in respect of all highways at all times.

The honourable Member only has to look at parcels of land in what formerly constituted his constituency in Brighton. He has seen a family home and a riding school displaced by one of the major industrial complexes of Barbados. Does the honourable Member really think that the same price would have been paid for what was a family dwelling in a back water if the prospect of immediate connection with the port was not in the air? Common sense tells you that developments near to a highway increase in value with the accessibility of the premises.

I am very sorry indeed for the half dozen residents in Lodge Hill who will be seriously affected by the road, but I will give you another human example. At the point where the junction with Cave Hill Road is going to be made, there is a land owner – an old lady. If we had to do a realignment involving carrying the road to the north, you would either have to make a 90 degree junction in the Airlie region or you would have to realign University Drive to come in the other direction. That old lady's house can be saved by the present alignment, although there will be some disturbance and some of her lands will be lost. It could not be saved if the alignment of the honourable Member was pursued.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: That is not true!)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Well, the honourable Member had better send me a copy of his plan. He is not the only person to suggest it, and people who know a lot about it also made wrong suggestions. Somebody whose name is a by-word for construction and development in Barbados also suggested to me that we should go the other side of Clermont and indeed have a "T" junction – although I believe that in making that suggestion, he might have been prejudicing his own pocket, had he known.

I am not saying that the honourable Member is in any way foolish. Obviously, he has to put the interest of his constituents, and I have no doubt that with his experience in Government and of seeing plans of this sort, he must be familiar with the original physical development plans which proposed highways, and he would have an idea of re-shaping the alignment of the road. But I am just politely suggesting that he is wrong in this instance, and the interest of his constituents are not going to be well served by putting the road out in cane fields away from where they live.

A few of his constituents will be disturbed. They will sell their houses. Do you know to whom they are going to sell their houses? They are going to sell their houses to B.S.&T. for some kind of purpose. They may sell their houses to one of the foreign investors for his manager to live in, and so on and so forth. I do not want to talk people's personal business, but some of the very people who are being talked about by the honourable Member may perhaps have sales and prospects lined up that would astonish him if he thinks that they are going to be worse off when the road is going.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I just thought that I would give the explanation, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thanks for that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: I did not wish to do this, because I think that the honourable Member had an input to make and I did not wish to appear to be contentious, but I would like to draw to your attention that the Minister had already signalled his intention to wind up the debate when the honourable Member rose as you were putting the question. I hope the Prime Minister will bear in mind and recognize that he had the indulgence of the Chair and the House when he was allowed to make an input after the Minister had wound up. I just draw it to your attention for what it is worth.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I take it that the Chair really acts on behalf of the whole Committee. When the Chair speaks, it speaks for the Committee and you must appreciate that there is some discretion.

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

5.10 p.m.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

HEAD 79 – MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS – $12,450,000

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Chairman, I do not think that there is much.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I need a little guidance here. It seems to me that this Head 79 was called. It is a Capital Head. It is unusual, to say the least, for us to call a Capital Head before calling the estimates for the Current Head. I just wish to know if we are having a departure.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, there is nothing unusual about the Leader of the House directing Government's Business. Head 79.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the House, in consultation with me, decided that it might be best, since there are not a lot of things to deal with.....

Aside.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: As a matter of fact, you can call the Head. You can be as wide-ranging as you can. I cannot stop you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, let us get ahead.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, in moving this Head, I will make a few brief remarks. After that, it is open to honourable Members opposite to take any course they feel like taking. I give all honourable Members the opportunity to question me on any matter. They can be as wide-ranging as the Chair would permit in questioning me on any matter which is germain to the portfolio which I hold, and which will come under Current and Capital. It is simply that since this Ministry's Current Head does not have much in terms of meat, I thought we could move straight to Capital, where I consider that we have a number of things to deal with.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, so that the Record will be straight: It is impossible, theoretically in the system which we have, to get the House passing a Capital estimate if it does not know what is the administrative arrangements that have been made to spend the Capital money. That is the principle. One is not trying to be offensive, one was just trying to draw attention to an irregularity. I am not saying it cannot be done. The House can decide anything, but you do not as a rule pass a Capital Head before you pass the other Heads, because the administration and policy can be found in the Current.

I really do not care if you pass the Capital, I just drew it to your attention. I do not mean to be contentious.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He is not contentious, he is ignorant. The Head is Head 79; that is what it is.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Leader of the House is only Leader of the House, but each honourable Member.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He is the Leader of Government Business, I dictate over here. I called Head 79, and that is what it is.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Two honourable Members are on their feet.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: At the expense of the privilege of the House, or the general picture of the House, I think that that attitude is totally uncalled for.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has made his point. The honourable Minister of Housing.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I am quite amenable to any request coming from the other side. I do not want it to be felt, or remotely appear, that there is anything to hide in the Ministry of Housing and Lands. I want that to be clearly understood. As a matter of fact, I am prepared to stay here all night and all tomorrow, if need be, to discuss any topic under Housing and Lands, because there is nothing to be ashamed of.

This morning, when I spoke in connection with the Transport and Works Ministry, I said that the Ministries of Transport and Works and Housing and Lands were areas on which everybody is an expert, and people became very emotive when they were dealing with any subject under those areas. Therefore, I am prepared to move the Head and sit down and let the Members opposite, or any person on this side, probe me on any matters.

There are a lot of things I would like to say, but in the light of the way in which this matter was started, I would prefer not to say a lot, but to sit down and hear the views being expressed from time to time on this subject.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, I am very sorry that this Head has started this way. I have always found the Minister responsible for this portfolio a very forthright person, honest in his intentions. This is not a debate in which we will be

contentious, this is a debate in which we want to exchange views for the betterment of the people of Barbados. We do not want rancour in this debate.

Mr. Chairman, with the Minister's permission, I am going back to Central Administration, because I think I will need to set a base against which we could appreciate the Capital Estimates that have been fixed. In the Central Administration of the Minister's portfolio, I would like to invite the Minister, first of all, very seriously .....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I rise on a point of order: I called Head 79 – Capital Works. There is no Central Administration in this. If they are not prepared to deal with the Heads as we call them, it is a matter entirely for them.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, Subhead 2. There is a vote of $6.5 million for the National Housing Corporation. Under Head 37, Central Administration, the functions of the .....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, he cannot deal with Head 37 Subhead 2, he has to deal with Head 79. I may give a little guidance. If there is a grant of $6.5 million to public institutions, which goes to the National Housing Corporation, he can talk about the National Housing Corporation. Head 37 is not before the Committee.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Head 79. Order! Order!

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The Chair will decide.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, Subhead 2, National Housing Corporation. It is my opinion that, over the last couple of months, the Minister has been giving some very serious consideration to this organisation. I think it is fair to say that the Minister has now decided on a policy that is different from the one pursued before, even in the earlier part of his period in the Ministry, namely, that he is not satisfied at all that the people of Barbados are getting value for money in the vote allocated to National Housing Corporation, when they were using this vote primarily for the construction of units by direct labour. It is now the Minister's intention to pursue the route of construction by private contracts under the vote granted to the National Housing Corporation, and I am prepared for us on this side to allow the Minister to proceed this way and observe the results that he is achieving, since, without doubt, everyone of us wish the Minister well in the development of housing in Barbados. But I want to say a few things in relation to this particular area.

5.20 p.m.

The Minister started his period in the Ministry by being quite forthright in saying that he was not satisfied with what he found. He changed his board a little bit, and he changed one or two of his senior management people. Now, the first thing that occurs to me is that there might be a bit of uneasiness among the professional and technical staff remaining at the National Housing Corporation in the light of the pronouncement of the Minister's policy that there is likely to be work going out to private enterprise.

I would just like to suggest to the Minister, and I am sure that he has given it serious thought, that he has now been able to put in place at the National Housing Corporation a fairly adequate, competent, professional and technical staff, and it would not be advisable to dismantle this staff at the particular moment, even though you might be advised, or you might think, that you might not be using 100 per cent of them. To illustrate, you have just been able to have a Quantity Surveyor on your staff, and I am certain you will be exercising your man, whether he may properly be utilised in your new scheme of things.

I venture to suggest that you are going to need all of your present technical staff if you are to be advised at the managerial level about keeping proper control of the projects that will be handed out to private enterprise. Your professional staff is going to have quite a lot of work on their hands, and if they are properly utilised, they will assist the Ministry in going down this road very carefully.

There is one area of the National Housing Corporation about which I am a little bit sad, because it did not operate so that it could continue to function, and that was the disbursement of loans to people in a particular category. I realize the problems you had. You had the problem of collection of funds and you had the problem of delinquency in repayment. But now that you have passed on, if I am right in saying that, and it is your intention not to function so much in this area, I would like to advise you that you are going to be creating a little problem for some of those people who were assisted in that particular scheme. That leads me straight on to the USAID funds that you have been able to negotiate, but which, in my opinion, have not been properly administered up to the present time.

The scheme needs to be completely overhauled. All of us were very keen and very anxious when we learned that some $20 million would be injected into the housing stock in Barbados. The funds were divided, as the Minister knows, into three areas: new mortgages, home improvement, and the tenantry programme. I will deal with each point, to show the Minister some of the problems this scheme has faced; and this is particularly important, because the Minister was advised; he had

special consultancy on this one when he was negotiating the loan.

As far as I know, this House was never properly told what rate the loan was negotiated at. I am of the opinion that the loan was negotiated at some 11.65 per cent. That is the first thing that I think we should have watched because at the time this loan was being negotiated, the interest rates were on the way down, not only in America, but in Barbados as well; and very soon after the funds reached here, the Governor of the Central Bank, after consultation with the Minister of Finance, further reduced the interest rate.

To look at the house repairs, so far some $2 million has been disbursed in this area. The first problem is that the people's hopes were raised too high, because every time you turned on the radio, there was a programme – I believe it was promoted by the GIS – giving people the impression that funds were available and they could be had very easily. As a result of this, the people did not condition their minds to the fact that they had to qualify for the funds under the same rigorous criteria as the commercial banks set for their own funds. When they were questioned, the banks said quite clearly that they had to accept all the risks, since Government was only acting as an on-lender of funds, and if they had to stand all the risks, they were going to apply the same criteria that they were applying throughout.

On account of this, and the fact that the money was being lent to the commercial banks at 11.65 per cent, there was a reluctance by the commercial banks to use it, because they were getting money on the market at 9 per cent. There really is no point taking money at 11.65 per cent, with the same risks involved in taking money at 9 per cent, for onlending at 18 per cent, because if you can get at 9 per cent and you onlend at 18 per cent, you would have 9 per cent, and if you had to take it at 11.65 per cent and you onlend at 18 per cent, you would get some 6.35 per cent. So a lot of the funds allocated to house repairs have not been taken up – and this is the area that has been in demand.

In my opinion, what has done the Ministry the most harm is the fact that because the people were of the opinion that these funds were easier to come by, a lot of them flocked to the commercial banks and were turned back, and they then became very disillusioned. I, myself on numerous occasions had to refer a lot of my constituents to banks, and on one or two occasions I even got the advice from the people administering the fund in the Ministry, trying to find out exactly what was the problem, but these people were turning from bank to bank. The Barbados National Bank sent them to Citibank; Citibank sent them to CIBC; CIBC sent them to Nova Scotia; and at the end of the day, they were without funds, very disillusioned, and they were saying; "We were told on the radio to come and borrow funds and we did not get the funds."

5.30 p.m.

It might have been a useful thing, in the absence of the funds operating through the National Housing if the Minister had considered, as he is now doing with long term funding, lending these people money at two percentage points below what they are lending, 8½per cent, therefore subsidising the mortgage, even if it meant that he was offering the banks an opportunity to take a little risk, by saying to them that he was prepared to underwrite a very small percentage, if needs be, that would equate to the subsidisation that you are doing for the long term mortgages. This was not done and in my opinion, you still have that area of difficulty in Barbados where people are having problems, unless they can meet the bank's rigid criteria, to get money to repair their houses.

That is why I am a little bit sorry that the machinery in National Housing was not functioning properly enough that you could have funded that section of National Housing with some of this money to service this group of people in Barbados where there is a tremendous need. I invite the Minister to have a look again to see if there is any way in which he could ease the situation in that area in order that the people may benefit more.

I come now to the mortgage section. I think this area is where the biggest mistake was made in the negotiation of the funds. The criteria state that the family income cannot be more than $16 000, the house must not cost more than $35 000 and the maximum mortgage is $24 000. With a family income of $16 000, if the person is in the Public Service, under the Public Officers Housing Loan Fund he is entitled to $48 000 in mortgage. If you went to the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation where they are taking 25 per cent, which is a repayment of $400, and the mortgage arrangement for that is over twenty years, that is going to give them some $47 000 to $38 000. So you are immediately putting this income bracket at a disadvantage. You are reducing their eligibility for maximum mortgage by restricting it to $24 000. You are not helping that class at all. People like the police sergeants and teachers now have terrific problems, which the Minister will observe from the 700 applications he got for the houses at Wildey in that price range, so some of this money should be moved into that area, what we call the low middle income area, where there is tremendous need.

I am suggesting to the Minister that he needs to negotiate that maximum again. Not only that, but when you tell a gentleman that to buy a $35 000 unit he has to raise $11 000, you know for yourself that this is not practicable. Barbadians as a rule, are not saving people, but if a fellow had $11 000, you know for sure that his

hat is up the ladder, because he is going to look at the fellow who can go to the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation if he qualified, put out $11 000, and get $110 000 in mortgage. So why are you asking the fellow who can only get $34 000 in mortgage to put up $11 000? Anybody who would have had $11 000 anyhow in this salary bracket would have already started his chattel house and getting ready to put on the little piece at the back. This is another disadvantage that you must remove immediately.

You will discover that none of that particular portion of the USAID money has been disbursed as yet. Those funds are still in the pipeline, and they are for chattel houses, and I want to address the Minister in charge of Town Planning on this matter. I have noticed that the Town Planning Department is making it more and more difficult every day for people to do anything. The last thing you have is, and this is an actual example I am giving you, that a lady came intending to get a chattel house under the scheme. She got the plan from the Lumber Company, submitted it to Town Planning and Town Planning sent it back. Do you know why they sent her back? They said it was not signed, and that, under their new regulations, every plan must have the name, who did it, and it must have the signature. I think that we are getting a little ridiculous. If they meet the requirements of Town Planning, why must they send it back? And it took nearly three weeks for that lady to get that plan signed!

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: (St. Thomas): Would the honourable Member like to know what is the reason for that? The reason for that is that officers in the Town Planning Department draw plans for people, and there is a widespread belief among the people who want planning permission that if you do not go to an officer of Town Planning, you will be hampered in your application, and there is no way of the Chief Town Planner knowing it. Officers draw the plans and therefore may be thought to have an interest in pushing the matter, and since we get a certain number of infelicities inside there – permissions are given out and then you wonder how they could ever have been given out and so on – we have imposed a rule that you have to sign the plans. A man should not be ashamed to sign a plan. It is nothing illegal. People who work in Town Planning are allowed to draw plans. I found it that way, and I believe it has always been that way, but they must say that they drew them.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Thank you. I am glad that you explained it to me so that people at Town Planning would know the facts. I am glad that I will be able to put the people at Town Planning on their Ps and Qs.

But unless you are in this thing everyday, you have to be careful that when you go to Town Planning and they send you back for a signature, that when you go back they do not send you back and say the radius is not right, because by the time they get through with you, there is total confusion. I have always harped on the situation with the Bay, where the Bay was held up a long time before Town Planning decided that the lots were not big enough. I do not understand how you can get that kind of situation.

Getting back to what I was saying, there are people who are trying to use that mortgage money, but they are restricted to chattel houses. We would hope that this would be providing people with the facility to move, if possible, away from chattel houses, particularly the soft wood chattel houses, because these people are going to have a problem. They spend $35 000 for that chattel house, but these houses are almost renewable every seven years – regardless of what they tell you about treated pine. So if you give a fellow that mortgage on that type of house and then you find that he has to be renewing that house, it costs more to the chap, it is less contribution to the housing stock than if you allowed that fellow to have $60 000 to put down a permanent unit which he would not have to renew. I invite you to consider this. Let us move it up the line so that we can consider a permanent unit which you do not have to renew.

I come now to the third problem relating to the USAID funds. First, the ceiling is not high enough, since you can only get a chattel house. Then if they can use a chattel house, to mobilise $11 000 to get the mortgage is a problem. The third problem, and this is where your Ministry can help – is that some of the people who would like to use the funds do not have any land to put the house on.

5.40 p.m.

This makes it almost mandatory on the Ministry to speed up its Sites and Services Programme, and, as I said before, I would invite you when you speed it up to include some facilities for the sewerage to help those who will benefit. Because if they are able to move on the $35 000 unit with a long-term lease from the Ministry, with provision in the lease that the land would be sold to them at some time, or that some arrangement would be made with them so that they would have some permanency, that would help you to shift the money in that area until such time as you can negotiate and have it moved on.

I really do not understand what is happening in relation to the tenantry part of the programme, but it seems to be going very slow. I should think that by now the Minister would have realized – and it is not as a matter of any political programme or anything; I have said it in this Honourable House before – that immediately after the passing of the Tenantries Control Act, people in those tenantries started to put down wall. In other words, from the time that Act was passed, it registered in their heads

that the spot was theirs. So even now that you are offering the spot at a considerably reduced rate, they are still finding that mental block to purchase it, because they are saying:– "This is mine, why should I put up the couple of dollars to purchase it when I have absolute use of it?"

Personally, I have been advising all my constituents and anyone who comes in to go ahead, get the couple of dollars and pay for the land in order that they would be able to use it as collateral down the road. I invite my colleagues and everyone to pass on this type of advice, because I think it is the correct advice to pass on to the people. A lot of them find it difficult after paying three cents a week or ten cents a week for years to pay out $700. Their argument is that at three cents or ten cents a week they will be there until 'Thy Kingdom come.' But we have to persuade them that they should have a more permanent stake and have the wherewithal to bargain at the bank, and they should therefore go ahead and pursue that particular matter.

In summary, I am inviting the Minister to open negotiations again to immediately raise the loan ceiling to allow those people who we want to benefit under this programme to do so, because it is a mistake to continue to contribute towards the building of chattel houses in Barbados with that cheap timber. If you want to move a step further, through the Ministry's contact with the building suppliers here, or through an educational programme on GIS or something, try to steer these people to hard woods. I would suggest that you immediately start your programme of indoctrination, because if you steer them to hard woods, there will be some permanency and you would not have to worry about its renewal in seven years – you can be certain that some hard wood will last for thirty-five to forty years. So, that is a job for the Government Information Service.

A lot has been said about National Housing and I am not prepared to get into the politics of it. I notice that you are starting back at Maynard's and Lammings.

The Prime Minister announced that there is to be a high rise apartment building opposite the hospital. I suppose that a lot of thought has been given to that, but my only hope is that you do not create noise pollution or anything that would interfere with the proper functioning of the hospital. When you put a high rise apartment building just to the north end of the hospital, you are certainly going to generate a lot of traffic in that area, and when you generate a lot of human traffic in that area, you are going to have a concomitant fallout. Naturally, you are going to have garbage disposal problems, noise problems, transport problems and all of the problems associated with a large number of people living there.

I sincerely hope that the planners have given this very good thought, because anything that would interfere with the proper functioning of the hospital is to be discouraged. I must admit that I am a little uneasy with putting a high rise apartment building like that to the east of the hospital. I do not know if it is too late, but I am certain that if you made a good search within the same perimeter of Bridgetown, you might be able to find an alternative spot.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Your fifteen minutes are up.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): I want to make a small contribution to this area, because I think this is an area in which we are moving towards a settled policy which, it appears to me, is likely to receive the support of all of the political bodies in Barbados.

There is just one thing I should like to add to what the honourable Member said. It is that the deficiencies of the banking system in relation to the delivery of finance for housing are well-known. The community itself seems to be taking advantage of the Government's encouragement of new financial institutions, the credit unions, to fill this gap. In the context of Barbados, it is possible for the credit unions to develop to the same position that building societies have developed in the United Kingdom, and savings and loans associations have developed in the United States.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Do not mind the course at the Labour College. Mind the fact that the Government was sufficiently perceptive of this possibility a couple of years ago and gave tax exemptions to savers who save in the credit unions. That was the greatest stimulus. It even stimulated the khaki king into action instead of talk.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: As soon as you create a department, you create bureaucracy which is going to stifle the initiative of the people. Because when you create a department – I know a lot about co-operatives – the department is going to feel that they can dictate to the co-operatives how to run the co-operatives.

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You know about subdivisions in housing.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Successful ones though.

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Not the subdivision of land.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Leave the department to be a general observer and inspector of standards. Do not ask the department to be the auditor of the co-operatives, to have to go to the meetings of the Executive Committee and tell the people how to run their business. As soon as they start getting into that, they are going to get into trouble. Let the religious organizations, like the Shamrock, founded around the Catholic Church, the various teachers' organizations, the police and people who have a common interest do it. The basic position is that this new institutional movement can deliver these funds at a cheaper rate and in a more satisfactory way than the banks.

I have talked to many banks in Barbados, because, like the honourable Member, it has been a great source of disappointment to me that I have had to send constituents from bank to bank. And what is worse, what is even more hurtful to me, is the fact that the very Barbados National Bank refused to do it.

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Because they would not accept your guarantee.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It is not a question of guarantee. We have tried to educate them to the fact that the Tenantries Act has given them more protection than they could possibly want, that as a mortgagee on land on which the owner of the chattel house has been living for the requisite period of time, they could exercise the option to purchase. We have tried all of these things.

But if you keep persisting, some progress will be made. As I understand it, a number of commercial banks have now decided that they are going to join the scheme. I am sure that the Minister is going to give us the details of these matters. So we have the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation, the credit unions and a number of the commercial banks. All of the commercial banks have not decided to opt out.
5.50 p.m.

The problem then will only relate to the conditions of the original loan – and I am sure the Minister will deal with that – and the problems of delivery to that category of Barbadian who is above 60 years old, and who is vigorously strong. I have some fish sellers in this category; they earn a lot of money; people who buy and sell produce – but who cannot satisfy any of the eligibility rules.

The Housing Authority used to cater to that group, but, regrettably, that scheme has been abused. We have a lot of evidence. We can show the other side what used to go on under them, how people used to build houses, sign them over and so on. All of this came out in the enquiry, so we will not bother with that.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You should be the last person to talk. Do you know about Joy and Happy?

The position is that there is a category of person now who no scheme we have can touch. That is the problem, and we have to address our minds to it. But even if we used the old money, the repayment record is so bad that we need to have a combined effort on this matter. That is why I am very disappointed when I see an old, experienced, ex-parliamentarian, now in his last days, indulging in irresponsibility. I am very, very disappointed in this former Leader of this House. Once again, he is trying to believe that this is 1961, and is encouraging the people not to pay the Housing Authority. I am very disappointed in him. That is not the kind of political consensus we should have on this non-controversial matter. He is always talking about men and matters – and is still encouraging the people not to pay back! You must not indulge in that kind of political foolishness in 1984!

I know some people who have a natural aversion to repaying anything at all. He may be one of them. But he must not project his peculiar values in this respect as being desirable nationally. He should not do that, because there is a shortage of money, and unless we can get the money to roll over, unless people repay money, many people will not be able to take advantage of it. I hope that the influence that honourable Members on the other side have on this gentleman will be brought to bear, and I hope that the spokesman for Housing will take him aside and tell him not to bother with that. That was good for 1961, but in 1984 there are no politics to be made out of this matter, because all of us are trying to see how we can improve the housing stock in Barbados so do not try to encourage people in wrong doing.

The honourable Member, who is a developer and a house builder, would know that when he puts out his money at risk in relation to the building and delivery of a house, taking advantage of the special tax rate that this Government introduced by way of incentive – he is a great beneficiary of that – that he expects that there is going to be a mortgage institution to pick up the mortgage as soon as he delivers the house, so that he gets paid and is able to continue to build a certain number of houses each year. But if this gentleman's attitude prevails in this society, when the mortgage people lend money, it will not pay back, and the honourable Member's machine is going to grind to a halt, because there will be no mortgage money for him to be paid. This is our problem. We must not try to inculcate in the minds of everybody that if you borrow for housing, you must pay back. If you borrow for anything at all, you must pay back, particularly in housing.

We also have to have a secondary mortgage market of some kind, where, after a number of mortgages have been given, they can be laid off with an institution in the event that the banks or anybody else borrow short and lending long. That is one of our defects. We are a small financial market, but that is one that we can possibly deal with, with the co-operation of the Central Bank and using the reserve.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Tomorrow you are going to speak on this like an authority, because you heard me saying it and you are going to improve on it. Do you want me to send you the documentation on it so you can spend the whole night studying it?

The basic position is that we have to get going to plug these gaps, and the Government is working at it. Do not abuse the Government about housing. I want the Opposition to understand that if they want a public debate on housing, we are willing to have one, because our record shows a very honest attempt to remove every bottle-neck that they had. We have not done badly either. We have revolutionized the whole process. We brought into being a whole new class of developer.

I hear this talk about lay-offs. Why is the Press so negative in Barbados? We have just had some lay-offs in my department at the Heywoods Project. They include a Project Manager, Deputy Project Manager, Chief Accountant – in fact, the staff at the center of that project unit have just been laid off.

(Asides)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: They have finished the project. That is the whole point. Once you are in the construction industry and projects come to an end, and your cycle of starting does not exactly coincide with the ending of the last project, you must have some laying off. Ask the honourable Member over there, who has experience in this as a functionary doing it – he is not like you, an investor – how difficult it is to dovetail, particularly when you do not have complete control of the money, to start the pipe flowing again. Government is like that, too.

The basic position with the lay-offs is that the Government, as a matter of policy, has decided that, instead of having the Housing Authority do the delivery in respect of house building, it will take advantage of the enterprise and competence within the economy in Barbados, which has been stimulated and encouraged by policies of this Government and by the investment and education that we have. I am positive that the honourable Member, who is the chief spokesman for the Opposition, cannot take objection to that, because the honourable Member knows, that the contractors will have to hire labour. 6.00 p.m.

One of the good things that National Insurance and Social Security legislation has done in Barbados is that changing an employer under our system does not result in a loss of conditions of employment to any material degree, because your pension provisions are continued. That is the benefit of the National Pension Scheme. If you work with the Housing Authority and you pay National Insurance, then go and work with private people and you pay National Insurance, when you reach the age you get the pension. Therefore, mobility of labour is now encouraged in the market, and it is accepted, but in a small society like Barbados – and the honourable Leader of the Opposition knows this; it might not suit him to admit it publicly, but he says it in here – the problem with the Government in areas like the Ministry of Transport and Works is that, because of the salary scales, it cannot command the number of technical people that it needs.

The honourable Member over there was a civil servant. Nearly every engineer in the engineering firms in Barbados passed through the Ministry of Communications and Works. It is only at times like these that some of them will tell you they are sorry they went into private practice, but that is only temporary. If the expertise is in the private market, why does the Government not take advantage of it? Because every dollar you spend will be, in our opinion, better spent if you place the responsibility for it in the hands of private people.

I warn my colleague, and I warn the Government. If you do not have good and excellent project management, they will trick you. They will give you substandard work, and will quickly ask for extras, and if you do not have a good legal team, and a good contract drawn up with excellent supervision, you will get trouble. I think you should try and keep the little staff that you have, but watch them very very carefully, because there is no such thing, in my experience, as a fixed price contract. The price is only fixed in so far as the assumptions on which the price is based remain constant. That is a great danger. You can get better value for your money, but you also have to remember that you need a corps of people to supervise the contractors.

This is the stage that we have reached now, and I hope that in the end, together with some other inducements which I hope the Government will take into consideration, we can get new buildings being built, and conversion of existing buildings into smaller buildings for houses, for young people in particular.

My own belief is that if we went through the Housing Authority's houses, we would find that there

are people in there who are ineligible to be in there because of their income – but they cannot move out, because they do not have anywhere else to go. So if you build more houses in a certain bracket, you will then be able to enforce your rule that if you have a certain income you must leave so that other people can come in. We still have one problem to address; how to deliver houses to those people the financial institutions, the Housing Authority, nobody wants?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (City of Bridgetown): Mr. Chairman, I should just like to make a few comments on Head 79.

I want to begin by agreeing with the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) in respect of the reservations which he holds about the Government's proposal to build either high rise or medium rise apartments, whatever they are, at Martindales Road. I share his view and I hear it now being reflected. I hope that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Housing hears this. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) in whose constituency it falls, agrees that the site immediately opposite the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can hardly be the most suitable site for medium or high rise housing, or for housing of any sort. You are only going to import, in my view, into what should be a "sterile area", pollution of many kinds.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke about noise pollution, and I agree. In addition there would be pollution of exhausts from all the motor cars which would frequent the housing establishments there, the pollution of added garbage, sewage disposal – the whole lot.

When I sat in the Ministry of Health and we were looking to site what is now known as the Ladymeade Polyclinic, I was very careful in choosing the location. The polyclinic will have more traffic on a daily basis than the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We could have fallen to the temptation to resite it on the old Enmore site, or to resite it at this same site which is proposed for housing, but you will observe that, instead, I looked for the land in the old Ladymeade estate, well away from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but still close enough for the necessary service linkages to locate the Ladymeade Polyclinic. I do think that the Ministry of Housing is well advised to look again for a more suitable location for that kind of housing.

I would like to suggest that there is a location which presents itself immediately. The Government already has begun to acquire lands in a huge block at the corners of Chancery Lane, Nelson Street and Wellington Street. The site is almost clear. I have taken the officials of the Ministry of Housing there on more than one occasion, and certainly this Minister of Housing and his officials visited there with me a few weeks ago. He is satisfied that it is an admirable location for a block of the sort, I think, which is being proposed for Martindales Road, and I would like to urge upon the Minister of Housing that he thinks very carefully about the possibility of a more suitable location at that Nelson Street/Wellington Street/Chancery Lane area. It would give us a chance to effect very important urban renewal in what is known at the Pondside area, where people still live in barracks. I very much want to offer that as a suggestion from one Cabinet colleague to another.

I am very pleased to see, under Head 79 also, that funds are being made available to pay for professional studies and services, and for what is now known as the New Orleans Study. This is very important. In fact, urban renewal is very important in Barbados. We have seen, during the past seven years, considerable urban renewal in Oistins. Oistins is now transformed. More recently, we have seen urban renewal, which is still underway, at Speightstown, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that Bridgetown, apart from being the constituency which I have the honour to represent, is still the capital city of Barbados and the port of Barbados.
6.10 p.m.

It is not that I begrudge Oistins and Speightstown their recent development. I do not at all, because I very much subscribe to the broad policy of decentralization back into the communities, and to the policy of subtowns that this Government promotes. But we will have to admit, and certainly it is abundantly clear to me, as the representative for the City of Bridgetown, that Bridgetown has suffered some little neglect, and Bridgetown's turn for renewal has now arrived.

There is in existence, something which is called the Bridgetown Urban Design Study. There are proposals for Broad Street to be made into a pedestrian mall. There are proposals for the whole careenage to be built up and widened. We need to build a new bridge. There is a proposal for a fish market – not of the size, but certainly of the same type as the one at Oistins – to be built at Cheapside. All of this is urban renewal.

We hear about water transport from Oistins, Holetown and Speightstown. It is possible that within this decade, hovercraft will be moving between these towns and Bridgetown. Important then, too, is the fact that we will have to take more of the motorized traffic out of the center of Bridgetown. There will be no incentive for people to drive into Bridgetown to do business, but, rather, to take hovercraft or some other form of sea transport from a point where they drive their cars – Holetown, or to Speightstown or Oistins, depending on where you live – and take the water transport, which is cleaner, healthier and faster, into Bridgetown; or if

you can still drive into Bridgetown, park at a point close to where they want to do their shopping and get off. All of this is part of a massive urban renewal, but it is important that residential renewal be not overlooked.

In the news we have heard much in recent days about houses and buildings which are of national and historical interest and worthy of preservation. A lot of these houses are, in fact, in the City of Bridgetown. All of that has to be incorporated into the new design, but I am particularly interested in the New Orleans Study.

New Orleans is already beautifully laid out in a grid. We have avenues running north/south as we presently have the roads, or the gaps, running east/west. I believe that the New Orleans will certainly rank high when the sewering of Bridgetown is extended. In fact, the sewer lines already run to the St. Cecilia Building Project. This is where we are obviously coming to the point, and it was made in here already today, that we are moving towards the 21st century. There is new technology and we have to be ready and willing to grasp it. The old-fashioned ideas about housing must fall behind as new techniques come in.

We see that at long last in Barbados prefabricated housing is now very much a thing of the present. We see that the Ministry of Housing is now planning to build small apartment blocks rather than big sprawling apartment estates, which, themselves, are turned into ghettos. We see this in other countries; we see it in Jamaica, we see it in Puerto Rico and, of course, we see it in most of the big cities, especially in the developing world. I should hope that we would want to avoid that in Barbados, and that we will design and service small apartment blocks that can go up in and around the suburbs of Bridgetown very quickly.

Again I agree with the honourable Member for St. Philip North on his point about the use of wood. We need to advise people who still want to build in wood – and a lot of people do prefer to live in wood than in wall, I am one – that they should move to hard woods, the Guyanese green heart and purple heart. There are other hard woods, but those are the ones that we know the best – I know that the gentleman would see amusement in that – and there are other strategies and other housing techniques.

The time is coming when sites and services have to be more than roads, water and light. The time is coming where the Government should be able to dig a foundation and put down a slab and then you acquire that and build on it so that each building will still have a personality of its own. The individuality of the owner will be expressed in that. All of these are new dimensions.

Asides.

We want nice terraced houses but we do not want little boxes. We do not want housing like what we see in Russia. When you pass these apartments and you look at the windows, you see that every light shade is the same. All the curtains are the same colour. Everything is uniform. We do not want to see that in Barbados.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: You went to Russia?)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, I have; more than once.

We still, want to preserve, especially in the City of Bridgetown, that individuality which very much personifies the Bridgetown people. All of this must be encouraged by the Ministry of Housing; they must not at all be afraid to widen their horizons. I hope that what I see here described as the New Orleans Study is taking all of this into account.

What New Orleans needs, more than anything else, is for most of those lots to be properly aligned. The people are willing and ready to buy them. If the lots are properly surveyed and aligned, the Ministry of Housing would be amazed to see the rate at which the people in the New Orleans would acquire them.

It is possible that you can have a few basic module designs, and that you can buy a design for module 1 and then, a few years later, you add on module 2, already certified and approved by Town Planning. These things can be done quickly. Money can be made available for this; in fact, money is still available now. We have to find ways and means to persuade the banks in Bridgetown.

All of this, I hope, is encompassed in what is here described as the New Orleans Study. There is tremendous potential for it. It is already being anticipated by the people of New Orleans.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly would not like to sit down without making mention of the St. Cecilia Project. Like the mills of God, the workings of the Ministry of Housing grind slow, but exceedingly fine. I see that the project is coming to part-way fruition, and I am very pleased about that.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I do not want to hear anything about the police and bad girls. The people of the City of Bridgetown clearly understood that that housing project was for them, people like Pooshen, who lives on a dirty floor up to this day, so I do not want to hear about policemen and bad girls.

The taxpayers of this country are not subsidising that kind of building for people who have access to other funds. Let them go to other institutions which their salaries will allow them to make loans from. That is for the poor people of Bridgetown who have never lived in anything with a floor or proper rooms yet.
6.20 p.m.

I am not threatening anybody, Mr. Chairman; I am just stating as a fact that I would not like to try to predict the reaction in the City if a whole bunch of strangers in a quite different income bracket moved in there. That is all I have to say. I see that the project is coming to fruition, and I just hope that within this new financial year that we are about to enter that that project will finally come to conclusion.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I wish under this Head to support the last part of the speech made by the honourable Member for the City (Hon. Miss B. A. Miller). I wish to support her one hundred per cent. It is the first clear statement that I have heard coming from the Government side on this issue where there is no attempt at obfuscation, where a spade is being called a spade.

The National Housing Corporation was conceived as part of a concept to provide housing for three different layers of people in Barbados. The Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation was a concomitant institution to assist in the concept that people from all walks of life would be able to get improved housing. Those who could afford the slightly higher cost housing – civil servants, policemen and other people like that – would be able to get mortgages, in addition to a scheme within the governmental structure. The National Housing Corporation, which followed the Urban Development Corporation and another, intended that poor people in Barbados – not the people who are called poor, people who live in this society to 60, 70 and 80 years and have had nothing but degradation throughout their entire lives – would be given hope – first by the first Barbados Labour Party Government, then by the Democratic Labour Party Government – that they could look forward in their lifetime to having some of the sweets in this country.

I am one of those persons who believe that if the Barbados Labour Party does something that is beneficial to the community, that, even though we look for political partisanship and we try to keep our respective seats, we have to applaud and say this is not a bad project.

When St. Cecilia was taken over, the impression was given to the people living by Murphy's Pasture, in Westbury Road and in the surrounding areas of Barbarees Hill and Brewsters Road – in other words what was then St. Michael South West and the City – that housing was finally coming to them, improved housing. The Minister of Finance, in a Budgetary Statement soon after the Labour Party came into power in 1976, and the honourable Member for the City, as part of her statement concerning what she hoped to see for her constituents, led the people to believe that those units that were going to be built, first at St. Cecilia and then, secondly, around the Cathedral, were going to be for at least some of the people who would be displaced, or who had not yet benefited from the housing development which was going on in the country.

Very subtly, first of all, the cost of building these houses at St. Cecilia has increased considerably, and the reason for the increase has to do with a very silly policy which the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister followed in terms of the allocation of portfolios. I have maintained that a Minister who goes into a portfolio ought to have the opportunity to develop that portfolio to the point where one can see growth and development, and if he fails, he or she should be asked to move aside. But we have seen a constant shift in Ministers of Housing to the detriment of the country, so that the cost of that unit in Passage Road, which has had corruption surrounding it as well, has escalated to the point where the only way the Government can recoup the expenditure is to start putting higher priced people into that unit.

That is not only a disappointment to the people who ought to have been going into those houses; it is a travesty on the promises which are continually being made to the vast majority of people in this country, which allows some 7 000 people, who go up to the National Housing Corporation every week looking for somewhere to live, to be turned around.....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Not all 7 000 go every single week, but if the Prime Minister finds solace in that slip, let him find solace in the principle which I am putting to him, that there are a large number of people – I say 7 000, but I hear figures of 9 000 – who have had their names down at the National Housing Corporation for 10, 15 and 20 years looking for somewhere to live, and all they are getting is fair promises, or they hear that the Committee did not meet yet, or the Committee has not examined their position yet.

And the National Housing Corporation, which promised to provide a large number of units per annum, fails to do so. The honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig) went on television about six years ago and told the people in this country that the Government was going to be building a certain number of low cost houses per annum. Check the records and see the dismal failure of the Housing Ministries. I say "Ministries", because no Minister since the honourable Member for St. James North has had an opportunity to

settle down into the Ministry. As soon as one goes in – I do not know why, the Prime Minister would know better than anybody else – another one is put in right after him, and they change the policy, change the personnel, and you cannot get any coherent, straightforward, progressive development in housing at all in Barbados. All we are getting is fair promises.

I recall that the honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) as Minister of Housing promised that there would be a White Paper on Housing. Subsequent to that, the Prime Minister said that they were borrowing money from USAID. Four years ago this money was promised. Now that the money has come, what we have is a Pyrrhic victory – the banks have the money, but the system is so confused and so convoluted that none of the people for whom the money was intended is capable of drawing it down.

The Government went and promised to subsidise the housing, and again the poor people in Barbados were allowed to believe that they had an opportunity, and then they allowed people to go and tell them at St. Cecilia to put in some solar driers. Some $60 000 of the project was for solar driers. They are going to put a piece of glass next to another piece of glass and allow the sun to shine through it, and you put the clothes in between the two pieces of glass. That alone is $60 000! And when you look at the mismanagement of the project, what has happened is that the project costs nearly three times as much!

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I stand corrected. It is a good thing the contractor died, not from the point of view of his being dead, but that helps to kill, no pun intended, the whole atmosphere surrounding that project. The honourable Member who is now the Minister of Housing says it is not three times as much. Would he accept twice as much?

Let me put it this way. The cost has escalated to the point where if you are going to have a return on it, you have to change the whole concept. But the honourable Member for the City is correct. Even if you have to subsidise these houses at 50 per cent, it is the Government's duty to include in that project, and similar projects in the City and the surrounding areas, people from the particular areas.
6.30 p.m.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: And who?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: And the surrounding areas. I am not ashamed to argue for my constituents. But I am not talking about my constituents, I am talking a national problem. The people who live in Alkins and those places need houses, but I am not discussing them. I am saying that we cannot go on promising people year after year, term after term, Government after Government and when you examine the record, it is the same set of people who are at the bottom of the totem pole.

Mr. Chairman, they are the ones who are paying exorbitant prices. They are the ones who get laid off. They are the ones who go looking for housing and cannot find it. They are the ones who get ejected. They are the ones who are paraded on the television having their things thrown out because they cannot pay the rent. Many of them are honest people. I defy any honourable Member in here to get up and say that poor people, generally, do not pay their debts. Generally speaking, this country.....

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It is people like you who do not pay.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is right. The honourable Member is saying that, as a lawyer, he does not want me to identify them as crooks. But there are a lot of crooks who do not pay.

The fact is that this country was built – and the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite) will confirm this – on a number of poor people who have always paid their debts; people who joined meeting terms and got into all kinds of schemes in order to pay their debts. Those people are being dislocated and disenfranchised while we are making high-sounding statements, while we are constantly talking about inputs from this place and outputs from the other.

The fact is, as the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) has pointed out, a medium-sized house in Barbados is now beyond the average middle-income civil servant, and may, indeed, be beyond a high-income civil servant. A house that used to cost $35 000 in this country ten years ago is now selling for $180 000.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is a joke.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member is saying it is a joke. He cannot be serious if he says it is a joke because he knows that the houses which the honourable Member for St. Michael South East had in Oxnards, which were priced at $130 000, are now costing $180 000.

The best houses in Paradise Heights, with swimming pools, sold for $45 000 when they were built. They are now selling for $220 000.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You can buy one for $120 000.)

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You cannot get $200 000.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member must be mad.

I own a house in Rock Dundo. I bought that house for about $33 000 with a mortgage. The mortgage for that house is just over $200; I think it is $293. It is that kind of assistance which was being rendered to people.

That house, which I bought for $35 000, where the mortgage, I believe, is $293 a month, is now worth $180 000. There is no way that it could be acceptable in a society of this size that that kind of capital appreciation can occur over a period of ten years. We are not Trinidad and Tobago. We have not got any oil revenues which spiral the economy into an unusual and abnormal state. What we have here is a normal, open economy, which has been going along by a little calibration here and a little calibration there in the last forty years – and a little careful calibration will keep this economy going in a certain direction. But it has now become skewed, where a certain sector of the community is able to continue living at a certain level and the rest are falling way behind.

I am submitting to the Minister of Housing that constant rhetoric about what we are going to do in housing is not useful in the context of life in Barbados today. We are going to have to find a way, we must find a way as a Government, if you are talking about social services – instead of having all of these new operators who are beginning to offer low cost housing at high cost prices – to provide decent housing at a reasonable price, which would take care of the point raised by the honourable Deputy Prime Minister.

The area in which the dovetailing has not occurred is in the creation of housing projects. Let the Government indicate where its housing policy has been contributing to the economy and the development of the economy in the last three years. I recall that when the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) was the Minister of Housing that you could count the projects going on, one after the other. It is popularly put forward by the Barbados Labour Party Government that the Democratic Labour Party did not do anything in housing. That is fine for political rhetoric, but the evidence is there. There is the Farm Housing Area, Eden Lodge, five housing developments in the constituency.....

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Three in Wildey, Wanstead, in Oxnards, in Eden Lodge.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member is helping me. There are three in Wildey, and developments in Wanstead Terrace, Oxnards, Rock Dundo, Eden Lodge and.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And you have run out of time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, what I am saying is that the honourable Member has made a point, and it is a point which falls in with the policy of the Democratic Labour Party.

If one looks at Wanstead, where we delivered houses at $15 000, you will see that there are low-income people, secretaries and below who are living in their own homes. That did not come about by magic. It came about by the kind of sensitivity to the total needs of the community which we wish to see any Government resume. That is why I said earlier that we are going to have to get rid of that lot if we are going to see any progress in housing.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE and Dr. R. C. HAYNES rose.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, just two minutes.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: No. L. B.)

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I have to speak now.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Just one minute.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): I am not going to say anything contentious; honourable Members can bear with me.

As I listened to honourable Members speaking, I happened to have in my hand the chapter on housing in the forthcoming Economic Review for 1983.

I listened to all this about how the Housing Authority is only building sixty houses and that there are 7 000 people who want houses. From the days of the Urban Development Corporation, the housing demand in Barbados has been calculated as being between 1 500 and 2 000. Some years when it is calculated, it is 1 900, some years it is 1 500, and the figure that we have been working on is 1 700 houses.

It is obvious that the Government cannot build 1 700 houses a year in Barbados. It is equally obvious that for many, many years, as evidenced by the facts, there have never been adequate statistics of house building in Barbados. Successive Ministries of Housing right down into our own time have looked only at the Government's efforts, and they have measured the satisfaction of the public in terms of how many houses the Government is building.

The Government has entered into a new policy. The Deputy Prime Minister is trying to make it clear. Honourable Members on the other side are fighting the

housing politics not of five or ten years ago, but of twenty-five and thirty years ago. They are going back to when Hurricane Janet swept the island and Sir Ronald Mapp, as Minister of Housing, could, in three successive years, build well over a thousand houses, figures that have never been achieved by anyone since.
6.40 p.m.

But I am not looking back to those years. They were years when a particular problem was met in a particular way. We are trying to bring Barbados into the 20th century; in fact, into the post 1960 period, as understood in developed countries. In Britain today, less than 11per cent of new dwellings are provided by public house construction. In Barbados, indeed it is less. The reason is that the possibility of mortgage facilities being extended more widely is now understood in developed countries, and we are trying to bring it home to Barbados.

In 1977, there was $78 million in mortgage money outstanding. In 1978, it was $102 million. In 1979, it was $137 million. In 1983, $203 million was outstanding in long term mortgages. We have, therefore, multiplied mortgage financing in this country virtually by three since 1976, and this is the point. We are trying to put an end to the system of rented land so that there will be no tenantries and no more building wooden houses on land because the land is rented. The decision to build a wooden house or a stone house in the future, as far as we are concerned, will be a decision which will be taken on the grounds of cost or preference, or whatever -- not because it is forced on a person by the existence of land rent and the fact that there is no title.

The policy of trying to make money available for mortgages is beginning to pay off. I hear at least as many complaints that there is no mortgage money available as there is no house available. We have estimated that for about 28 per cent of the population, at present levels of income, the Government will have to aim at providing rented accommodation. We are battling with that in two ways: (1), by building rented accommodation, primarily by apartment building in the city and adjoining districts, and (2), by raising the level of income of that 28 per cent to the point where they will not need rented accommodation. We want to reduce rented accommodation to the stage which it now enjoys in Europe, United States, or in Canada, where such accommodation is used by people because it is convenient – by people who move people who are not ready to build a house, people who are transient, people who are going away, people who sell a house and decide to live in rented accommodation for a few years – rather than because of poverty.

The effect of these policies are now only beginning to make itself felt. I am very sorry to report that, for the reasons introduced by the honourable Member for St. Philip North, the banks are not pushing the USAID funds as they should. The funds are available for lower income people, but, on the one hand, the banks do not want to pay interest rates at which the funds are borrowed, because the spread is too small, and, on the other, the banks have a disinclination to deal with poor people. These are facts, and we have to fight to get over them.

I am also disappointed that the Government's scheme for putting land into the hands of people is not moving as quickly as it should. I think that the lawyers in Bridgetown bear some responsibility for this. Since you can only get $50 for drawing a conveyance for a plantation tenantry spot, there are no lawyers particularly interested in pushing it at that rate. I wish that they would allow members of the Cabinet to draw the conveyances. I have drawn one or two free for my constituents. I hope the Bar Council does not hear that and punish me at some future day.

The amounts of money are small and are paid in cash, so no financial institution really has an interest in promoting the share of plantation lands. They cannot be bought by developers, so the developers are not pushing them. Similarly, I have some reason to doubt whether people who live in the urban tenantries understand that, as a right, they can buy spots that they have. It is a matter of price negotiation.

For whatever reason, the land that is available in Barbados for sale as house spots is not being taken up. There are 900 unsold house spots in St. Philip. There are perhaps 1 300 unsold house spots in Christ Church. Only 13 per cent of the agricultural land released for residential purposes since 1970 has actually been built on. But we cannot get people to move forward. These are the things that we cannot get through. There have been many schemes for expanding the amount of mortgage funds available, and they are still continuing.

Having recited all the difficulties, I want to recite some of the achievements. The census returns came as a real surprise to those who deal in housing statistics, because everybody subject to the census, every household, was asked.....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. The Prime Minister referred to the census statistics. I would like to know when he is going to lay that Census Report in the House. It is a matter of national interest.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I hope the honourable Member will put that down as a Parliamentary Question so that the Statistical Department can see that not only the Minister of Finance is interested in it.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: It would not be laid until the next census if what the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) is suggesting is true. But I am very glad to take note of something which I had only previously heard as a rumour.

During the census, householders were asked when the house they lived in had been built, and, as a result of those answers, we discovered that some 2 700 houses had been built in the two years immediately preceding the census. These figures were so far in excess of anything that the Ministry of Housing, the Waterworks, Electrical company, or anybody else had imagined that we could hardly believe it. When they were further analysed, we realized that, if anything, it was an understatement, because, in many cases, when people who are living in wooden houses, and who have added on stone, brought water inside the house for the bathroom and kitchen, and so on, are asked when the house was built, they do not say the previous year – they say about 5 years ago, because they do not consider those renovations, which, essentially, they are.

I cannot quote precisely from the figures which I have here, because an error has been made. St. Philip has been omitted. The honourable Member for St. Philip North will understand that I have to send them back right away to ask that this most significant omission be corrected. I think some mistake has been made between St. Joseph and St. Philip. Very, very few houses are built in St. Andrew, St. John, and St. Joseph. According to this, 10 houses were started in St. Joseph in 1981, 3 were started in 1982, but 121 were completed in 1983, so I think there has been a little error.
6.50 p.m.

But, in fact, in 1982 at least 1250 houses were built, and in 1983, at least 1100. There was some fall back. The Economic Report will, in due course, give the best figures. But over and above that, the Ministry of Housing has made an estimate of how many houses were improved or substantially renovated during 1983. The estimate is based on new loans disbursed by financial agencies in Barbados for house improvement during the year, and they estimate that figure at over 1500. I give these figures as the best estimates the Ministries can produce. They consistently underestimate, but the figures of 1100 houses and 1500 substantial renovations are not out of accordance with the observation of the Town Planning Department and other departments that have to deal with these matters.

So it appears that the Government has for ten years only been a minor provider, not the major provider, of housing in this country. It is in recognition of this trend, that people want to help themselves, that the Government's new housing policy has been fashioned. We are now in a situation where between 2500 and 3000 people plus are getting some housing satisfaction every year, and this is in very considerable excess of even the highest estimates ever made of the need for new homes in Barbados.

We are looking at the whole thing. We are not repeating the worn out stories about 7000 people a week wanting somewhere to live. Maybe there are 7000 people at any given moment that fairly urgently have a feeling that they want to improve their housing conditions, so the honourable Member is correct. That is what he said, although he said "every week." I say "at any given moment" in any week there may be 7000 or 9000, but this will be in our considerations. This is what we really are addressing.

I do not know that there is any country with total housing satisfaction, except one whose population has fallen sharply while incomes remain high. Perhaps Switzerland is like that. No doubt there is no dissatisfaction with housing in one or two of the very high-income European countries with stationary population and hardly any pockets of poverty – Switzerland, Germany, and maybe Scandinavia. We are not in that position, but we are not in the position of hopelessly under-providing for the housing needs of the country.

I do not know how many honourable Members drive about the country. Everywhere you go in Barbados you see a back being added on to a house, you see new stone houses being built. I invite honourable Members to drive through my constituency, the wonderful and salubrious inland parish of St. Thomas. Go and look at the houses being built at Welches and Warrens. Every time I drive up there, I see another little knot of five or six constituents being created.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that, in a reasoned way, I have explained what the Government is doing, shifting from public to private. We are trying to help people to help themselves. The Government is going to help those who cannot help themselves, and obviously the people of St. Michael South Central have not been able to help themselves very well. We are also giving those who can help themselves the means with which to do it.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Sir, that this sitting be now suspended until 7.45 p.m.

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

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

6.57 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it now reverts.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. J. G. ODLE resumed the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee. When the suspension was taken, we were dealing with Head 79. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased indeed that the problem relating to a housing development in Martindales Road was raised not only by the only expert on housing in this Chamber, but also by a former Minister of Health, the honourable Member for the City (Hon. Miss B. A. Miller). I am also glad that the present Minister of Housing is also a former Minister of Health.

All who spoke before spoke about housing. The Honourable Minister of Finance was talking about the politics of housing. It is that which has given the genesis to the decision to place that kind of housing development in the Martindales area. I cannot think of any greater perversion of the concept of planning for the future than to utilize that particular area for that particular purpose.

We all know that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been built largely on a rock. Everything around the QEH consists of land that is very difficult, and expensive, to build on. We have the experience of the Nutrition Centre. As you know, that was built adjacent to the hospital, and, within a few years, that building cracked.

Across the road from the hospital there is Enmore. Across the road from there the rock continues into the Bannister Land area, and then into the Belleville area. Further towards the sea, you run into the same kind of problem. Indeed, fortunately we only had minor building problems, which we were able to correct at an early stage, in relation to Delaware.

It ought to be obvious to anyone that, first of all, it would be a serious error to place a housing development right next door to an institution of that kind.

The second problem is that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is going to have to expand sooner or later. You are thinking of establishing a National Health Service, and you can be quite sure that you are going to need support infrastructural services for that National Health Service. In a matter of years, you will have to take five times as many X-rays, and probably 20 times as many blood tests as you are doing now, and that whole area should be used for health related development. It would be unfortunate if you found yourself in a situation where you cannot find space to expand with the QEH bursting at the seams. I can tell you that the original design of the QEH has been seriously compromised in terms of air flow and so on, by trying to utilise every available inch of corridor space within the existing structure for development. Attempts have been made, and various soil tests have been done to carry out developments in the area behind the hospital, that is the area towards River Road. Again, there are problems in developing that area with any substantial structures. So you are going to utilise the only available piece of land for a housing development which, I am quite sure, within the foreseeable future, you will probably have to knock down in order to make way for a more sensible development.

You have problems with housing junior staff, and there are many things that can be done within the Enmore context there. Any housing development there is a totally inappropriate development, especially when the same thing can be done elsewhere.

There are many good homes in the Martindales Road area. What you need basically in that area is to assist, with welfare housing, those people who need assistance at that level, and to make available mortgage financing for those people who can take advantage of mortgage financing because of their income levels. It is not a slum area. There are many people in that area who would love to have title to the land on which they have their homes in order to further develop their homes. That is the process that we want to encourage in the Martindales area.

That proposal to put a development there is what I would call the "Tom Adams Ackee Plan." He planned that from a shop in Martindale's Road. He knows perfectly well that that is an inappropriate development for the particular area.

Asides

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Now do you see the problem? As representative for the area, one has a national responsibility, but I know the honourable Member is going to go to Hall's Road Roundabout and say that I got on the floor of the House and said that I did not want any housing development for the people of Martindales Road. But the people of Martindales Road know perfectly well that any time a housing development comes there, they are not going to get into the houses. They will be moved out,

and you know exactly what is going to happen – the same thing that has happened to the honourable Member for the City and other people. So I would urge on the Government to seriously reconsider that development in terms of a long-term development in this country, and I am very glad that the matter has been raised, not only on this side but on the other side. Let us set about improving the housing in the short and medium term as it stands; and when the time comes for permanent development of the area, let us see the best use to which the area can be put in the national interest.

The space in that area, I can assure you, is exceedingly limited. I also know that the hospital is bursting at the seams, and the only place it can expand is across the road. There is nowhere else you can build on the site where the QEH is, and I know that you are going to need that space, because the health demands of this community are going to multiply threefold once you introduce a comprehensive National Health Service. So you can either take my advice or go ahead and allow political considerations to dominate your thinking in regard to the use of the area.

In the private wards in particular, the grade A beds, those on the side of the road in Intensive Care you will notice that very often the windows in those wards – C 10, C 5, C 6, and the B wards – are kept closed. There is already a major problem with noise. Why are you going to inflict further noise pollution problems on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

That Bannister Land/Campaign Land/Delamere Land area is an exceedingly closely knit and stable community. There is very little crime in that area. There is a lot of self-help in that area. It is an area, though divided politically, which has a lot of strong Barbados Labour Party supporters, and a number of the people you are planning to move out of that area and disturb are very loyal Barbados Labour Party supporters, and some of the ones that are going to be more seriously hurt are your own supporters, so do not let politics influence the decision in relation to that Martindales Road area.

I urge you to think again, to assist the people in owning the plots of land and assist them in further development of their homes. Let us look for the longer term development of the particular area rather than attempt to destroy houses, because a lot of the houses are going to be destroyed, dislocate the whole community, and put up buildings which, in the long term, could turn out to be just temporary buildings when you are faced with making use of the same area of land far more efficiently in terms of your health development projects for the future, when you look at the need for post graduate education and space for post graduate programmes in Barbados.

7.55 p.m.

Asides

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The St. George's Medical School is an undergraduate school. Just think of the future and you will realise how short-sighted it would be to go and utilise a site like that for that particular purpose. I would say that you would be undermining a potential development of the major health institutions in this country.

You may recall that on the floor of this House I have always argued that the first polyclinic that should have been built should have been the Ladymeade polyclinic. I am sure the honourable Member for St. Andrew can confirm that. Because it would be adjacent to the Q.E.H., then you would be able to make better use of the space available, you would get the community more involved and understanding better the purposes and the functions of a polyclinic, and you would also get your secondary and tertiary health care facilities more closely integrated with what would primarily be a health care facility. I have argued that on the floor of this House again and again. That whole complex is ideally suited for health care development, and if you look at the Development Plan in terms of road development and so on over the next decade or so, you will see how a health complex would fit very nicely in that area.

In relation to this USAID money, I think it is unfortunate that the Government took the decision to borrow money at that interest rate for the purpose of housing on the one hand, and, secondly, that the Government has had to resort to a hard currency loan for the purposes of housing in Barbados. I have checked the figures, and the figures seem to me to be right, but I was surprised at the very low foreign exchange cost of house building in Barbados, which will probably be substantially reduced when you have the cement plant here. I believe that the honourable Member for St. Thomas almost certainly was considering balance of payments problems more than house problems when he got himself involved in that loan.

I recall that we examined this matter of a loan from USAID about 12 years ago, when I was Deputy Chairman of the Urban Development Corporation, it was rejected because of the criteria attached to the loan. They have accepted the money now, and the honourable Member for St. Philip North has pointed out the kind of difficulties that you have when you get USAID money for housing in the circumstances of Barbados. The kind of conditionality that is often attached to that lending is more suitable to countries which have reached a lesser state of development than Barbados.

I believe that sooner or later the reserve requirements of the Central Bank will have to be

adjusted, but there will always be a reserve requirement there, and that can be a source of finding funds for long term lending through the commercial banks of Barbados. I believe that the Government should look very carefully at how it allocates the available funds under the National Insurance Scheme, which is another important source of domestic funding for housing in Barbados. The Central Bank and the National Insurance Fund have an important role to play in that particular area.

Today I addressed an audience elsewhere, and I pointed out that the Democratic Labour Party has always been committed to the private sector in Barbados, that the Democratic Labour Party, by proper planning of its public sector programme, had given a considerable filip to the expansion of the private sector in Barbados. I further pointed out that we created two new private sectors in Barbados, and I also pointed out that we even got the private sector of Barbados interested in infrastructural development in the form of housing, and a lot of the housing that took place under the Democratic Labour Party was in the private sector, because an appropriate public sector climate was created for housing development in Barbados.

Now when it comes to housing, I know a lot about this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member's time has expired.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I am not necessarily winding up. I am entitled to speak like anybody else.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I just wanted to know if it is your intention or not.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I am not necessarily winding up. Anybody can speak after.

The discussion on this Head has ranged far and wide, and it is appropriate that I should intervene to reply to a number of things. I want to start with the last honourable Member who spoke on this matter, since he touched on subjects raised by the honourable Member for the City (Hon. Miss B. A. Miller) as well as the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) – the noise levels and the possible pollution springing from any development which might be made at Campion in Martindales Road.

The Members were constructive, and since I have a particular concern for the people who are within the compound of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I will look at it, since the Ministry of Housing and Lands has some responsibility for the environment, and, obviously, we would be concerned about these matters. I want to assure all honourable Members who have spoken that I have taken their concern into consideration.

There is just one thing with respect to the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes). When he said he did not particularly wish to have a development in this area, I wondered if he was saying that with his tongue in his cheek, because I got the feeling that I have to be beware of the Greeks even when they are bringing gifts. I believe that this is a stroke to tell me or the Government that since he did not want it, we had better bring it. But what he said about the expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is valid.

Touching on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and its possible expansion, the point of view is expressed, and to me with some force of logic, that with the building of the Ladymeade Polyclinic and the development of other polyclinics around the island, that there might be no need for the further expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. That is really a matter for people who are capable of pronouncing on such; not the doctors, but the people who are engineers within the medical field and who might be able to properly advise us.

8.05 p.m.

You cannot let the doctors advise, because if you leave the doctors to themselves, they would want to make the whole small island of Barbados a hospital. They like to have things on a big scale. They cannot operate within small confines. I know them. I have had to deal with them. I know that they have big tastes.

In a country with a small land area, you cannot afford to allow large areas of land to be taken up unnecessarily for the building of hospitals or anything else. You have to limit your resources and you have to find means probably of building upward rather than across. These are matters which the Ministry will have to look at, and the Government will have to look at them in terms of its physical resources.

However, I regard the debates which have taken place so far on this Head to be extremely constructive. I welcome the views expressed, with the exception of the occasional outburst of the honourable Member – and of course, he is very capable of that – for St. Michael West. He likes to be sensational. The only thing is that I was surprised that he attempted it today when there were no children in the visitors' gallery. He is always playing to the gallery, but he did not have the children today, so I wonder exactly to whom he was playing.

He tried to sensationalise the whole thing, talking about National Housing, throwing out people's furniture and levying on poor people, in response to a point made by the honourable Member for the City, when she said that St. Cecilia must be a place for city folk and for the poor in response to a remark about the police going in.

I take certain broads views as far as the St. Cecilia project is concerned. I am a product of the working class

people of this country. All of us are aware of where we come from but some of us do not recognize it. But I am very conscious of where I came from. I could not really deny the existence of the working class, the suffering mass of people, and I certainly would not be conscious of myself if I allowed a situation to develop where the working class people were not taken into consideration.

He talked about levying on people. I have got unbelievable documentation in here to do with the attitude of people towards Government properties. There are people who have been living in houses for over ten years without paying rent, people who have several other properties but are still living in Government estates and renting out their properties, and paying no rent to Government estates – all of this.

We have been seeing the newspapers, particularly the *Nation*, sensationalising the issue of levying on people. One wonders if it could be a coincidence that the *Nation* could turn up at the same time that a woman is going to faint. This woman has been living in a house, somewhere in Deacon's Farm, for many years. She and her husband have been living, illegally, in a house that was tenanted to a particular man. She agreed to pay the amount which was owing, more than $3 000, in order to get the tenancy because she would not be entitled to the tenancy.

If you are to become a tenant of the corporation, you have to apply properly. You cannot have people coming through the window. That is the problem that the Minister of Education has with respect to the headteachers in some schools. If some people are coming through the door and some can get through the window, all of them might opt to come through the window. If you want to be a proper tenant, you have to come the right way.

You cannot say that because someone is going away or moving into another home tomorrow, you can go into the corporation's property and be regarded as a tenant. This person went in and not only refused to pay the rent which they agreed to pay – they only paid $50 towards the $3 200 – but went in and themselves accumulated arrears of about $600.

What must the corporation do? The corporation has to find money in order to carry on. The corporation's expenditure per month is over $600 000, and the nearly four thousand units and several hundred lots of land rented out cannot meet even half of those commitments when the month comes. Do you want to tell me that a corporation like this, which is so heavily subsidized by the taxpayers, is not able to break even? You give the corporation all it wants, you buy the land, pay to develop the land and build buildings on the land – even with West Terrace, if there are profits to come from West Terrace, all will go into the coffers of the National Housing Corporation – and all people do is hold back payments.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North raised the question of management. He said that management is unsettled, they are not quite happy. They have a right not to be happy. But it is not my fault that they are not happy. They were there for many years and they had a right to equip themselves to feel at peace with whoever comes in as a Minister.

There are some Ministers who can be very patient. There are some Ministers who are in a hurry. I have worked in a few Ministries and all my time was short-lived. I have never known when I would be told that I would be going to another Ministry. If I want to get a job done, I am in a hurry to get it done, so I adopt the attitude that work must be done, and done properly.

Earlier in the day, we dealt with the Ministry of Transport and Works and the Transport Board. We are now dealing with the National Housing Corporation and the National Conservation Commission. Fortunately, for me, the National Conservation Commission is not much of a problem. The National Housing Corporation is a different kettle of fish. It is too politicized and, equally so, the Transport Board has been the same over the years. There are a number of people who feel entrenched and are concerned with wielding political influence.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West mentioned a lot of things today. I know that Miss Jordan or Mrs. Jordan fills him in very well with the information which he wants. I can say a lot of things which I do not want to say on the floor of this House.

I am a very tolerant person and I can cut my eyes to a lot of things. I am not a person who easily interferes with anybody because of their politics. I take a judicial view of a number of matters that come before me. I am not particularly concerned with names. I am not concerned with the politics of people. I am concerned with how well people can work.

You can see the type of approach which I bring to National Housing. When I went there, I felt that a manager was not doing his work well enough, and I called him in and spoke to him. There was no system at National Housing. I asked for the record of people. I asked for the record of the houses within National Housing. Would you believe that I was not able, for the year and over that I was there, to get a proper account of what was taking place within the National Housing Corporation. I could not get a proper inventory of the housing stock. I could not even tell you who was working within the National Housing Corporation. There was a "management" staff, but they could not tell me anything,

and I wanted to know, because you can only effectively manage and administer a system if you know what is going on.
8.15 p.m.

I spoke in this House of Assembly about "dead wood". I was not sensationalising the problem. I was speaking of the problem as I saw it, and I tell you that the management of the National Housing Corporation was able at all times, to conceal vital information from Ministers. When I discovered that they were not willing to be forthcoming with information, I decided to bring in independent people to get the information which I wanted.

There are a considerable number of houses out there which had in illegal tenants, about which the corporation's management was not aware. If all of us are taxpayers, and if the majority of people in this country who are taxpayers have got to pay for their own houses, and we subsidise Government houses to the tune of 42 per cent, do not tell me that the people who we are subsidising the houses for should not try to pay.

Aside.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: It is said that the poor will always be with us. I do not believe this is a biblical injunction. I do not think that Christ would wish it to be so, unless you mean that because a person is poor, the person has virtues. I believe that there are good virtues in poverty, but I do not believe that the goodly master intended that the poor must always be poor. Nobody has created more poverty among the people of this country than your party. When we came in here, there was chaos and misery among the poor. That is why they dismissed you in disgrace; they disgracefully sent you out, so you are not the persons to pronounce on that.

There is poor among us, we admit that, but it is not the wish of this party to send the poor to the wall. We have not tried to do that. There is a system within National Housing Corporation whereby, before a person who is in serious arrears is levied on the person is written on two different occasions. The person is then investigated to find out if the person can pay and if the person is working, and what are the circumstances surrounding the person.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands as a Ministry, as distinct if you want to put it this way from National Housing Corporation, will never tolerate such behaviour as we hear about and see or read about in the media. I have made it abundantly clear that there must be no televising of anything to do with levying, and, more than that, I have further given the direction that the Press, including television, must not be called in.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT. Mr. Chairman, I regret very much that the Minister attacked me. The honourable Member who just sat down is Minister responsible for National Housing Corporation. He relieved another Minister from his party when he became the Minister. I believe the honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) was the Minister when that honourable Minister took over. Now anyone coming from Mars and hearing the litany of woes which he just announced could not believe that he had not come in office fresh and new. He could not believe that he relieved one of his colleagues in that Ministry. When he talks of his inability to get information and how officers concealed information from Ministers, he is condemning all the Ministers who went before him.

You have been in power for eight years.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are saying that the Ministers before you did not have the perspicacity which you possess.

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: You went into the debate bad).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I went in the debate bad? I am going to deal with you now though, because I did not interfere with you. One of the things that this country has thrived on is natural justice. When a Minister in a debate, in the manner in which the honourable Member was debating, calls the name of the individual who is working in his department, it shows that he is bias against that individual. It shows that he cannot, in any matter dealing with that individual, be honest, fair, and impartial.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I now understand. I was trying to figure out who was Miss Jordan.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You put her name in the debate. I now understand why that poor woman has had to go to the doctor.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot call the name of an individual.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But he did, Sir. He called her name.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: He did, and that was an error; and this is another error.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am saying that a poor lady working in the Ministry is terrorized because the Minister is obviously bias against her. That is contrary to all the principles of natural justice.

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I do not know her!)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You do not know her? It is a good thing you do not know her. Get up and say that you do not know her. I am going to state categorically that I have never received information from that lady, or any other lady, about your Ministry.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. The honourable Member for St. Michael West is in a position to know how to judge these things. Why do you not tell the House how you sent home Leroy Murrell to sit down and draw the taxpayers' money? You would know about terrorizing people.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am going to deal with the debate today. The honourable Member is accusing me. A genius, that is what I am; I fired a civil servant. But I have never got on the floor of the House and indicate that I am prejudiced against one of my officers. It is one of the most disgusting things I have ever heard since I came into this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Head deals with Housing.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: She works in Housing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are not dealing with personalities. I must warn honourable Members to stay clear of that please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I stand warned, but she is my constituent and I feel hurt that any honourable Member who is a Minister responsible for a department can get up in this House and cast aspersions.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member is being irrelevant.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not being irrelevant!

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I am sure it is impossible for the Hansard Reporters to perform their duties in circumstances such as this.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Take the honourable Member for St. James North, who was a Minister of Housing. I have never heard him, during all of his years as Minister of Housing, come into this Chamber and attempt to take advantage of anybody. In fact, I have always heard him say that, during his time as Minister of Housing, he had nothing but cordial relations with all of the staff.

At this point certain remarks made by the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) were ordered expunged from the Record by the Chairman.
8.25 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: All of them know who my constituency secretary is, and anyone who would get in here and suggest that because he vilifies the lady .....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I must again warn the honourable Member. This is totally irrelevant, and I will have to exercise the rule as regards irrelevancies. Please stay away from this approach. Let us debate housing. Do not be too ruffled by the asides.

Members on the Government side, please!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You see, Sir, there is a rule in this House that an honourable Member should stay away from calling the names of civil servants, persons who work .....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please get on to housing.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am demonstrating why the National Housing Corporation does not function effectively, why it is not delivering the services, why it is not meeting the critical levels which the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) said a corporation should meet. If it is clear in advance that a Minister can demonstrate that he is prejudiced – I am not dealing now with the honourable Member, I am trying to show one of the reasons why the National Housing Corporation is in the state it is in – and a Minister says that there is dead wood, then the Minister repeats it over and over again, and then the Minister publicly, in the House of Assembly, not only castigates the staff, but goes so far as to identify an individual, I am suggesting that the morale of which the honourable Member for St. James North had spoken when he was Minister in that Ministry is bound to be at its lowest ebb. I am suggesting that the taxpayers of this country have every reason to anticipate and expect that the National Housing Corporation cannot function effectively if the Minister's attitude, as displayed in his speech, is an indication of what they might expect. It is thoroughly improper.

I will go on to show that it is against the constitutional rights of people in this country with regard to housing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, deal with housing! Are you dragging us into the Constitution now?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir. This is Capital Head 79. Subhead 1 deals with the purchase of buildings and lands. Subhead 2 deals with the construction of units of St. Cecilia, Maynards and Lammings, and Rosemont. I really do not see how the Central Administration should be involved in this. We have Head 37– Ministry of Housing and Lands – which we have to do at some time.

I would hope that Your Honour would draw the irrelevancies to the Member's attention, so he can stick to this aspect of this Head. Then he can come to Head 37, if it arises. The tone set by the honourable Member for St. Philip North should be followed. When I suspend the House, I am going to make a speech and commend him publicly. It is the best speech, full of depth and soundness, which I have heard from that side.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is that all part of the point of order? I can understand, and I do appreciate, what the honourable Leader of the House is attempting to do at this stage. I believe I have already warned the honourable Member about irrelevance to the debate, and I am sure he accepts and understands that he must carry on with the business of housing.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I understand. It is the honourable Member who just sat down who himself called Head 79. Head 79 deals with the Urban Improvement Scheme. It also deals with housing, National Housing Corporation, Grants to public institutions. It is my contention, Sir.....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Can I be heard in silence, Sir? The white haired gentleman.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member must be heard in silence, but I must warn him that his time is running very fast.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: My time always runs fast, Sir. I am aware of that. I have no quarrel with that. You may give me as much time, or as little time. I always abide by your ruling.

My point is that the morale of the staff that is working in the National Housing Corporation is very germain. The Minister spent a substantial amount of his time pointing out that he found veritable chaos in the National Housing Corporation. He said that prior to his going there, it was obvious that the people were concealing information from Ministers. I always try to speak in the English language.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It started with him then, Sir. Apparently it was not prior, it started when he got there. I do not know if he is suggesting that because they do not like him, the chaos started, because if it was not prior, it would have to start with him, and he delineated a whole series of chaotic situations in the National Housing Corporation. He caused long-standing, respected members of his party, members of the National Housing Corporation, to be fired, dismissed or revoked. All these are matters concerning the National Housing Corporation under Head 79.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am only discussing the effects, your firing whoever you like, whenever you like, have had on the whole question of housing in the country. I am suggesting.....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now the arch-interferer has just come in to spur up poor L. B. L. B. is here managing by himself, and he comes in now from nowhere to create chaos. The honourable Member who has just come in will not participate in this debate while I am speaking. I am going to ignore him. I know he wants me to curse the Minister, but I will not do that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please get ahead with housing!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Minister is normally a man who is very cool, Sir. We get along very well. I do not know who interfered with him tonight, why he called the lady's name, but I am drawing to his attention that that is not fair to her. She has never given me any information, not that I have not asked her, but she is such a loyal member of his staff, and she is so afraid.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: For the last time I will ask the honourable Member, and all honourable Members who speak in this debate, please do not debate the staff. This is not the purpose for which we are here at this time. I will not tolerate it, it is totally irrelevant, it is in very bad taste, and I tell all honourable Members in this House that that must cease now. There will be no more debating of staff.

8.35 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I believe that it is not right, if persons have not paid their rents – the honourable Member says that it is sensational – to be paraded on TV. Those persons should be dealt with through the process of law. If they are being dealt with through the process of law, no one can fault the Minister or the officials at the National Housing Corporation. What persons are concerned about is that the people who go to levy on these

persons living in the National Housing Corporation's houses, seem to have got a spirit of ill-treatment; and when a person is having his or her possessions removed from the house, that person does not have also to be subjected to the indignities of having it cascaded across the television screens in every household in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Who is Miss Jordan?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has only two minutes more, and that is because of the many interruptions.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is a standing procedure between the two of us now, Sir, and I have got accustomed to it, so it comes to me as no surprise.

I will take those two minutes to say that I am ashamed of the Prime Minister. I never thought that I could even admit that he was worthy of shame, but even he joins.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is irrelevant, totally irrelevant!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. Even the Prime Minister joins in that comedy to suggest that one of the officers in the National Housing Corporation is my constituency secretary. It is not true. The records of who is paid as my constituency secretary are there. She is not even a member of my constituency branch. It is thoroughly unreasonable, unfair and unacceptable for anyone to suggest this, and I am sorry that that is the basis on how they are going to treat her. I hope this Record will form part of any case which she brings against them, because it is clear that they are prejudiced against her.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): Mr. Chairman, I am sorry that the honourable Member who has just sat down has wasted a beautiful 15 minutes, in which he could possibly have made a substantial contribution to this debate. I think he got sidetracked into little trivialities.

I want to raise one or two matters under this Head which I think are of great significance. I am pleased to see the grant which is being given to the National Conservation Commission. I believe that that body is performing a significant job in this country, and it has, perhaps, a very leading role to play, not only in environmental control, but in beautifying in general the island as a whole.

The Commission has come a very significant way from its initial formation under the past Government, and I believe that people ought to become more conversant with its work, and the very good job that it has been doing in beautifying certain areas. I think that it is running Harrison's Cave as efficiently as one could expect, and I believe that it is making a genuine effort to beautify the environmental area of Bridgetown.

Much more can be done in keeping our environment clean, and I am taking the opportunity to appeal to the people of Barbados to avoid the litter which one sees around our streets and to try not to destroy some of our places of beauty. One can cite the fountain in Trafalgar Square. Sometimes if you look down from the Treasury Building you are amazed at the amount of litter and debris that is thrown into that area, and you can imagine the problem it proposes for the National Conservation Commission.

I am glad to see in these Estimates, too, the provision of money to start the construction of certain changing facilities at some of our beaches. I notice, in particular, River Bay, Rockley and Brighton.

Rockley is perhaps used by more people, both visitors and Barbadians, than any other beach in our island. We have some very serious problems of beach erosion in the area. I am aware that a study is being done by the Government, and I understand that the outcome of that study will shortly be available, but we have to try to protect the reef barrier off the whole of the south coast, extending from St. Lawrence to Carlisle Bay, in order to check the rapid erosion in that area. I also hope that the plans which the Ministry have for Rockley will include not merely changing facilities, but adequate facilities for those persons who sell their ware on the beach.

Mr. Jack Dear, the Chairman of the Tourist Board, is probably one of the most maligned Barbadians because of the manner in which he has really spoken out on some of the unfortunate attitudes which we have in this country. There is no doubt that the strictures were right. Regardless of whether he has been misrepresented or not, Barbadians must recognize that they have to be disciplined in their approach to their use of their own facilities, and that if we want to attract visitors to our shore, and we want to ensure that all Barbadians use the beach properly, we cannot just sum it up by saying "Da beach is mine", if, in that expression, we mean that we can do what we like willy-nilly.

I think that sometimes we mislead our country people into believing that licence is freedom. It is not. For every freedom which we have, there is a corresponding duty; and one cannot emphasize too strongly

our duty to preserve our environment and to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy the beaches without molestation from other persons.

I am happy, Mr. Chairman, to see that the Hotel Association and hoteliers are prepared to provide adequate facilities for those Barbadians who want to carry out their jobs properly. I believe that we have to tighten up security on the beaches. Perhaps, the Government should get expert advice and a proper study on how to dovetail the security personnel on the beaches, the wardens, into the other security personnel, and to co-operate fully with the police, because we have to eradicate the peddling of the dope on the beaches. In my constituency, I have known of the problems at Rockley. I have drawn some of these problems to the attention of the police and, wherever possible, I have tried to use whatever influence I can to persuade persons engaged in that sort of trade from prostituting the use of the beaches.
8.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I do not see a specific reference in these Estimates to the Graeme Hall Swamp.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are on Head 79, you know.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I know. I hope that the study on the Graeme Hall Swamp will soon be completed so that we can find the development for that area taking place as soon as possible. It is not merely a matter under agriculture.

I believe that the Government is making a genuine effort to deal with the problems of housing. Within my own constituency there are two housing areas, and I feel proud to say that Pleasant Hall Housing Area has the best record among all of the housing areas for consistency in paying rents on time. I believe that the consistency has a record of between 90 per cent and 95 per cent. This is because the people are responsible, and, secondly, I have always urged on those persons in my own area the necessity to pay their dues for housing. It is a priority, and whereas I am anxious to support anyone who wants to get a National Housing unit, I make it quite clear at my Saturday clinics that there is no way that I would be supporting any defaulter, unless there are extenuating circumstances which justify that person in a default.

There was a levy in the new area in Bonnetts among poor people. That will not happen again in Bonnetts. I have personally canvassed the residents of Bonnetts on this particular problem, emphasising the need to pay regularly for their occupation of the houses. Every defaulter means that someone else in the queue of over 8 000 people is without an opportunity to get a housing unit, and I think it would be reckless politics if we cannot say to the people occupying the 4 000 housing units in this island that they are getting highly subsidised rental units at the cost of the taxpayers, and that their contribution must be prompt payment.

I cannot understand politicians having a fear to talk frankly to their people. I always do, and I am sure I will get an increased majority next time. I do not get any fall out from it.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable member for the City asked if I want all the votes. I only want 95 per cent; the other five per cent, if somebody wants to waste their time, they can come and run against me and have that.

The point I am trying to make is that Barbadians have a way of understanding straight talk on issues such as this. It is a fallacy to believe that if you go around telling people that they do not have to pay rents, and that levying on them is wrong, they are going to respect you for it. If you tell them that they have an obligation to pay to help their neighbours, they may be angry at first, but in their heart they know that that is right.

I heard that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) does not like the site in Martindales Road, and he has advanced some very good arguments as to why he does not think it is an ideal site for a housing development. I believe that within the constituency of the honourable Member for the City, there is a lot of scope for urban renewal and development. I can cite three areas, about which Government need not hesitate, where they can shift that development to the area probably with better advantage – Nelson Street, Greenfields, and the Henry's Lane and Dunlow Lane area, where there is still open land. In fact, there is also the Valerie, in the constituency of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, and there is, perhaps the best land available for building – there is no foundation problem – land in Bonnetts which was acquired, and which is available in case the Honourable Minister does not want to delay his projects.

We are about to establish some other units in Passage Road and Church Village, and I hope that the Minister will give some priority to the city and to urban renewal. Perhaps the plans for Martindales Road can be looked at again, and in the meantime we could go speedily ahead with redeveloping some of the substandard housing that still exists in our city.

I think that the Government should also look very seriously at exercising the maximum influence on the

United States Government about the housing credit scheme. While I can appreciate the foreign exchange benefits accruing to the island from this scheme, I am concerned that some of the terms of the loan are such that they will dissuade people from making maximum use of the scheme. The United States officials are sometimes not appreciative of the level of development in Barbados, and usually associate us with the mentality of some of the more retrograde Latin-American banana republics and Haiti. I want the United States Aid officials understand that Barbadians have a reputation for paying back their money promptly; we do not default on loans. The means test that they are using is totally unrealistic, particularly when they use the income of more than one person together. It is too low, the terms of repayment are too rigid, and if they wish the money used, they will have to relax those rules, because there is a subsidy to the interest rate coming from the taxpayers of Barbados on that scheme.

I agree with the emphasis in shifting houses from the statutory boards, to the large extent that it has been before, to private development and private enterprise. I should like to throw out one suggestion to the Minister of Finance. We can perhaps in ten to twenty years beat the housing programme in Barbados by encouraging persons who have just come into the work force, and who are probably planning a marriage and looking forward to their family, to go on a savings scheme. Any money saved during the year should be non-taxable to them, and if they keep it over X years and use it as a down payment on a mortgage, it remains non-taxable to them. If, however, they use it for other purposes, it becomes taxable at whatever rate is applicable in the particular year. I am sure that by giving an incentive of that nature you will encourage savings, you will encourage housing development, and you will assist the young people who want to own a bit of their land and a house.

I use this opportunity to make a plea to the insurance companies and to administrators of pension schemes. Some of the pension funds in Barbados are substantial, but some of the insurance companies have not shown the foresight that one would expect of them in encouraging development. It is possible for an insurance company to go into the development of land and building houses. They can take the mortgage themselves, they can give a 90 per cent mortgage and, if they want, I am sure the Government can develop a position where the Government would give a guarantee – it is money that could never be lost, because in contingent liability the risk is low – in order to support the nature of this development.
8.55 p.m.

The other area that I think we must encourage the private sector and the quasi-governmental bodies, like the Caribbean Development Bank, to lend in is in the area of second mortgages. I believe that only the University of the West Indies has developed the secondary mortgage market for its own employees. But Government must do – and I am going to end up here, Sir, because I see that my time is going – everything possible to encourage the secondary mortgage market in Barbados if we are to flog the problems of housing.

Finally, a word of commendation for the credit unions. The credit unions are playing a very far-reaching role. I want particularly to congratulate the Public Workers' Credit Union for the tremendous contribution which it is making in assisting people to acquire their own houses.

I am sorry that time has run out, but perhaps on another occasion I will be able to expand some of the ideas that I have, particularly since the National Housing Corporation has said that there is no other Member of Parliament who has written them more letters on this problem than I have in the last five years, I think, that I have represented the constituency.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Mr. L. L. SISNETT, Mr. Chairman reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly at 9.00 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. J. G. ODLE resumed the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED

HEAD 79 CONT'D

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

Mr. L. A. WEEKES (St. Michael North West): Mr. Chairman, it would be very unusual, if not a strange

occurrence, if I did not make some contribution to this Head, bearing in mind Subhead 2 and Subhead 3, and certainly the comments made by the honourable Member for the City and some of those by the honourable Deputy Prime Minister.

The explanatory note to Subhead 2, which comes under the National Conservation Commission, is for the erection of beach facilities at Brighton. When the Spring Garden Highway was nearing completion, I made an observation that there would be a need for such facilities because of the use of the two beaches at Brighton and Brandon, and I am strengthened in that observation due to a recent incident.

While on one of the beaches, I was approached by two tourists and, to my embarrassment, they asked me to show them where they could find such a facility; and, to their shock, I told them there was no such facility. It was almost unbelievable, since they felt they had been seeking such a facility for a little while. I do not know what were the consequences of that particular incident, neither can I estimate how many other people of a similar nature might have had that same problem.

I am not advocating such facilities only for the tourists, but I am sure that the local residents themselves would be very heartened by such a pronouncement in the Estimates. I am going to urge the Minister to give this matter urgent priority in the light of what I have said, and because of the growing demands for such facilities, which could have some economic value.

I wonder if the Minister would explain, since Brighton is mentioned in the Explanatory Note, whether it is Brighton, or Brighton next to Brandon, or Brandon proper. Nearly all of Brighton is privately owned, so it would be very interesting to hear where this particular facility would be.

Subhead 3 deals with a matter which I think would assist the people of Rosemont. They have been complaining quite a long time about inadequate roads and the problems that attended thereto, the dust and all such. I am sure that they would be heartened by this particular provision.

There is one thing that puzzles me in the development of these complexes, that you leave them in darkness. I believe that it is an incomplete development if you put in all the other facilities and leave street lighting out, and I am strengthened in this particular position by an observation made by the Resident Beat Officer of the area. He is convinced that darkness is an aid to the criminals, since in the housing areas you have a cross section of people of different cultures, attitudes and behaviour. He is satisfied that this sort of facility should be there. I believe that lights should be installed at St. Cecilia, Lammings and Maynards, particularly St. Cecilia, where you are in a city area and you are more likely to encourage different elements, so I hope that you will not give out the homes until you have included this provision.

I said that it would be unusual if I did not take some part in this debate. By accident or design, I represent a very strange constituency, and I believe that if you were using certain criteria to be Ministers of Housing, I would qualify. I am not complaining about the methods but it would give me the opportunity to make the kind of contribution that I think is necessary. Let me give you some idea. In this one constituency, (1) we have Fernihurst, (2) Rosemont; (3) Farm Housing Area; (4) Golden Acre; (5) Rock Road Development and (6) the Pioneer Chattel House Pilot Scheme, implemented by the first Conservative Government. So if there is one person who may be qualified to speak on the problems of housing and the people in this area, I think I am.

The Minister of Education, the honourable Member for the City, was heard yesterday to be very concerned about the allocations to be made in the St. Cecilia district. It comes to mind that when some time ago, in this Honourable Chamber, the honourable Member for St. Michael East (Dr. D. G. Blackman), I think it was, made a similar plea, there was a very hostile reception.

I am sure that the Minister, as I know him, will bring to bear the kind of understanding to relieve the problem which the honourable Deputy Prime Minister alluded to – defaulters. Mr. Chairman, defaulters just do not default like that. Perhaps, as the honourable Minister said, just as we have the poor with us, we are going to have these people with us at all times. But we must make sure that the kind of machinery in action does not allow the political influence to encourage such a factor, and I say that if we are going to be partisan or parochial in allocating these homes, you are heading down the road to the real defaulters.

I say that because, over the years, there have been many complaints that the allocations were improper. I am not prepared to say that, but I know that there have been a lot of doubt as to the procedure used in acquiring a Government property. Maybe your committee, which, in my view, has been getting a very bad name, should very well look at, with the possibility of removing that committee and having a broad-based advisory body, which will remove some of the bias in such an operation. I hope the Minister will try to understand that I am helping the Government to remove some of the distastefulness that occurs from time to time in the house allocation.

There is also another problem that encourages defaulters. I am very unhappy about the accounting system used. The end result is that many of the residents

themselves can never be sure about how much they owe, or if they really owe the amounts in truth and in fact.
10.10 a.m.

Let me give you an example. Last year in June a tenant brought a notice to me and he said this is what I owe the National Housing Corporation. I looked at it well and I saw the genuine signatures on it, and I asked: "Is this the total amount?" He said "This is what I have been told." During this year, when efforts were made to collect the rents, he received another notice telling him that he owed $3 000.

In the first instance, I indicated to him that since he was not working – he had been laid off from one of the Government Departments – that as soon as he was re-employed, he should pay his double amounts. Since he had no bank account or anything like that, he was not able to get the resources to pay the full amount, so it was rather strange when he got the second notice. Even in spite of paying double the amount, he still got a notice to the tune of $3 000. This is not to say he may not have owed the $3 000, but the confusing situation is that if you send out one notice one year with one amount, and then another year, with the amount in the wrong position, the tenant must get the impression that that there is something wrong within the Accounting Department, and that frustrates the tenant, because he is not sure whether he owes the money or not.

If you give a tenant a rent book, the rent book should obviously coincide with the figures they have in the office, but recently we have been seeing some rent books with figures far away from what the notices have been saying, and most of the tenants believe that something is wrong. Some of them have not been given receipts at some times, and when questioned as to why the amounts have not been placed in these rent books, all sorts of frivolous excuses are given, like the machine is not working or something is not functioning. Some people do not have receipts to even argue their case.

Therefore, I say it is bad accounting somewhere. I think that it should be constant. You should be able to tell the tenant, from the first year of his being there, whether he has been paying his rents properly and whether he has been defaulting. I believe the tenant would not be able to owe these fantastic sums of money if the accounting section would pay more scrutiny to the way in which they operate these accounts. That is another area which I believe would lead a defaulter to default more, because if he feels he does not owe money, although he cannot justify or verify it, he tends to get very lackadaisical about it.

The other area where I think the National Housing Corporation has fallen down in its attitude towards the tenant is in its poor public relations. I do not believe that the method used in collecting the rents in the past few weeks will do any good in encouraging any proper relations between the tenant and the corporation. Far from it, it will create a certain amount of enmity between the two, and people, like the Minister, unfairly gets the blame. It is true that constitutionally, he would have to accept the blame, but it is not the desire of the Minister I know to unnecessarily embarrass, or depress, or make any of these people feel uncomfortable, because that party must be like the Democratic Labour Party in its attitude to workers.

Underlying all of this is the fact that one of the stipulations for application to entitle you to one of these homes is that you must be working for a maximum of $150. In a day like this, a salary of $150 or less would embody a particular category of worker in large numbers. He is either going to be a casual worker, or a semi-casual or unsecured job worker, which means that any time his job is in doubt, his rents are also placed in the same position.

The National Conservation Commission laid off some people on February 27. Clearly those individuals must have a problem in meeting a rent like this, and it is a fact that we must accept that we are providing houses for a low income group which is open to these kinds of difficulties. It would be interesting to hear from the Minister what the percentage of defaulters is like, for, in my view, you can easily locate the bad ones, but there is going to be a variety of people who, for a number of reasons, are not paying the rent.

Mr. Chairman, take an old housing area like the Farm and Golden Acre. Some of these people would never own a house in their lives. Far from that, they are becoming old age pensioners in these homes. So what are you going to do? Are you going to say that housing is an economic venture? After fifteen to twenty years of people paying the Government rent, because you are subsidising it, are you going to behave like the old landlord and say: "Go and find somewhere, we have no place for you, we have to put some people in there who can give us rent?"

These are the problems that confront National Housing, and you would have to prepare for the defaulters. After all, defaulters are not outcasts. Many of them are people with problems, and even the guilty in the law courts get representation, and since you have given me all of these housing areas – I do not know if you like me that much that you gave me them, but I have all of them – I have to represent them. They, like the guilty, need representation, and that is what I am doing. I am trying to bring to bear in the debates not the acrimonious feeling that existed before, but I want the Ministry to search out these problems in a humane way and try and

let us get a housing development that people are very satisfied with.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member who has just sat down in his quiet way introduced a lot of matters into the debate. I respect his approach to matters, but he impresses me as what we in a friendly way refer to as a desert fox. I want to correct him on something which he said just now. He said that since we have given him the housing areas, he has got to represent them. He has given himself the housing areas, we have not given him, because he went to them with his eyes wide open and he understood what the problems were.

But he said a lot of things and make a lot of sense in what he said. He said that even though the Minister might not be responsible for what is happening within National Housing, he has ultimate responsibility and he cannot escape the blame. That is true and I agree with him entirely. There are some people on your front bench as shadow Ministers who, in the remote possibility that your party is returned to office, might come forward to high position, but who continue to feel and to pronounce that if Ministers see things wrong, they must not seek to put them right. Responsibility must carry a measure of power with it. Dr. Bush – at the time when he introduced his experiment – said that Parliament had power but not responsibility. In an exercise of sharing the power and responsibility, he decided that he was going to select certain people from the party, which, in his opinion, was most likely to command a majority, to advise him. If you are to get things put right, you have got to exercise that power – not in an arbitrary way, but there are things which you must, of necessity, put right.
10.20 a.m.

I want to put the record straight in connection with a matter. The honourable Member for St. Michael West, said during his speech that I had mentioned a name. I did not during my speech mention the name of any person employed by the National Housing Corporation and who has any affiliation with another person. I mentioned that name across the floor – which the Chair did not take any notice of, and which the Reporter had no right to take notice of – to the honourable Member when he was speaking, and it was he, himself, who introduced that name. I do not bear responsibility for introducing the name in here. The honourable Member must take full responsibility for having introduced the person's name into the debate, which will go into Hansard. We do not do that, and I have no intention of doing that.

The last honourable Member who sat down referred to the provision of facilities at Brighton. He wondered if we are going to put the facilities at Brighton or Brandons, and whether this is only for the tourists or for the people of Barbados also.

There is no facility at all, that I know of, that is owned by the Government and is there for the tourists alone. It is not for the tourists, it is for the people of Barbados. The transport system in Barbados is a subsidized system. It was not really put there for people who come in as tourists. But what must you do? Must you tell the tourists that they are not to use the transport system? They are our guests. There are people who pass by my home, whom I do not know. Sometimes they hop into my place and ask me if they can use my facility. I say: "Yes, come in." That is a friendly approach.

The facility will be built into the area where the citizens of Barbados go to have their bath and their recreation; not on a private property. You cannot put it on a private property, unless the Government acquires it.

As far as lighting is concerned, that is a matter for the Ministry of Transport and Works. We can ask them to look at these areas. We agree entirely with you that, in the absence of lighting, there could be problems of vandalism and to the breaking and entering of people's houses, because wherever there is light, darkness flees; wherever there is light, people who have had intentions will move away, although I do not know if light is any deterrent to the fierce type of gangsterism that we are seeing.

We read daily of people who break into other people's properties, and robbing banks and other places in broad daylight. It shows how fierce the thief is today, and what people can really do. So even in a properly lit area, you may still get this type of vandalism, and while we agree that lighting might help to some extent to reduce this situation, it would not prevent it. So we have to address that problem as well.

He dealt with the collection of rents and the system which is being used. No system is going to satisfy anybody. The defaulting tenant is like a guilty man who goes before the court. He seldom ever pleads guilty and relies upon the court to be sympathetic and show mercy. He is prepared to fight to the end that he does not know.

I have given the Member for St. Michael North West a note for his own benefit, relating to the history of a matter which he questioned me about, a private matter between us. I hope that he will deal with the person involved in a quiet way, which I believe he is capable of doing, and confirm the truth of the report which I gave him. The report is in black and white. It deals with a person who is claiming that they do not owe the money that the National Housing Corporation is claiming is owed.

I do not approve of inviting the Press in any form to go to see the levying on people's houses. It is wrong, it is improper, and I have made my position on that

known. But the Minister, in the final analysis, must accept responsibility, so when the Minister acts in axing the wicked people who will perpetuate these types of wicked actions, the Opposition should not cry, "Foul".

Levying must go on. I am not apologizing for that. I have said it before, and I will continue to repeat it. Other people have got to pay their own mortgages, interest rates, insurance, and pay for the upkeep of their properties, in addition to paying income tax, which goes towards assisting in the building of these units, which come out of the Consolidated Fund, and it is unreasonable to expect that you can allow people, who are capable of paying, to run up arrears.

And there is a system in the extended family unit in Barbados where as soon as a granddaughter or grandson, or even a distant relative, recognizes that the old lady or old man is living in a house free from rent, the relative quickly gravitate to the house. We are paying the electricity bill for the house for them, but they have a telephone, which they make sure they pay for – and they make a lot of overseas telephone calls, too. These are the problems which we have to address.
10.30 a.m.

No levy, as I said, and I emphasize that, is carried out without proper and due notice given, and an investigation made by social workers into the ability or otherwise of the persons to pay. It is all right for the newspapers, in sensationalizing the situation with respect to what is happening with layoffs or levying, to find themselves lined up. It does not happen by accident. It is no coincidence that you can find on the front page of a newspaper a big strong man with a woman, who is equally as big and strong, pretending to be fainting and crying. It is a good thing that God is a merciful God, otherwise both of them would have fallen down.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North wished that the fellow at Bonner's place at Bottom Bay had fallen into the sea, but I do not wish that they would fall down. I wish that they remain strong and continue to be able to parade before the newspaper photographers in order to act in the way they are acting. If they were in North America, they would be able to get a huge sum of money for the performance which they put on. They should not be living in Barbados. They should be living in a big society. They would have done well.

There was another lady who said that she broke down when she was levied upon, as though a bunch of heartless and faceless people came in and levied on her without giving her adequate notice, and as though she did not owe the money. She owed every cent. Actually everyone who is levied on owes. In the normal course of things, even in the private sector where a landlord has only six tenants, there might be a levy which might not be entirely accurate. National Housing has over 4 000 units to contend with, and, therefore, a mistake will be made occasionally.

Sir, I will come at a later stage.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): I would like to make a very brief contribution in respect of National Housing Corporation in support of my colleague. I believe that when this Government came into office in 1976, they inherited what one can safely describe as a cancer in rent collection and the managing of the National Housing Corporation units. I wish my colleague well, I wish him the best of luck, but for years scientists have been fighting very hard to find a cure for that deadly disease called cancer. They have been able to diagnose it. We have been able to diagnose the problem. It is now for us to be able to prescribe the medicine.

The levying on people by the National Housing Corporation, apparently has attracted the attention of some members of the public, who considered the Government to be heartless in its approach, that in the month of December one can think of going to levy on a poor old woman's or man's house. I recall that I had a very humane approach to the problems of rent collection in particular in the National Housing Corporation, and I believe that my successors have approached it in that way.

One may not recall that we had waived all the outstanding arrears for the old aged pensioners, whom I still believe are among the best paying tenants of the National Housing Corporation. But there is an attitude among tenants of the National Housing Corporation that the houses are Government owned and, therefore, they have the right to free living. And there is no doubt that when the Opposition party was searching for power, in 1956 and into the year of 1961, they encouraged the people. This was 23 years ago, but there are still people from 23 years ago living in those very houses, and that attitude passed down the line. You told the people that they are your houses and not to pay the rent, so there was a callous approach all through the years, and Government sympathetically overlooked it.

I recall that I had a meeting with the National Housing Corporation's administrators and I told them to send out, I think there were as much as four letters, to the people asking them to only come in to the office and make some form of arrangement, and in so doing examine the incomes of the persons and the size of their families. It was agreed upon by some people that they would even pay as much as $2.00 per week over the rent which they were supposed to be paying so as to reduce their arrears. Some of them came and paid $5.00 per week, and those who could afford more paid more.

But one of the problems which I discovered is this. You will find that the husband and wife would apply to the National Housing Corporation for a house, and would be given the house because of their low incomes. They start to raise their children and you find the sons and daughters living in the house. Now, the man is old and the wife is old, but rather than help them pay the rent and keep the house going, they think of things which I do not think are priorities. Their priorities are wrong.

I know of people who applied for houses at the National Housing Corporation and who were living in houses owned by private landlords, paying as much as $25 and $30 per week for houses without any water, lights, in places with no roads and the roof of the house coming off. They religiously had to pay that house rent to the landlord – otherwise, he was going to throw them out. You would take that very same person and put him into a three bedroom Government house with water, toilet and bath. If a leaking tap needs a washer, they call the Government's Technical Division to do it, but it is those people, who would have paid the landlord $30 a week for a run down, broken down house, who would come, get a $10 or $15 a week house, not pay the rent, and end up owing the Government five and six thousand dollars in rent.

10.40 a.m.

I believe I was the first Minister in this Government to start levying on people. I am not going to call the names, but I know of two people in particular living in Christ Church. One man used to hold dances twice a year and you could not get into Club Randall. I believe the Member for St. Philip South would have attended some of these dances. He had a taxi and a small minibus, and he used to carry students to the Lodge School. He had arrears of $3 600. He is a big man; he had big arrears and a big income.

Then there was another man, whom I have met on more than one occasion at Alexandra's night club buying brandies and whiskeys and soda for the white girls. He had 40 rings on his fingers and seven chains around his neck. When I checked how much money he had owed the National Housing Corporation, he had a debt of almost $4 000. You all know him very well too. If I feel like drinking a Dragon sometimes, I drink one, because I like Dragon stouts.

I carried out these two levies in that area to let the other people know that they would be levied upon in the same way these two gentlemen were levied upon. I had a system. In every single housing area, a levy was carried out.

We came on the floor of the House and we appealed to the tenants to pay their rents. We went to them when they were given the houses, we kept meetings in the areas where they were living, and we told them point blank to pay their rents first and everything else afterward. This is what really bothers me. It is not fair to me as a taxpayer, nor to you on that side, that in some of these houses you could find a colour television upstairs and one downstairs. I know this for a fact. There is a coloured telephone upstairs and one in the bedroom. There is a refrigerator and you have to move half a door to get into it. There is a washing machine, and parked outside is a car. They are the ones who would owe the National Housing Corporation enormous sums of money.

I know there are also other people who find it very difficult, and most of them are women who find themselves with four and five children – unfortunately, for five different fathers. They are left with these children, you cannot find the men, and they have to struggle to pay the rent. Some of them cannot go out to work because they have to remain at home and assist with the kids. These cases, I believe, are the ones which the Government and my colleague here have been investigating, because there must be a humane approach in dealing with such individuals. I have no doubt about that.

I also feel that my colleague should examine very carefully a man paying in accordance to his income. I feel this is how it should be examined. If you have a family income of $1 500 a month, which is possible, because you can have two girls working for about $600 a month, and maybe another $300 here and there, and you can ascertain as a fact that these children are living there, one should be able to make that individual pay a certain percentage of his pay cheque so as to assist the woman with the five or six children who cannot afford to pay.

It is a social service. It is a service which the Government offers. You offered it, we are offering it. It is a welfare service which the Government has to subsidise. It is low income housing. It is one of these social approaches to a society in which we look forward to having peaceful and happy living.

I can identify with his problems. I will say here on the floor of the House that it is a Ministry I never want to see again as long as I am alive; that and MTW. I would never want to see the two of them.

I sat in here and heard all sorts of arguments about Transport and Works. I had to carry the Member for St. James South – I believe that was the first time in about ten years that we spoke – along with my colleague, the Member for St. Michael South East on the balcony outside. It was about 4.30 in the afternoon. I said: "Look out there and see the country you are living in." Hardly an old vehicle was passing the road!

I am not introducing the subject now, Sir, but look at the Transport Board and see the conditions under which we are living, a country with limited resources. Of course, it is

your duty first to oppose, secondly to oppose, and thirdly to oppose. I was in the Opposition, I know Opposition politics only too well. You trot out things to impress upon the public that you can do better in this Government than we are doing. I have heard all the arguments, but I have not heard the solutions to the problems.

I believe we are tackling the problems of the National Housing Corporation in a humane way. The defaulters have been given a lot of sympathy, and I have no doubt they will still be given sympathy. Maintenance is high, the cost of construction is high. People from overseas come here and marvel at the type of housing we have in Barbados and the price which is paid for it. I believe it would be hypocritical of Members on the other side if they did not agree that on more than one occasion they have had visitors from overseas, their families, who have come back here and marvelled at the type of housing we have in Barbados.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, the points raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael North West have been handled quite adequately, in my view, by the Minister and the Leader of the House. I need not go into that. My contribution under Capital, Head 79, Ministry of Housing and Lands, has more to do with my perception of what the housing needs of the country are.

My understanding is that Government is doing a study of what the housing requirements are, and it has been established that Barbadians require 1700 houses per year. The demand defines that need by relating it to affordability. Of the 1700 houses required, 35 per cent of those persons who require houses cannot afford any type of house under the financial and construction programmes that exist today. This means that there is a need for a new type of housing programme – a prefab type perhaps is what we need. We have to break away from the old traditional system of block and mortar in order to create efficiency of building and reduce the cost of construction. Twenty five per cent of the remainder of those people cannot afford to buy a house at all. Twenty five per cent of the population of Barbados cannot afford to even buy the cheapest prefabricated house that it is possible to build in Barbados. Therefore, out of the 1 700 people who require housing on an annual basis, only 1 100 householders can afford to buy some kind of house, so you have to eliminate 600 householders automatically. That is why the Government, through the National Housing Corporation, must continue building houses for rental units, and that is why it is important for people who rent these housing units to pay the rents. When you have $7 million in arrears in rents, you cannot build more houses. If the Ministry of Housing and Lands could collect $7 million in arrears due to them in rents, they could build $7 million more in houses for rental.

There are over 20 000 applications at the National Housing Corporation for people who want houses. The honourable Members, especially for the St. Michael constituencies, would know about that. I am, from day to day, presented with two major problems in this country – (1), housing, and, (2) jobs.

We are aware that unemployment stands at 15 per cent. It has not been this high since 1975. Housing has always been a problem, not now, and, as the honourable Leader pointed out, in the late 1950s it was the policy of the Democratic Labour Party to encourage people not to pay the rent and, to a large extent, that permeated the generations. That is why we have to make a stand now.

None of us on this side of the House and, indeed, I dare say I do not think any self-respecting Barbadian, with any sense at all of what is right and what is wrong, any person who has any feeling for humanity, would want to throw someone out of their house. But if the facts are that these people owe money to the National Housing Corporation and can afford the luxuries of colour television sets, motor cars, coloured telephones, video games, video recorders and so on, they must pay their rents or they must be thrown out. It is as simple and straightforward as that. We must make room for the underprivileged of the country, those who cannot afford not even a telephone, those for whom, through the Welfare Department, you must pay electricity and water bills, the mothers who have five and six children, who are on welfare and who are unemployed. These are the people who, in my opinion, need houses from the National Housing Corporation.

There are some young couples now setting out to get married. Some, indeed, before marriage have two or three children already. These are the facts of Barbadian life. The National Housing Corporation must provide houses for them, and the only way that we can do it, based on our scarce natural resources, is to ensure that those people who presently rent housing units from the National Housing Corporation pay their rent.

The 1980 census indicated that the housing stock in Barbados numbers 67 166 units. Between 1970 – 1980, we built an average of 857 houses per year. Between 1980 and 1982, we dropped slightly, because of the international recession, and we have only built some 752 per year. But the 1982 estimates of housing, based on the above figures which I have just given, have now brought the housing stock in Barbados to 69 400 houses.

In 1980 there were 38 500 chattel houses in Barbados. By 1982, two years later, it had been reduced to 36 900, a transformation of 1600 houses from timber to concrete. As one drives through the country, Mr. Chairman, one can see the front part of a house, the side

part of a house or the back part of a house being added on to the chattel house in concrete, and as the months go by, and you pass the same house, lo and behold, the house is transformed from timber into concrete. No one can deny that, and statistically we have been able to prove that 1 600 houses have been transformed from timber to concrete between 1980 to 1982.

Of the 69 400 houses in Barbados, we have to look at some other areas that are of importance, and would indicate the standard of living in this country. Approximately 63 000 of the 69 400 units have piped water and 35 378 have water-borne toilet facilities. I am not saying that all is well in this little paradise of ours but, I am simply saying that, with every passing year, the housing stock is improving, the transfer from chattel houses to concrete is improving.

The policy of Government as it relates to this whole idea of the construction of houses has been focussed mainly on some major objectives, the first being to identify what the major problems are, and I must compliment the Minister in this. He has set about systematically to find out what the major problems are in relation to housing in Barbados because you cannot have a solution to a problem unless you are able to identify what the problem is. These problems are (1) inadequacy of funds for long-term mortgages; (2) bridging loan financing for mortgages; (3) unavailability of residential land; (4) high cost of land; and (5) high cost of construction of houses based on the standard format.

Having identified the main problems, what are the solutions to these problems as we see them? You have to create an environment for Barbadians to own a house at an affordable price. You have to provide the framework to expedite the transfer of tenantry lands to tenants. This has been a problem; the Prime Minister touched on this last evening. You have to get the private sector more involved in building low-cost housing to take some of the pressure off the National Housing Corporation. You have to encourage Barbadians to be more self-reliant, to encourage Barbadians to stop calling their parliamentary representative and begging for houses from the National Housing Corporation because there is very little that some parliamentary representatives can do.

As a matter of fact, there is very little that any of us can do, as the facts demonstrate. There are 10 000 applications for houses, and we are building 700 or 800 a year, so it will take 12, or maybe 15 years to satisfy the demand. And the demand gets greater each time, because as more young people come into the workforce, get married and raise families, the demand for houses will increase – and we still have to improve the condition of housing in rural and your urban settlements.

11.00 a.m.

What is the Government's strategy? It is very easy for Members on the other side to criticise Members on this side in relation to transport and works, housing, tourism, manufacturing, export goods or whatever. But, as the honourable Leader of the House said when he sat down, we are not hearing what they would do if the Democratic Labour Party were in power, and I am very interested to hear what they would do.

I have a great deal of respect for the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I want to hear what the policy of the Democratic Labour Party is in relation to housing. I do not want to hear what the problems are; we know what the problems are. They know what the problems are, the country knows what the problems are. I want to know what some of the solutions are. Assist us to ensure that we do what is right for the people of this country in relation to housing.

I do not expect the honourable Member for St. John to tell us what they would do, or to come to the House and let out their secret, as I heard in an aside. But if you are conscious, and I am sure he is conscious – in my view he has always put Barbados first, in my view he has made a contribution to this country that is second to none in my view, and no one can take away the contribution made by the honourable Member.....

Asides.

Mr. A. TRUSS: I am entitled to speak and I am entitled to say how I feel on these matters, and I will say privately, publicly, inside this Chamber, outside this Chamber and on top a platform that the Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition has made a distinguished contribution to this country. No one can take that away from him.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Why, Sir? Are you cutting me short? I am not yet finished.

I do believe, however, that the Prime Minister of this country, the Right Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the honourable Members whom he leads on the front bench, when you compare the front bench on this side to the honourable Members that represent the Democratic Labour Party, are, in all fairness, better equipped – as we say we are the great combination – to handle the problems in this country not only in relation to housing, but in relation to every other aspect of the Government's economy. We have proven since taking power in 1976 that we have been able to do better for the people of this country than the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot do any better than to ask the honourable Member to conclude his speech. Your time is up.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, politics and Estimates time cause some strange speeches to be made. That is not unusual. If you have been in politics long enough, you know that some speakers like to do everything in their power to try and ward off attacks, but the honourable Member will learn that there are some people who, no matter what good you say about them, when they are ready for you, they are coming for you.

The National Conservation Commission and facilities were touched on this morning, and I think it is appropriate that this matter be raised. The Government's position is very clear on certain matters in relation to facilities in Barbados. In 1979 the Government amended the Parks and Beaches law, as it then was, to permit the regulation of selling services on the beaches in Barbados. There was a tremendous amount of debate at that time. Government, as usual, was subjected to much abuse, particularly by the Democratic Labour Party. The intention of Government was subjected to much distortion, particularly by the Democratic Labour Party, but we stood our ground. We made it clear that, in our opinion, just as you had to provide rules for the regulation of competing users of the public highway, so too you must have rules and regulations for competing users of the beaches to which the public have access.

I am appalled at the reckless, irresponsible attitude adopted by some organisations in Barbados when, at their annual conferences, they get and openly distort the whole intent of the legislation. Never have I heard such nonsense emanating from the President's mouth as the nonsense I have heard emanating recently. It is a fact of life that anybody who checks with the Parks and Beaches Commission, who checks with the enforcement authorities on the beaches, will recognise that little of the problems that we have now with harassment on the beaches arise from the activities of women. There has never been any charges that the women give problems on the beaches.

Since the regulations have been enforced in 1979, some 327 have been licenced. Every one will tell you that the women, particularly the older women, are the ones who are the upholders of the law, and they help the wardens to enforce the regulations. It is a group of pimps, male prostitutes, selling their fronts and their backs that we have to deal with. And I do not care what they say, the Labour Party is determined that we are going to eradicate the drug sellers from the beaches, the male prostitutes, and all of them who harass people who want to sit down on the beaches – and harassment relates not only to foreigners; it also relates to local people and it relates to colours. Some of these homosexuals are so aggressive, so desirous of money, that they attack people when they are refused attention.

I have written a letter to the Prime Minister. I do not want anybody to be in any doubt about this. I am 1 000 per cent in favour of the rigorous enforcement of the law on the beaches to prevent this. The policy of the Ministry of Tourism is that all the Government agencies should combine and make an attack on it, and no foolish, stupid, ignorant, asinine resolution by any organisation is going to stop the Government – not in this case, because we are on the right track.

Barbados is building up a great reputation for its courage in dealing with a problem which plagues every tourist resort in the Caribbean and in other parts of the world. People have been writing our Ministry asking us for information on how we are dealing with it. At long last the hoteliers now understand that they have a role to play, too. They must provide security guards to guard their own properties. They must provide, as part of their contribution to the tourist industry, spaces where we can put up huts in conjunction with them.

There is no new policy. Since 1979 the battle was fought, but it is popular now to say a few things about this beach is mine. Paradise and Sam Lords, were the first hotels to respond to the request of the Government to set aside an area for specific sales by registered beach operators. It works quite well at these hotels. At Heywoods, a specific area was designed for a beach market. At the Welcome Inn and Sand Acres in Maxwell the same thing is occurring. All over Barbados, where there is a demand for it, the National Conservation Commission would willingly co-operate and provide these areas, because it makes us unique if we are courageous enough to let it be understood quite clearly that if you want to sell, go in a specific area.

11.10 a.m.

As a matter of fact, I have no objection, as I have told the Parks and Beaches Commission repeatedly, to licensing the so-called black coral boys in these areas. I have no objection, because if people want their services, they will go there and pay for them, or make a contact there and go somewhere else for them. It does not matter to me. But we are not going to have the situation which exists now, where, if you are a young girl, or a young man and you look like a young girl, and you are lying down on the beach, people come up to you and offer their services. That is happening here every day.

One of the greatest complaints that I have ever received was when I went to California. Some American ladies told me that when they came to Barbados and they were on the beach, they could not enjoy themselves for two minutes without a lot of young men telling them that they wanted to mother them. It is a fact, a lot of

young boys go up to elderly ladies and tell them that they look good and they want to mother them. The ladies asked me what they meant, and I said that the word, "mother" is sometimes used in a very peculiar way in Barbados.

This happens, and people write about it, so why are we to be afraid to speak out about it? That group can pass a resolution on me, but I am saying that the experience of Barbados is such that a police certificate of character is necessary for one to sell on the beach. We do not want drugs salesmen, rapists nor male or female prostitutes on the beach, but there is no attempt to prevent anybody from earning an honest living. That is the position. I want to hear the views of the other side on it. Let those who are in favour of law and order and proper regulation on the beaches identify themselves.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON and Mr. B. M. TAITT rose.

(Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: He is not looking out there at all.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot have two honourable Members on their feet. Please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member said he would like to hear the views of the Opposition on the beaches .....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do no mind what the honourable Member tells you he wishes to hear. You just have not caught my eye.

Laughter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did not realize that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I am relieved to see that your eyes are working all right.

I would like to make a brief intervention on this Head which we have been discussing.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do not worry to quarrel with Truss.)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: No, Sir, I am not going to bother to quarrel with the Member for St. Michael Central because he is entitled to his independent opinion. The honourable Member for St. John knows that that is not universally shared on his side, so we need not discuss it further.

Laughter.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: In examining the problems that are associated with public housing in Barbados, I am very pleased to note the fact that the Minister responsible for Housing has articulated the position with respect to the manner in which he will be proceeding towards finding a solution to the problems of public housing.

Housing is one of the areas where we have almost a need that is beyond fulfilment, particularly today when the social values of people are constantly changing. We see people moving away from the concept of the extended family operating under one roof, and we are seeing a proliferation of young householders, who are moving away from their parents and seeking to set up ther own facilities. This sociological phenomenon is not peculiar to Barbados; it is indicative of the developmental stages through which all societies pass, and it is a sign of development. When these things begin to happen, when you see young people aspiring to be independent householders, it indicates that there is a high level of upward social mobility, and that, indeed, people are experiencing a fair and reasonable level of economic prosperity, because, obviously, a person cannot move off on his own unless he has the resources with which to support an independent household.

In Barbados, we can expect this phenomenon to increase, and it is noteworthy that the Minister responsible for Housing, in recognizing this situation, has determined that it is perhaps more sensible to de-emphasize the public involvement in the actual provision of houses and more towards providing an environment in which private developers can utilize their capital to provide houses for people to live in.

In relation to private investment, I should like to identify another phenomenon in Barbados. It has to do with the fact that we, for many generations now – it is part of the Barbadian cultural heritage – particularly at the lower socio-economic level, have always been a self-help society.

The vast majority of so-called chattel houses that we see in this community, and, in recent times, the vast majority of transitionals, the ones that moved from chattels into wall, have largely been constructed out of self-help. These are not houses that were initiated by private contracts in the sense that a builder chose a piece of land and then built a house on it. This is the phenomenon where people, having their own land or rented it and built a wooden house on Sundays with exchange labour from friends, and that process led to a completed unit. And then, as they moved from one socio-economic level to another, that wooden house gave way to a wall bungalow, as we used to describe them.

I believe that it is only in Barbados that one sees this sort of chambered nautilus effect, where people living in a chattel house start building wall around it,

and then one day you pass and you discover that the wooden house is now leaning up, and a wall house emerges – and the people never move from that spot. Those houses are built through independent, self-help labour, with people in the neighbourhood, families and relatives lending their services. In many cases, no real money passes; it is usually that people come over and give a hand in the expectation that when their turn comes, they too will be assisted by the persons who at the particular point in time are being helped.

So the point that I am emphasizing, and I should like to recommend it to the Minister, is that when we think in terms of private investment, we ought to be sure that there is enough capital resources available to these people so that they can go and borrow money. They do not usually require $45 000. In most cases, they do not need a mortgage. These people build houses by buying 100 blocks at a time, two Oran windows, which they lean up under the cellar, and they do it piecemeal until they have completed their house. The longest period over which they will require financing is usually five years, and I would like to see some of Government's resources for lending provided for these persons so that they can be able to continue what indeed is part of the Barbadian tradition.
11.20 a.m.

I do not think that we, in recognizing this as an aspect of the Barbadian society, make enough practical and technical resources available to these people. I am wondering if it would not be possible for us to contemplate providing small manual concrete block makers – these are not expensive to manufacture; you see them in places like Antigua and Dominica – so that a fellow building a house builds his own blocks.....

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The point I am making is that it is wrong to suppose that Barbados, or any society, develops at the same level and at the same pace. There are people in Barbados who need a mortgage and who have not reached the point where they can go to a bank and command the kind of attention that they think the bank manager should give them – they just do not have those resources – and I am suggesting that it is possible still to recognize that there is a stratification element involved where there is still a small number of people, and these are the ones who tend to get overlooked all the time, who still require that kind of assistance.

This brings me to the subject of sites and services. We tend sometimes to believe that everybody has 7 000 square feet of land, which he has paid for, and can find $30 000 or $40 000 with which to make a start and then get a mortgage for the rest. But the demand for sites and services in Barbados should be instructive. If we designate any area for sites and services – I am talking about chattel houses now – you would be surprised at the response you would get. In my constituency, if I could find 200 spots now, I could guarantee you that by now and the end of next week all of those 200 spots would be taken up – by people who are waiting. This is that self element of our society that is now coming into the house market. They want to start off owning a property costing $30 000, built of wood, which they will sell in five years and then move into a wall structure. I believe that we need to pay a little more attention to that particular phenomenon.

There is another aspect of this housing business that I want to examine. Politicians sometimes create problems for ourselves because we lack the courage and forthrighteousness to be honest and straightforward with the people we represent. We have indulged in a lot of foolishness in the interest of trying to appeal to cheap votes. You tell people not to pay for the houses in which they live, although you know that you cannot enforce that as a policy. And when your turn comes to collect the rents, you are going to be faced with the same people whom you have instructed not to pay the rents – and they are not going to pay: they are going to be disenchanted when you tell them then that they have to pay.

I believe that it is wrong for politicians to try to appeal to the worse in people. Our duty is to explain to them that if they are occupying public housing, they have to pay for the privilege of living in it. If they do not intend to pay, they have to move out – move out or be put out – and let some of the thousands who are out there on the waiting list, and who are willing and able to pay for their accommodation, come and occupy those places.

I have in my hand a case that is indicative of the kind of problems we have in our society. Here is a lady occupying a Government house in the Pine since 1974. A politician put her in that house. She has not paid rent since that time until this day. In addition to that, Sir.....

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please get on with the debate.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: This house was sold to a lady in that day for the grand sum of $5 627. That lady went to the United States, having not paid for the house in full, and died in the United States. This politician moved this lady temporarily into that house. She has not paid any money in respect of the rent, or any money in respect of the purchase since 1974, and those arrears have been mounting up. National Housing, through the new systematic programme that they have, managed to

identify this lady, and she is saying that she should not be charged for rent arrears because she used her money to repair the house. It is not hers; how can she go into somebody's house and presume to repair it?

In addition to that, she was given a spot in Grazettes, upon which she has her own private house, and she rents that house out for the sum of $120 per month. She has been getting rent since 1974 for a house in Grazettes and she is occupying a Government house in the Pine, and not paying a cent. Meanwhile, there are hundreds of people in the Pine who want houses and cannot get and there is this lady living in a Government house free.

When we go and drag her from in there now, the lady, who the honourable Member knows, will go and tell the television camera people that we, the Labour Party, are evicting her. She will cry long tears, and the *Nation* will go and put her on the front page with a big, strong man stopping her from fainting, thereby creating in the minds of the public of Barbados that here is the Barbados Labour Party, heartless, cruel, and indifferent, taking advantage of a poor, helpless soul.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please wind up your speech.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Yes, Sir.

This lady is drawing rent off the taxpayers of Barbados, and we are supposed to be helpless and powerless to deal with these matters.

I suggest that we as a Government have to be purposeful, and we have to be sure that what we do is done justly and humanely, but justice must be done, whatever the consequences happen to be.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I would like to address my contribution under this subhead to the question of beach protection and the work of the National Conservation Commission.

I think that on both sides of this Honourable House it would have to be accepted that the Parks and Beaches Commission and its successor, the National Conservation Commission, have done a good job for Barbados in terms of the preservation of the beaches. I really hope that the speeches in this Honourable House will not seek to drag that particular agency into a politically partisan position or into a partisan debate, because I do not believe that the preservation of our environment is open to partisanship.

I wish to respond specifically to a point made by the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, the Deputy Prime Minister, who raised the question as to what is the position of the Democratic Labour Party on the protection of persons on the beach from lawlessness. I think that the question was really a rhetorical question because no responsible political party, or indeed no responsible individual in Barbados, could have any objection, or could have any negative reaction, to the carrying out of the law as it relates to Barbados in general, and on the beaches in particular.

11.30 a.m.

I think that even the Deputy Prime Minister must be careful not to frame positions on this issue in extreme ways. It is not a question of doing it Jack Dear's way, or Gabby's way, because perhaps neither one of them has taken the position that has been attributed to them. Gabby's calypso has, unfortunately, been used by a number of people in this society to bring out their own prejudices when they attack the calypso and seek to blame the calypso for what is going on on the beach.

The fact is that Governments in Barbados, and more particularly the Democratic Labour Party Government, have over the years insisted that the beaches in Barbados were not available for sale, they were not available for owners of land to turn into private beaches, and that the people of Barbados, whatever their status, should have at least one last place where they can feel equal with everybody else. So the concept that the beaches belong to everybody in Barbados, as recently adumbrated by the President of the National Organisation of Women, ought not to be used as a whipping boy to deal with another problem and another issue which requires national attention.

Prostitution is older than any other institution that we know of, according to the history books. Male prostitution is on the increase in Barbados and has been for some time, and I think that such activity must be linked with the general attitude pervading the society, and given credence by the Government in its attitude to such matters of casino gambling and that kind of thing.

The lack of morality in the society cannot be attributed to any single sector. There is a feeling in the society that getting money quickly, without effort, is not wrong. That has been abroad now for some time, and that is at the back of a lot of the attitudes which one can find both on and off the beach. But I do not wish to stray into a broad discussion on morality, I want to stay with the beach.

Let me say specifically that I as an individual, and we as a political party, do not and cannot condone any attitude of molestation on the beach of Barbadians who go there to bathe, or visitors who come to this country to enjoy the facilities. It would be a very strange concept for a political party not to agree with the honourable Member that the advanced form of gigolos which now crudely walk the beaches of Barbados should be rooted out. How could we not agree with him that that has to

be rooted out in this society? But we cannot allow persons of a certain kind in the community, in an attempt to root out this particular evil, which stalks the beaches of every country in the world that caters to tourism, to inflict another evil.

It cannot be that everyone who approaches the property of a hotel is to be treated as if he or she is a thief, a potential rogue or a potential vagabond. Mr. Chairman, about nine years ago I was on a beach that is near where I live, and two very old and not particularly attractive tourists approached me in a manner which offended me, because I felt that, as a Barbadian who had been walking on the beaches and swimming at Paradise beach for all of my life, I could not have been identified as a gigolo merely because I was black and athletic looking.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: How long ago was that?

Mr. B. M. TAIT: Nine years ago, Sir. I really felt that some of the visitors to this country do bring with them a number of the bad habits which they have from their own countries, and which they have picked up in their international travels, and they do contribute, and have contributed, to the moral decline in Barbados.

What we need when we approach this problem is an even-handed approach. We need to make people aware, by a process of education and concerned involvement, that preservation of the beaches from physical and social degradation is in the interest of the entire community. We do not need to make this point by a brutal approach, by the police state mentality which did emerge from the statement published by the Chairman of the Tourist Board as it was published in the Press.

No one is going to take sides for one position against the other position and be right, because if you say that all persons, irrespective of whether they are pushing dope or whether they are looking for handbags to snatch, or whether they are legitimate people going to have a sea bath, must be able to go on the beach without let or hindrance, that is tantamount to saying that you should have chaos. On the other hand, as the Attorney General has said on more than one occasion, if you are implementing the law, the implementation of the law must be seen to be done fairly and courageously, but, nonetheless, in a manner that the population can understand.

So I think it is time that we stop this business of pitting one extreme against the other, and giving the impression that you are either in one camp or the other on this question of beach security. I think it is a matter that has taken a very bad turn in the debate which has been going on, and I think it is time that we approach the matter sensibly and recognise that we need all the abilities we can gather from anywhere in this community to deal with this very serious and pressing problem.

For as long as we have as many as 400 000 tourists coming into Barbados, we are going to import with that 400 000 tourists a number of problems which we did not have ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. What we have to do is find solutions. We have to move with the times, we have to send some of our people to see how they have dealt with these kinds of problems in other places that receive more visitors than we do and that have had these problems longer than we have had them.

I want to turn to the question of physical beach erosion. I notice in the Estimates that provision is being made for remedial works arising out of a report from the IADB that is called a diagnostic survey. I wish the Minister, if it is possible, to make that report available to this Honourable House. I am interested to see what this diagnostic survey has come up with, to see what are the steps which will be taken to preserve the coastline in Barbados, and what provisions are going to be made.

The sum of money which is voted is not a great deal, and from my research a few years ago, in 1980 to be exact, when it was necessary to look at some of the natural resources in the eastern Caribbean region, I formed the impression that in some of the areas of Barbados, arising out of the development of the tourist plant, we were getting a rapid degradation, part of it man made, of the coastline. You will recall, Sir, that there was a tremendous amount of destruction to the west coast because some of these entrepreneurs had taken matters in their own hands and had not only built their own groynes, but had destroyed some of the natural physical environment of the west coast.

11.40 a.m.

We have not had a report on that sort of activity for some considerable time, but I am loathe to criticize the Government on this issue until one is able to see what precisely is being done. I saw a few statements from a lady, who has come out, I believe, under the aegis of the IADB, and she had promised that within a very short time she would have been presenting to the population the prescription for the beach erosion which was going along the west coast and, I believe, along the south coast.

I think that it is very important that the Government recognizes that we need all hands to the plough in this particular issue. Again this is not a matter for partisan politics, but it is a matter of serious concern to each and every one of us, because once there is rapid degradation of the coastline – it does not go in arithmetic at all, Sir; it is a very rapid destruction, as you know, being yourself a scientist – it takes hundreds.....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No. He is a *bona fides* scientist.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are honourable Members discussing the Chairman?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I happen to know that he has an interest in coastlines, Sir.

The point I am making is that it takes hundreds of years to build back part of a coastline that can be destroyed by a thoughtless act on the part of some entrepreneur, by dynamite or some other agent of the kind.

We have been having a tremendous amount of shift in the coastal waters, and in the next few months we are going to have a cement plant that will result in a considerable change in the use we make of the land to the north. We are going to be quarrying, we are going to have the problem of dust, and we are going to have the combination of heavy traffic on our roads and congestion arising out of the operation of the cement plant. I think on all sides we are agreed that the cement plant was necessary for Barbados. We regret on our side that it has taken as long as it has, and therefore cost as much as it has cost, and the jury is still out as to whether the capacity of 280 000 tons is a desirable size for an island of 166 square miles, but that is something which we will discuss in more detail as we come to look at that. I want to know what provision is being made for conservation of that north-western and north-eastern coast of Barbados in the light of the new developments which necessarily must come, and which has started, with the provision for the cement plant.

I see that you are signalling that my time is up. I hope that the Minister will be in a position to answer some of the questions I have raised, because I would like to make a further contribution on this once we have got the information from him.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Chairman, I have decided to make my contribution under this particular Head. After listening to some of the comments from honourable Members from both sides, I felt that as a former Minister responsible for Housing, I should make a few disclosures. The honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) did say that the policy of housing differs somewhat under the present Minister from what it was under previous Ministers, and I want to make it clear that there is no change in the Government's policy on housing.

When I was Minister of Housing, it was made public that the National Housing Corporation would no longer be called upon to build houses for sale, and it was said at that time that private contractors and developers would be invited to assist in providing housing for Barbadians. the policy of Government then is still the policy of Government now.

In an effort to bring this policy into reality, one remembers very well my saying that the cost of housing was too expensive, building per square foot was too expensive – and there was a tendency to increase it day by day – and that the cost of housing could be reduced.

Honourable Members criticized me: They thought I was mad. I maintained then that we were not looking at new technology and different systems. When I mentioned systems like the eurocrete and the spraycrete, among other technology, other Members, in particular Members from that side, wondered what madness I was talking then.

In order to prove my point, I went on a private trip to Puerto Rico and examined a system there. Today, that particular system is in Barbados. I think one or two model houses are on show here, and the company is about to set up a plant in Barbados. The main reason I went to Puerto Rico was because I felt that there was a need to look at new technology, with a view to reducing the cost of housing and to speed up the building of houses.

I also said then that we should look at private developers who had done extremely well in Barbados and we should invite them to build houses on Government-owned lands. I said that Government would either lay out the land for them and invite them to come in and build the houses, or make the land available to them, and when they sell the houses and land, then the Government could retrieve the money from the sale of the land.

Ideal Homes is one of those projects that came into being during the period of time I was in the Ministry, and no one can fault Ideal Homes. We made lands available in the Wildey area, put in the infrastructure, and invited Ideal Homes to build houses on those lots, and the joint project by Government and Ideal Homes has worked extremely well. I think some 10 or 12 families have already moved into these homes in Wildey, and I am sure that the Ministry of Housing has been looking at other joint projects, because other persons have expressed a wish to get involved in such joint projects.

11.50 a.m.

In the 1983–84 financial year, provision was made in the Estimates for housing to further accelerate this particular policy. We said that we would put in the infrastructure in certain lands owned by Government. Walkers in St. George was one of the areas earmarked, and we also looked at Parish Land in Christ Church and at lands in Spooners Hill. That is a policy presently pursued by the Ministry of Housing and Lands, so there is no policy difference here.

As far as the National Housing Corporation is concerned, Members in here must understand that personally I do not think there is any reflection on me. I do not

think that any former Minister feel it is a reflection on him, and I hope any future Minister does not feel this way when the National Housing Corporation fails to carry out its responsibilities as set out under the National Housing Act.

I remember that when I assumed office there was some $4 million owed to the Corporation: It was not that people were not willing to pay, but it was because there was always this tendency at National Housing Corporation to drag feet, not to see the pressing need to get after people who owed the corporation money. This has prevailed. Ministers before my time have tried to impress upon persons who had bought or rented houses from the corporation the need to pay, and I am sure that they appealed to these persons to pay because, if they paid the funds which they owed we would have been able to accelerate the building programme of the corporation.

All of us have asked people; we even begged them sometimes. I remember one of the first things I did when I was Minister was to go on VOB. I was interviewed and I said that there was one gentleman who had owed $4 000; he was driving a brand new Subaru, changing it almost every six months, and yet he was living in a Government house. I got after him. There were people who had two houses, people who were living in houses illegally, and who did not pay the rents. There were people who were sub-letting the Government houses and receiving the rents from those persons to whom they sublet them, and they never paid the corporation.

The point is that we do not need to point fingers at any Minister. When my colleague makes reference to problems at the National Housing Corporation, I do not criticise him, because they are problems that were always there. The National Housing Corporation has a history which all of us ought to be aware of. It was responsible for welfare housing. The honourable Member for St. Michael North knows that, so he will appreciate what I am saying. Up to 1976, it was still responsible for welfare housing, and because of the welfarism which prevailed, people began to feel, those who were not even welfare cases, that they should be involved in some sort of welfarism, and they began to adopt the same attitude by not paying.

Another point is that you had rent collectors like Mr. Rose. He was made an OBE by the Democratic Labour Party, though he may not want me to mention that. He collected money as a rent collector and never paid it in. All these things happened, and the very persons who are called upon to pay up to this day are persons who have claimed that they have paid money in to rent collectors and the rent collectors did not pay the money in to the National Housing Corporation. These are things which we have got to examine very closely.

When I was Minister, I decided to address myself to the question of rent collections, and I set up offices in Wildey, the Pine, Rosemont, in St. James and in Gall Hill, Christ Church, with a view to providing tenants with a rent collecting office in their areas so that they would not have to make the excuse of not paying because of the distance, or that they could not travel to Country Road to pay the rents at the headquarters of the National Housing Corporation.

I also had a complement of staff, headed by a Chief Collections Officer, whose responsibility it was to see that the rent collectors discharged their responsibilities by collecting the rents. I told the chief collector that it was his job every week to check the books, because they were given books with names, like insurance people. It operated like industrial insurance, and it is a good system; I worked in industrial insurance and I know how it worked. So the collectors went out and collected the money and, as soon as they came in, some time on Friday or Monday, the staff manager, who was then the chief collector, would go through the books to see who missed. I then told the chief rent collector that if he discovered that persons did not pay for two weeks, that he ought to go out with the rent collector to the very house and make enquiries of the tenants as to why they did not pay. I went on to say that the collector should look at the reasons given for inability to pay, and if it was a genuine case, then the chief rent collector would report this to management or to the board and they would look into the particular case, because there are some people who are genuinely unable to pay; they might be out of a job, they may be sick.

That is why I set up the system. But there is always a lack of will to discharge duties. That is exactly what happened. And no Minister, no matter who he is, is a magician. He cannot make an officer discharge his duty.

Sometimes you got a report; you heard about arrears. I have come into open conflict with my officers when they showed me some figures stating that they were $2 million in arrears. I said that that did not represent the true picture at National Housing Corporation, because I remember well that, in 1979, the Cabinet took a decision to write off the arrears of genuine welfare cases and persons who were said to be statute barred, people who were completely unable to pay.

I will say this before I sit down. The National Housing Corporation has not done that, and the Minister will find that those persons remain on the National Housing Corporation's books, and that is why we will see that it would appear that there is no significant dent made on the arrears. I want the Minister to understand that officers in there sometimes led us to believe that they were carrying out their functions when they just were not doing that.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I will be very brief, Mr. Chairman. There are just two points I have to address my mind to at the moment. One of them comes under Subhead 3, which says that the provision under this subhead is to enable the National Conservation Commission, among other things, to establish lifeguard stations at the Crane in St. Philip.

My view is that if you are going to establish a lifeguard station, you must first have something there for the lifeguards to do. As you know, Mr. Chairman, for the past three or four years Crane beach has been inaccessible. Before that, Crane beach, I believe, was one of the more popular beaches for excursions and moonlight picnics. I have come to this Honourable Chamber before and I have mentioned the problems at Crane Beach, and up to this very day I have not heard what was the cause of the delay for not doing some work at the Crane. But now that a lifeguard station is proposed to be established there, I would hope that the first thing you do, instead of putting the cart before the horse, is to get the horse before the cart and fix whatever is wrong at the Crane Beach first, so that the lifeguards will have some sort of work to do. 12 noon.

Under Subhead 5, it says:

> "The provision is included under this subhead to cover expenses associated with the transferring of house spots within plantation tenantries to occupants as provided by the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, 1980."

There are quite a few tenants on Hopefield Plantation. The owner of that plantation, I believe, a couple years ago, probably pre-empted the Government in the law that they were bringing in with regard to tenantries; he sold the land to a private person. The private person apparently did not understand that, because of the new Act that was being brought in by the present Government, he could not force those persons to move, because they were there for a number of years, and that if he wanted to sell, the first thing he would have to do would be to consult with those persons.

The person has apparently suddenly realized the position which he has found himself in, and in an effort I believe, to recover the money he spent buying Hopefield he is at the moment contemplating getting those tenants off the land. I had to speak to the tenants in that area, and I have told the Minister of Agriculture and some of my colleagues on this side about it. I have been informed that these persons only have to go to a lawyer in order to remind the owner of the land of the situation with the new Act which states you cannot just make people move in that manner.

What I am getting at, Mr. Chairman, is that the real estate agent, who is trying to get rid of this land, is the same person whose name cropped up last year when this same sort of thing occurred with a lady in Woodbourne. I wonder if this particular real estate agent just sits and waits for this sort of situation to occur.

I do not believe that the lady who was forced to move last year should have had to move. That is my view, according to the law. But she had to move after having lived on that land since 1947, and I hope that these persons on this tenantry land, which used to be part of Hopefield, would not be forced to move, against the law, as that lady was forced to move last year.

It is all right for people to say that they only have to spend a little money on a lawyer and have things straightened out, but we know that, in times like these, it is not easy to get money to pay a lawyer or anything else. I believe the Government should step into matters like these and advise owners of these lands as to what the law says, so that they will comply with the law in Barbados and allow these people to remain on the land in comfort and in peace.

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

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I am going to speak on a different note. I would say that, as far as housing is concerned, the policies of the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party are about the same. I remember that in the early 1950s, there was the famous Barbados Labour Party, and the then Minister of Housing, who I would consider a star, was Sir Mencea Cox, as he is now. Then, we came to the early 1960s, and we had the Democratic Labour Party regime, and I would say that the star minister in those days was the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves). Now, in the present Barbados Labour Party's regime, I would say that the star was the Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig). In my opinion, the three of them, who have been there in the last twenty-five years, have done fantastic jobs as far as housing is concerned.

I do not believe that we would ever have a Minister of Housing who would not try to do his best. I had the privilege of visiting a few countries around the world, and when I look around and see the improvement in and the standard of housing that we have in Barbados, in comparison with some of the places in the United States of America, one can really be proud to know that there is a Housing Corporation with a difference; one that will always try to house our people in the best housing environment possible.

But, Mr. Chairman, here or late in Barbados, there are some people who have the feeling that when the National Housing Corporation builds a housing estate in a particular constituency, the housing area belongs to the

people who live in that constituency. That is a very dangerous feeling. I do not like it at all.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I agree with you.)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: I believe that all the funds which go towards building housing estates come from the taxpayers of this country.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: True.)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: I am one of those people who believe in the even distribution of housing accommodation.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Hear, hear!)

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, in the constituency of which I am the representative, there was an old lady who lost her house about five years ago. The welfare officer did all that was in his power to find rental accommodation in the parish of St. Lucy, but he could not find any. The nearest place he could find accommodation for that lady was at Haynesville, St. James. The lady was over sixty years, and at no time did that lady relax in Haynesville. She was always worried and, eventually, she died. Young people die and old people die, but I believe that if the officer could have found some place in the parish of St. Lucy, where that lady, as accustomed, could have had her friends around there, she would still be alive.

There are some constituencies which currently have as many as six housing developments, and there are others with none. I believe that the only constituency in Barbados that does not have a housing estate is the parish of St. Lucy. There are some people who try to give me the impression that the people of St. Lucy are proud and they do not like living in housing estates. I do not agree with that; nobody could fool me with that. I believe that there are poor people all over Barbados, and I feel that if housing estates are good for the parishes of Christ Church, St. Michael, St. James and others, they are good for the people of St. Lucy as well. We are taxpayers in this country and we should have the same rights as any of the other constituencies.

I am sounding a warning. I am not altogether happy or satisfied with the situation in St. Lucy. About two or three years ago, we heard that there was going to be a housing estate somewhere in the Checker Hall area, and now, when I look here at the Estimates, I do not see it mentioned on the agenda. I am very, very worried about that, because I feel that we should have the same privilege as people in the other constituencies.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak on the acquisition of land at Checker Hall. Yesterday, the honourable Member for St. Michael North spoke about it, and I thought that the debate on housing today would be the best time to satisfy myself about the matter.
12.10 p.m.

The honourable Minister will tell me that they have already acquired land at Checker Hall. I agree that this Government acquired eleven acres of land at Checker Hall. But now there are some Members who feel that this land is too close to the cement plant. I am trying to accept that, but everybody gave me the assurance that the cement plant would be dust free. Why is it that this land will now be too close to the cement plant? I am worried about this, and it is something that has me a bit doubtful.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think this is fair for the residents of St. Lucy. We were quite satisfied living in the Parish of St. Lucy, and especially in Checker Hall. We did not ask the members of the Democratic Labour Party to come down there and acquire land at Checker Hall to erect a cement plant; we have to agree that it is progress. The Barbados Labour Party has now implemented it and they built the factory. But those people are accustomed living in that area and after approximately four years have gone, do you not think that we should know where those people have to go?

I remember listening to an honourable Member yesterday who said that somebody would not allow the people to go. But go where? In the first place, you have to find some place to send the people. You cannot just tell them to go. They cannot go in the air or the sea.

We have the St. Barnabas Road, the Spring Garden Road, the Speightstown By-pass and the Oistins Development. All those projects came on stream since we had acquisitions to construct the cement plant, up to today you have the management of the cement plant harassing the people of Checker Hall, telling them that they have to go. They are treating those people unkindly.

I do not think that is good enough for the people of St. Lucy. These people have had quit notices for four years, but they have no place to go. These people were not paid out. These are poor people. Where will they go?

At Christmas people have the tendency to clean up and do things. These people cannot do any of those things, because they do not know when the men will come with the bulldozers. They are threatened day after day that the cement plant manager will come with the bulldozer and remove them. But I would like the cement plant manager to let me know the day when he will go and bulldoze those people, because he will have to bulldose me with them.

The cement plant might be all right for the island of Barbados, but is has stopped the progress of St. Lucy

as far as housing is concerned. I remember that yesterday our honourable Prime Minister quoted the parishes which had outstanding rates of building. St. Lucy was always one of those parishes with a high rate of new buildings. Today, it is different. We are definitely suffering a loss. If we could only find somewhere nice where people would like to build, I am sure that we would be quite happy and satisfied.

I am appealing this morning to the honourable Minister of Housing. As my good friend and colleague, I believe that he will do all in his power to speed up this exercise, because it is causing me great concern. I would like to see the road being cut because we have heard about the famous road that is to run from Checker Hall, from the cement plant, to St. Andrew. It is near the place that we plan to acquire now. I carried the honourable Minister there and he liked it very much. It is a very nice area and I am sure the people would be happy with it, and I hope that the plan of the road would not pose any problem.

I would like to see things moving in a more speedy manner so that we can develop things in the parish of St. Lucy. We are not asking for anything more than the other constituencies. I know there are Members on this side who would tell me: "Brathwaite, you should not be complaining now for the people of St. Lucy, because St. Lucy was rated as one of the strongholds of the Democratic Labour Party, and they should have had a housing area down there before now." But I cannot relax because of that. That was then. As far as the people of St. Lucy are concerned, they have found out their mistake in supporting the Democratic Labour Party for 15 years; they got nothing. They gave me a chance, and I gave them the assurance that I am a man of action. When I do not see action, I become frustrated, so I am appealing that I will see some more action in St. Lucy.

I would like to commend the honourable Minister for remembering the nice people at River Bay, because I think that was a disgrace for a long time. As you know, River Bay is one of the most famous excursion spots in Barbados. It is most frustrating to see what exists there on bank holidays; how when people go on excursions they have to run across the sea hill if they get a call from nature. I am very, very glad to know that the honourable Minister is thinking of putting facilities at River Bay to help people who go there.....

Asides.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Yes, sometimes you see those people coming down the district on Hope Road begging people to allow them to use their toilet facilities. I think that is a very risky thing, especially since we know today that we have a lot of germs about the place, because when you allow people to use your toilet, you can find yourself with a lot of problem.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to touch a little on what the honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke about yesterday concerning the high cost of housing . I do not think that is a fact, and, as you know, there no Government is responsible for the high cost of housing. We all know that in the last three or four years we have had a building boom in Barbados like never before; any boy or girl could go to the cement plant or the Heywoods Project and get a job. You would also know that anytime there is a demand for houses, workers and contractors will over-charge. In the 1970s, the period he was talking about, when a house cost $35 000 or $24 000 or in that range, the price of a carpenter was $25 but the price for a carpenter at present is around $50 or $60 a day.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Chairman: I do not usually interrupt the Member for St. Lucy, but I was referring specifically to the USAID scheme. The figures I mentioned were the specific parameters of the USAID scheme – the house must not be for more than $35 000 and the loan must not be more than $24 000. The borrower has to find $11 000, and I am contending that that has made it very difficult to make use of the scheme.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: I thank you very much for that explanation. But I will tell you that concrete blocks in Barbados now are about 20 per cent cheaper than they were two years ago in this country. Anytime that we have a demand, prices will rise. There was a certain time, two years ago, when I would try to buy blocks and would quarrel about the quality, and somebody else would take them up whilst I was quarrelling. Nowadays, there is a big difference. You have more blocks than you have buyers, so the price automatically dropped.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12.20 p.m.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Chairman, first of all I want to congratulate the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite) for what I think is probably the best speech made in the House today. I think it is an exceedingly good speech, a very sincere and honest speech, made, as one would say, from the bottom of one's heart.

I am not one for looking back too much, but sometimes it is useful to look back. As some honourable Members on the other side spoke yesterday, notably the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Education and the substantive Minister of Housing, I could not help but think that they were in fact making the speeches I made in this Chamber ten years ago on the same subject.

In 1976, the policy of the Ministry of Housing shifted from rental to ownership, and, in pursuance of that policy, housing estates for ownership were developed at Friendship Terrace. Nearly 200 houses were put in at Friendship Terrace for that purpose, another 200 houses were put at Lodge Terrace, and about 150 were planned and 100 were being constructed at that time at Wildey Terrace North. I do not recall the exact amount, but nearly 100 houses were planned at Wotton Terrace for that purpose. We went into Wanstead Terrace and we built a different kind of house, a house for middle income people.

I believed that, as a Ministry of Housing, we should serve as broad a range of persons as we could. We tried to serve the middle income, a category of persons called the lower middle, and the low income people. The low income came in, because as we were building houses for the middle income, we were building rental units for the low income, and there was a gap between the middle and the low which was not being served with housing.

We constructed the houses at Wildey Terrace East, about 100 houses, for the low middle income people. The same applied for the people in Lodge Terrace, because we believed at that time that we should concentrate on ownership of houses. What is more, we were giving the persons who were living in the housing estates the priority to buy some of those houses. There were some who could have bought the low income houses at Friendship Terrace, and a couple at Eden Lodge, and there were even some in the housing area who could buy some of the low income houses in Lodge Terrace as well as in Wildey Terrace.

When we lost the Government and Senator Mapp came in, regrettably he reverted to the old policy which he himself had known in the Fifties, and he placed emphasis then on rental, to the extent that in Wildey Terrace North, which had been earmarked for ownership, he built terraced houses there. He built more terraced houses in Wotton than had been originally planned. Okay, if that was your policy, that was your policy.

I am very pleased to hear from the Prime Minister that the emphasis today is on ownership rather than rental, because that is precisely what we were moving into in 1976. I am glad to see that you have reverted to that policy, because I believe we have enough rental units to serve certain people. We will always have people in this country who will never be able to own a house. Much as we as Barbadians pride ourselves on wanting a house we can call our own, that we can do with it as we want to – decorate it as we want to and plant a little garden to suit our own tastes – we will always have a sizeable portion of our population who will never be able to own a house. Today, ownership is doubly difficult, because the cheapest house, a timber house, cannot cost less than $20 000. There are many persons who will never be able to afford to own a house at that price, so we must continue to have rentals to serve persons like that.

At the same time, we should try and reserve those houses for persons whose income truly qualify them for the rentals, because there are some people who have gone into those houses, during my time as Minister of Housing too, whose income disqualified them, but we put them in, because it cost a lot of money to build some of those units and we tried to recover some of the cost of the construction. Those houses should be reserved for people who cannot afford to buy a house, and I am very please that this has now become the policy of the Government.

I want to take issue with the honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. D. L. O. Bradshaw). I am not enamoured of, and I flirted at one time with, prefab housing. As a matter of fact, 112 houses in Wanstead Terrace were built using prefab components. There are houses in Long Gap, built long before my time, some in Lodge Hill, and in Wildey Terrace North which were built using some prefab components. As I said, I am not enamoured of importing systems into this country. I flirted with them when I was a Minister because I was made to understand we could get houses constructed in a short space of time and at a reduce cost.

We set up some houses in Lodge Terrace. There were about five prefab houses which came from Columbia. The eventual cost of those houses was no less than the conventionally built houses, block by block, that we have in Barbados today. What is more, we could build the same house costing about the same amount of money in not much more time, we had even brought in workmen from Columbia to build what we called 'the eternate house', and they worked on that house in Lodge Terrace. The time they had given us as the time for construction was far exceeded, so we are not saving anything that way. What is worse, we were subsidising and supporting the labour in Columbia, so when we import a system into this country, what in fact we are doing is supporting the labour of the country from whom we have imported the system.

12.30 p.m.

I believe that we have enough builders in this country. It does not have to be a big builder. In my time I tried to encourage the small builder. We can use four or five builders, give them each about 50 houses, and let them build the conventional type of house. I am sure we can get a strong house, a better house, a house that the Barbadians know and like. We will be supporting our own labour, and in the end, we will stand to benefit from this kind of house.

I am pleased to see that the Ministry is now going back to giving out contracts for housing. I tried it in my time, and it was successful, although we had one very

bad experience with one builder. That contractor was the most qualified of all the other contractors, but he lacked some experience. He had some experience, not as much experience as the other contractors, but he was a qualified engineer. Unfortunately, his contract had to be terminated.

But, in our time, we did not have the kind of support and technical staff that the Ministry of Housing has today, and with the technical staff now in placé, I think that the Ministry should have another good look at giving houses out on contract. In that way, by using a number of contractors – not one or two contractors, but five or six – and do not give them too many houses to build – you can still reach the number of houses that you have set yourself to build in any one year. At the same time, it would be a good thing if the Ministry of Housing could use own powers of acquisition to acquire the lands so that those lands would be made available to the contractors on which to build.

I heard the honourable Member for St. Lucy lamenting the fact that there is no housing area in St. Lucy. The blame for that lies over there, Sir.

First of all, St. Lucy had probably the first co-operative housing, in the form of self-help housing at Clincketts, that existed in Barbados. This was in the very early 1950's. Secondly, before I left office in 1976, I had entered negotiations with the owners of Fairfield and Mount Gay for approximately fifteen or sixteen acres of land at Nesfield to establish there what we call rural housing, the kind of housing that was eventually established in Sion Hill, on lands that we had purchased from the Massiahs and had laid out. We had also done a similar thing with some lands at Orange Hill.

We so laid it out because we did not believe that you should take urban housing developments and implant them in what is essentially a rural area, so we had designed the type of housing which we felt was suitable for the rural districts. The land area was quite a bit more than usual, because there was an area of land which people could use for agricultural purposes. That is what is happening in Sion Hill.

A similar thing was planned for in Nesfield, St. Lucy, and this site was chosen not willy nilly. It was chosen because, from the Physical Development Plan that was prepared by the Town Planners, Nesfield, around the area by St. Lucy's Church, was what was called a centre, and in order to help give the Physical Development Plan a push as well, we decided that we would acquire lands at Nesfield for rural housing and develop a community there.

With the policy of the new Government that came into power, that was seen as the cutting up of estates. So the housing area that was planned for St. Lucy went through the window when the Government came into power in 1976. Because of that policy, St. Lucy was robbed of having a housing area like any other parish in Barbados.

Sir, before I sit, I would like to make one point about the funds that we have got from the United States of America. Those funds had been offered to us in our time in the late 1960s, and we had a good look at them. I believe there are officers in the Ministry, like Mr. Redman, who could corroborate this, and who at that time, as far as I can remember, advised against these funds. We had a good look at the proposal and we saw nothing but problems ahead for us, and we politely told the Americans, "Thank you very much, but this is not what we want."

We have the funds here now, so we cannot tell them that we do not want them anymore, but we are going to have to try our best to get some relaxation of the conditionalities. The IMF is not the only institution with conditionalities, this has conditionalities too, and I feel that the Government has to try its best and get out of this problem that they are in with these funds. They would have been better off by not choosing those funds, but, seeing that they have them, they will have to do some hard bargaining to see if they can be utilized in a way that they will be of benefit to the people of Barbados.

Applause.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, you have left homonomous hemianopia on the left in either eye.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Everybody knows that you are a physician specialist and that sort of thing.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT (St. Michael North East): I am not so sure of that, Mr. Chairman. He might be a physician, but I am not so sure that he is a specialist.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by saying that I sympathize with the Minister responsible for Housing. It is no easy task for any one person to adequately undertake the responsibility of supplying all the housing needs of the people of Barbados. It is a herculean task which he and his staff have to undertake.

If someone stops me on the streets, the request is the same: "Mr. Sisnett, I have a problem. Can you help me? I need a house." Nine out of ten calls I answer

every day follow the same pattern. "Mr. Sisnett, you see, I applied to the National Housing Corporation 12 years ago, and every week I go there I cannot get a house." I believe this is a problem that most Members of Parliament face in the course of a day. It happens again and again.

The housing needs of the people of Barbados are perhaps the greatest problems the Government has to undertake and they cannot be solved overnight. The information which I have is that there are approximately 12 000 applications on file. The committee responsible for the allocation of these housing units built by the National Housing Corporation has another big task, because every need perhaps is greater than the other one before, every person's problem is a little more intense. I am told that, to date, the committee has given permission for the allocation of some 1 000 or 1 100 houses.
12.40 p.m.

I cannot see how, by any stretch of the imagination, these needs can be fulfilled within the time required and with the urgency which the people have for these houses. It simply is not possible. Barbadians of all walks of life need houses: civil servants, general workers and the very low income workers. I think the Government should indeed formulate a programme to try to arrest the situation, but the Government alone cannot do this, and we will have to rely on the private sector to play its part in satisfying the needs of the people.

I would like to make a suggestion. The Barbados Workers Union is an organisation that boasts of a membership in excess of 40 000 general workers. Workers from every spectrum of life are members of the Barbados Workers' Union, and I think that if there is one organisation which should immediately become involved in some co-operative effort in trying to do something for the people that need housing most from the private sector, it would be the Barbados Workers' Union. Indeed, the Workers' Union has invested lots of its money in real estate. Only quite recently we saw them move into a new headquarters at Harmony Hall, the cost of which perhaps is well over or almost $2 million, and we know they have real estate at Roebuck Street in the form of Unity House, and also their former headquarters at Nelson Street.

Asides.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT: I know I am not saying anything, but it makes sense to the general workers who are in need of housing. If the Barbados Workers' Union could utilise some of the funds which they have available for housing rather than investing in more real estate, then it would be of more assistance to those workers who are in dire need of finding immediate housing.

We know of the Mangrove project, but that was not conceived for the general workers, because the people who now occupy the Mangrove housing project are among the middle class in the society. They are not the very low income workers, the ones that I think need some assistance. The Barbados Workers' Union could form a co-opt, utilising some of the funds of the IADB to provide housing assistance for the low-income people.

The Government's accent is to move away from wooden houses, and I believe that some consideration should be given to greater co-operation with the Republic of Guyana in utilising some of the hard wood timber there for low cost housing for some of the workers in Barbados. I understand that the Republic of Guyana owes Barbados a large sum of money through the Caribbean Multilateral Clearing Facility, and if you are thinking of making a favourable exchange, I can think of no greater exchange than to have the Government of Guyana reducing the money owed Barbados by giving us their hard wood for housing. This would go a long way, because those houses compare favourably with any of the wall units constructed in Barbados.

Another problem confronting this country is that people want to make an input, but they need some assistance, they need some land, and I believe we should create a land bank. If only land could be made available, with all the services or some of the services, such as roads and water, I believe many Barbadians would go ahead and build their own houses, but the problem is that they cannot find the land.

The staff at the National Housing Corporation are at a loss as to what they can honestly tell people, who go there on Tuesdays and Thursdays, about their applications. Some of them send them away saying, allegedly, "Go and see your M.P. We must have a letter from your M.P. in order for you to qualify for a house." I do not believe that they should tell people that sort of story to get rid of them.

The fact is, that at any point there is less than 100 houses being constructed, and the demand for housing outstrips the supply. It is a tedious undertaking which the Minister has on his hands. The only solution I can think of is for the Government to seriously consider the Housing problem, and I know that steps have been taken to find the funds and to get a programme on stream to alleviate the burdens which most of these people have. But there are major problems: the inadequacy of land for long term mortgages, the unavailability of residential land, the increasing cost of developing land, and the increasing cost of building houses, in terms of labour costs and the cost of materials. These factors are putting great stress on any private investor, indeed on the Government, who is seeking to erect more houses.

The Government's objectives are to create an environment for Barbadians to own their own house, and at an affordable price, and to provide the framework to expedite the transfer of tenantry lands to the tenants. We have done something to assist people on tenantry lands, but I am told that the attorneys' fees are not attractive, and so they are hesitant to work on some of these matters. We are trying to get the private sector more involved in building houses at lower cost, to help people to erect their own houses, and to improve the environment for housing construction.

As I said when I began, the Minister of Housing does not have an easy task; he is called on to do something urgently to fulfil the needs of these people. But I would warn Members on the other side not to try to score political points on this issue, because they have not advanced any other solutions to the problem. If they were in power, they would be having the same difficulties, because there is a genuine need for housing. The Government is not sitting idly by doing nothing; we are trying to create an atmosphere conducive for the private sector and Government to build houses in.

Then, there are those people who are fortunate to get a house and are reluctant to pay the rents. How can we actually go ahead and create an environment for more and better houses if those who are lucky to obtain a house refuse to pay their rents?

I have an unfortunate case in the constituency which I represent, and I hope that the Minister will be able to grant some kind of assistance in this instance. One of my constituents lost his life when some device was thrown into his house a few weeks ago. I would like to see some assistance given to that family, the Morris family at Bibbys Lane, whose house was partially demolished by this incendiary device of unknown origin.

Evictions are another problem with which we are faced, and seeing some person's things beside the highway is nothing of which we should be proud. Then there is the problem of fires. National Housing again is under more stress to find adequate housing for these people who lose their homes in fires.

I would support the Minister in assisting his department to find solutions to these problems. I want the Government to come out with a concrete proposal and plan to come to grips with the gravity of the situation in housing. But more importantly, I think that since Guyana has an outstanding amount of money for us, and since the Guyana timbers are of a very durable quality, every effort should be made to negotiate with the Guyana Government to provide the hard wood timber for us to provide a better kind of housing. That would go a long way in satisfying some of the needs of our people.

12.50 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Chairman, I have listened to this debate since yesterday – I made a brief intervention last night – and it is quite clear at this stage that the Government's policy in relation to housing has been a complete failure. Firstly, when they assumed office in 1976, they promised the people of Barbados that they would build 800 units a year. By now, they should have been well on the way to producing 6 400 units. They have failed miserably in that regard.

Secondly, they have sought over the years to give the impression, by confusing the statistical information, that they were meeting the housing needs of this country. They have been listing every electrical installation and every metered connection as a new housing unit. In fact, what they were counting were apartments being built along the south and west coasts, and saying that they constituted part of the housing stock of Barbados. That is not so.

The third factor is that they have been caught up in a vicious cycle of political and financial corruption. The present Minister has been called upon to clean up the totality of the mess in housing. He, himself, took the most extraordinary step, when he went up to sign the loan agreement with USAID, to signal to this country that he would stop the corruption that was going on in housing.

The Opposition has for many years been complaining about corruption in housing. Many sought to deny that, but I know the honourable Member for St. Andrew, and he is not the sort of man who would get up and say that his party was guilty of corruption in the area of housing unless he really felt that that was genuinely so. There is no one who would defend the present Government in a more articular manner than the honourable Member for St. Andrew, so one can be quite sure that when he makes that statement about corruption in housing, it is absolutely true. He would never have made that statement unless he has good reason for doing so.

Only last night we heard another serious statement, which would tend to mislead the general public of Barbados, and it was made by the Minister of Finance, who is an expert in this area. Everybody knows that for the past three or four years it has been almost impossible to get mortgage money in Barbados. All of a sudden, the Minister of Finance produces statistics to suggest that there has been a massive rise in mortgage loans in Barbados.

Do you know what has been happening, Sir? Because of Central Bank restrictions, in order for the commercial banks to meet the requirements of the Central Bank's in the area of lending, they have classified many loans as loans for housing. Many people repaired

motor cars with money which they obtained from the commercial banks on the basis that there were for house repairs. All of us know that; that has been happening again and again in Barbados.

The commercial banks have certain restrictions, but once you have a good enough salary and your bank manager is trying to help you, and you get a piece of paper saying that it is for housing repairs, the $10 000 or $12 000 goes to buy a new motor car. We all know what is going on, so let us not fool ourselves. There is no significant increase in the amount of lending by commercial banks for the purposes of housing in Barbados.

We are faced with the appalling situation today where welfare housing is in chaos, where the cost of housing – and this is a central point about housing in Barbados – has risen largely because of Government's impositions – people cannot afford to build, repair or maintain their homes – and, thirdly, because of the lack of financing, people find it very difficult to obtain money in Barbados even for bridging loans, far less for permanent mortgages. So you are bound to have total chaos. When you have corruption in welfare housing, when you have high cost of building, which you do not control, and when you have no credit available to the housing sector, then there is no way that housing in Barbados can proceed. So all the talk will get you nowhere.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Make mortgage loans available, make lending available so that people can repair their homes, cut out the corruption in welfare housing, and you will begin to get somewhere.

Finally, Sir, I am begging the honourable Minister of Housing to help some of the old people in St. Michael South Central, who have problems with their housing, get some housing repairs done. I am sure you are going to cut out the corruption and I am going to submit to you very shortly, on the basis of need, a long list of names. I am begging you on the floor of the House to help these poor people who are deserving of welfare.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Corruption?)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: They forget that they have Cammie Tudor, the arch general of corruption and George Moe. Do not mind the corruption talk. We will deal with that.

Sir I beg to move that you do now report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 2.00 p.m. today.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

1.01 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, before you leave the Chair and the House go into Committee, I have a document from a supplementary Notice Paper to lay, and I crave your indulgence to do so now.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House is seeking permission to lay a document. If there are no objections or observations, leave will therefore be granted. I presume there are no objections, so leave is granted.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to lay: The Law Revision (Rectification of Omissions) Order, 1984.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS RESUMED

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED

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

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

The honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, this has been a very long debate and we do not think we are going to keep it going very much longer. But the Minister has been referring continuously to the subsidizing of the rent by

42 per cent. I wish him to give the factors used when he is calculating the subsidy. On the question that was raised about the increase of the rents which are likely to create a problem for the very said people, I should also like the Minister to give us some idea of the machinery he has set up to actively investigate cases once you have to refer people to the Welfare Department for the payment of their rent.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St George South): Mr. Chairman, Sir, so much has been said on housing so far that I really want to spend only a few minutes on one of two aspects of the Minister's portfolio.

Development, is multi-dimensional. It does not only encompass economic activity; it must encompass social activity. We heard a lot in the deabte that is concerned only with the economic and the material. What has troubled me for a long time in Barbados is the lack of an integrated approach to housing development. We find that in a number of the housing areas, areas are delineated early for recreation, playing fields, cultural and social centres. But most of the time, after houses are constructed and housing estates are established – long after – you find that the development of the playing fields and the recreational facilities still has not started. One example is the Eastland area of St. George, Buckeley Terrace, where a new development has been completed, as far as the houses are concerned, and the monkeys have taken over the area that was earmarked for playing fields. The people who undertook the developments do not seem to be concerned, now that they have got their money for the land and houses, about what happens to the rest of the area.

I think that if we are to maintain a society that is sane, well-balanced, and well developed we should make sure that any thrust in our housing policy takes into consideration these social and cultural elements which are essential to the community.

Something else has developed in the debate – and I think the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite) was very eloquent when he dealt with it – the growing trend in thinking that a housing area in one district should be reserved for the people who live in that district. I do not have any major quarrel with that, and it is for this reason. You cannot continue in Barbados to destroy the fabric of communities or villages without doing total harm to the community, and you are going to dislocate community life by dragging people from one place to another for housing. The honourable Member for St. Lucy made allusion to the old woman in St. Lucy whose house was destroyed; he said that the nearest place that they could get to put her was all the way in Haynesville, and he spoke of the type of damage that move did to her. We want to avoid that kind of development in this country. We want to preserve the villages and communities.

I remember that a number of studies were done on the community at Ellerton. One of the things that came through in all those studies – I think the most recent one was done about two years ago – was that there was a tradition of community self-reliance in Ellerton that had developed over four decades, and that because of the impact of urbanization, young people, through lack of jobs, low wages in the agricultural sector, and through inadequate assistance to peasant farmers, drifted from the rural areas to the city. I do not mean necessarily in the heart of Bridgetown, but the suburbia – Bank Hall, Beckles Road, and the surrounding areas. This is putting a strain not only on the services, housing and otherwise, in those areas, but it is also breaking up the fabric of community life in the rural districts.

I agree with the honourable Member for St. Lucy that if we are to maintain, as we seem to be maintaining in recent times, that the development of housing in a particular area should be for the residents of that area and the immediate vicinity, there will be a need for a thrust of housing throughout the country in every area. But having said that, I want to make it absolutely clear that I do not expect that in any housing thrust there will be a scrimping on aesthetics. You and I know, for instance, the St. George Valley. I personally would not like to see the beauty of the St. George Valley marred by any new housing estate, and I hope that when they come to take a look at certain rural districts in Barbados, they will seek to have the type of housing development that blends naturally with the environment.

In St. George, we have another problem, the close proximity of sugar cane fields to chattel houses. At every crop there are houses lost in the country because cane fires get out of control and destroy the houses, which are very close to them. Three years ago, we introduced legislation to give the people who are living on plantation tenantries the right to own the land they have been occupying for a period of time, and I thought that there would have been a quick rationalization of the use of those tenant lands to minimize, if not completely remove, the proximity of these houses to the canes. But that has not yet happened. I am going to ask the Minister of Housing to use his good offices to make sure that, as rapidly as possible – because this is only a marginal part of the activity that the Ministry of Housing is carrying out in the plantation tenantries – priority is given in the restructuring of tenantries to the early removal of those chattel houses that are choc-a-block with plantation canes.

I want to deal with the sociological implications of large housing areas. I heard the Minister of Housing, and I commend him for that, saying that he is proposing to

do a self-help project at Walkers, St. George, on an area that has spots for about 20 houses. What he is doing in that sense is reverting to what was a traditional practice, particularly in the rural districts of Barbados. You made the land available, you did sites and services, put in the roads and so on, and you allowed the people themselves, the artisans of the district, to work on all of the houses. Not one; they would live in one but they all would get together and work on the houses.
2.10 p.m.

Two things happen when you have such a system. You build up a community consciousness in the district, and you bring employment into the area where the work is going on. I am, therefore, supportive of the concept as articulated by the Minister. I hope that he can set about it as soon as possible and make it a model for other districts in Barbados.

I want also, in talking about the whole spirit of self help, to raise the question whether it is not desirable that the construction of Government works – we are dealing with housing, but generally – should not be put mainly in the hands of the people where the work is going on. Again, the honourable Member for St. Lucy is strong on that, because he believes that in any Government project that is taking place in the north, the people in St. Peter and St. Lucy alone should get the work. Even though with the improvement of the bus service you can now get from St. Lucy to St. Philip and Christ Church and so on, it is imperative, if we are to develop the type of consciousness in the community, and the pride in the achievements, the institutions and the buildings in the community, that the people have something to do with it from the planning right through to the implementation.

I will give you an example. The Ministry of Education built a school in Ellerton, St. George. Most of the workers who worked on that school were people who live in Ellerton. It is the best kept school in Barbados. You hear talk about vandalism – and the Minister of Education can correct me if I am wrong – but there has not been one single act of vandalism since that school was constructed. It is neat and well kept, and the people in the district feel proud of it and look after it, because they built it themselves.

I am wondering whether the Minister of Housing cannot get the people of the districts involved when he is doing various projects across the island. It is not my idea, that is what people are asking for. They cannot understand why someone from St. James should come to weed the gutters in Greens, because the people in Greens can weed the gutters themselves, get the money and have pride in the cleanliness of their own district. I am just throwing the concept out as one that I hear repeated over and over again to me.

I want, finally, to advert to this whole question of human settlements policy – I believe that is the in-phrase now – which relates to the establishment of a total community in all its manifestations, not only houses, public buildings, churches and so on, but all the other aspects of community life that tend to give a personality to a community.

The problems that we have been having in housing, and which are being spoken of frequently during this debate, relate to things like non-payment of rents, evictions and the type of damage people in the areas do to the integrity of the area. All this certainly cannot be accidental – it must have something to do with the whole idea of developing the community. I do not want to go into this in any more detail, because I will have something to say about it under the Head of Information and Culture, when we are dealing with Community Development. I see a few things happening in community development in Barbados, and it all ties in with the whole idea of human settlements policy, and I will defer further discussion on that until such time as we come to that Head. There are a number of things I want to say in more detail as we get to that, but I thought that perhaps at this stage I would mention it.

What we are lacking in our planning, perhaps, and in a way it is critical of ourselves, is a proper co-ordination and correlation between the work of respective Government and non-Government agencies in our physical planning and the implementation of our physical planning. When we are discussing the Ministry of Transport and Works, we hear that the Ministry does one thing with road building, and the Waterworks Department does something else in their area, and the gas people do something else, and therefore the roads are always dug up, because there is no proper co-ordination of planning and execution. That relates to MTW, but in respect of the whole range of Government's physical planning, I submit that we need to spend more time looking at proper co-ordination of the work among a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies.

This does not only involve the planning for building itself, but the involvement of the financial institutions that provide the financing for building. It also involves the people who produce the materials to build. I think it is a very fruitful area for us for ideas for the future, and I believe that if we can concentrate a lot more in those areas, we will not only be able to produce a better product, but we will have greater satisfaction with the project in the end.

Mr. Chairman, if the Minister goes on and there is more debate on this issue, I shall be glad to come back on the point I was making about human settlements. If not, when we get to the Head on Information and Culture, I will deal with it at that point.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS (St. James South): Mr. Chairman, I will deal specifically with housing areas, because I have a very large housing area in my constituency. As you are no doubt aware, most of the people who come into the housing areas come from various parts of the island, and I believe that a number of problems which arise in the housing areas stem from the fact that, before going into the housing areas, people never seem to be able to get together. I am wondering if the Minister – I believe life is a series of experiments, to tell the truth – could find it possible to have people meet before they actually go to occupy some of the houses in the housing areas, because it seems that when strangers come together they are suspicious one of the other, and this creates a lot of problems.

It could be possible that in order to bring about a community spirit, before people occupy the houses some arrangement be made to bring them together, probably two or three times, so that they can get to know each other, so that when they go to occupy some of the new areas at least they begin on somewhat friendly terms, rather than on terms on which they are suspicious of each other. When you become suspicious, then the whole atmosphere deteriorates.

I want to speak specifically of Haynesville, because we have a lot of problems there. There is a set of houses which have concrete roofs. From the time they were built, the roofs leaked. I do not know if the roofs are too heavy for the structures, but they have what appear to me to be structural cracks in them. The people in that area have been complaining for a long time. I am not saying that nothing has been done by the Ministry, but they are somewhat anxious that if something comprehensive is not done quickly, one day a block might come tumbling down. This is not unknown to happen, because in London some years ago a whole set of flats fell down. I am asking that some effort be made to ensure that the houses are safe and that some investigation be carried out to allay any fears which might be in the minds of people.
2.20 p.m.

Unfortunately, in the cutbacks, the people who normally clean the Haynesville area have been laid off. From time to time we have asked the Health people to come in, because it is a large housing area – I believe there are about 600 units down there; maybe more – and you can imagine the problem we have since the cleaners, the people who weed and clean the streets, having been laid off.

This is not to say that the people in Haynesville are not doing something for themselves. I believe that when you help yourself, then others should help you, and they have just formed a Haynesville Community Council. The purpose of the council, as it says, is to get the people closer together and to try and provide some of the services which, at this time, the Government finds it difficult to provide. So I am only asking the Minister, if he finds it possible, to look into these areas.

I mentioned under another Head, I think it was yesterday, that since at least the new phase of houses were built, lighting has not been put in. Many people who work in industries, and the youngsters who go out to the cinemas, come home late at night, and the place is pitch black. We have written, I believe, to the National Housing Corporation. I believe that we were told that we would have to petition the appropriate Ministry. But I think that, seeing it is a Government housing area, it should be the responsibility of the Government to provide these services – and the services are long overdue.

Some three years ago, a building earmarked for a Nursery was placed in a new area. The present Nursery cannot accommodate the number of children who want to go there, but so far nothing has happened with the new building. I should like the Minister to see his good offices to ensure that we have the nursery open so that the children can use the facilities.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few points in reply to the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves).

He said that they acquired land at Trents Plantation to have a housing area in St. Lucy. That party was in power from 1961, and three months before 1976, when they were not sure who would win the elections, they went to the Wards, the Mount Gay and Fairfield Company, and told them not to cultivate the land, as they wanted to acquire it. But one does not acquire land in that manner. You have to pay money, or set aside money to pay for land.

He said that the Town Planners had agreed to the planned project. I do not believe that the Town Planners of this country would agree with the members of the Democratic Labour Party to acquire that particular piece of land, because the first six acres of land to the front contains two ponds, and about four out of six acres would be ponds. If they were going to acquire the whole twenty acres, about nine acres would be pond bottom. What kind of Government would buy twenty acres of land and have to lose nine acres? That is not sensible at all.

Since this Government came into power, we went on the same site, and I asked why should we buy such a large amount of land. Because, eventually, the lots will be cut up and given to the poor people, and then a man would not even be able to dig a pit, because he would be digging right down to the pond bottom, to a depth where he would have to put blocks to build a pit, and that would be really expensive.

I hope that Government would not continue to allow this sort of thing because it is the taxpayers money. I am of the opinion that it was a blessing in disguise that the acquisition did not materialise, because buying that land from that company would just be giving out free money. It would be useless as an housing area, and a lot of land would be lost in that project.

He also spoke about a housing area at Clincketts. I want honourable Members and everyone to know that I am not a liar. I always try to speak the truth. In 1954, I think it was when the Barbados Labour Party was in power, they acquired a piece of land from Heywoods, which is the Clincketts area, and they built 14 self-help houses. There were people working and building their houses. Those are the only houses we have in St. Lucy up to now. You would not call that a housing scheme. They are only self-help houses, and those people each had to pay $1 100 in that day for the piece of land and the house. I would not call that a housing area at all.

I should also like the honourable Minister to know that we have another problem down there showing up its head now, where there are some people who bought spots of land, for building only, ten, twelve and twenty years ago. They never put it in agriculture; it was only there for building. Now, these same people have applied to Town Planning for permission to build their houses, and the Town Planning Office is telling them that the land is too close to the Cement Plant. I think the honourable Minister will have to look into that. What are those people paying taxes for?

You buy a spot of land to build a house, you are not accustomed working it– it is not agriculture land – but now that you are ready to build – it is not a Water Zone, it is a building area – they are telling you that you cannot build there because it is too near the cement plant. I would like the honourable Minister to let me know about that, because I definitely believe that if that is the case, the people at the cement plant should take over the land, pay out the people, and Government should look for a different location where those people could have a spot of land.

Mr. Chairman, I would not tire you on this. Those were the few points I wanted to make to clear up any misunderstanding the honourable Member for St. Michael North might have.

I thank you.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, in response to a query raised by the honourable Member for St. Philip North in relation to the Natural Gas, let me say that the problem with the installation of natural gas, particularly in the housing development areas, is mainly due to cost. Many of them are very old, and it would mean that Government would have to spend money to put the mains in and, at the moment, that is not deemed a high priority. But the policy of Government in relation to the new developments in housing, for example, West Terrace, is that in the overall planning, provision is made for the installation of mains. The Ministry of Housing made provision for and, in fact, paid for the installation of those mains at West Terrace.

The problem though, of course, between the installation of the mains and the actual linking up to the individual units is a different matter entirely. The thing is that people in the housing estates usually come from the lower level of the socio-economic ladder, and they find it very difficult to find the initial investment, which may be $300, $400, or even $500, to bring the service from the main to the utensil. The corporation is responsible for bringing the main up to a point; beyond that point the customer is responsible.

At present, my understanding is that the deposit has already been paid by the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the project at St. Cecilia. So all new Government projects will take into consideration all the utilities, such as electricity, water, natural gas and of course, telephones. So as far as the new developments are concerned, the provision of natural gas is well taken care of.

2.30 p.m.

In relation to the older units, the problem is a little more difficult, and this is why, through the National Petroleum Corporation, the National Bank has been approached on behalf of the poor people who live in these units and would like to have natural gas, because in many of the areas the main gas pipelines pass these development. If we can, through the Home Improvement Scheme of the Barbados National Bank, allow these people to borrow $300 or $500 to instal natural gas piped from the meter to their utensil, then it will be easier for the National Petroleum Corporation to have this billed over a three year period, and this bill would be charged on a monthly basis in the format. Now that the National Petroleum Corporation is computerised, the bill would read; Capital Expenditure – $X, Terms of Repayment and Uses of Natural Gas – $Y, so this would give the poor person an opportunity to instal natural gas and have that spread over a period of three years. We are presently working on this.

In the City of Bridgetown itself, before the repavement was undertaken by Government last year, there was a particular request made by the Fire Chief that every restaurant operating in the City of Bridgetown convert from bottle gas to natural gas. This is very significant and important for the City of Bridgetown, because in the event of a fire, the LPG gas can very easily explode, and a fire can spread very quickly throughout the City of Bridgetown. By having all the restaurants convert from LPG to natural

gas, it would give the Natural Gas Corporation an opportunity to turn off the natural gas in the event of a fire in the City of Bridgetown, therefore we have ensured that this was done. Practically 90 per cent of all the restaurants, 100 per cent of the very large ones, have already been converted to natural gas in order to safeguard Bridgetown.

In addition to that, the police made a specific request concerning the prison at Station Hill. At present, the prison is being served natural gas from behind the gully, and in the event of a riot or a take-over by the prisoners, it would be impossible to turn off the natural gas. The Commissioner of Police requested some years ago that the prison be fed natural gas from the main road on Station Hill, so that in the event of a problem the natural gas can be turned off, and this has been done. Fortunately for me, the prison lies in the constituency of St. Michael Central, so it afforded me the opportunity to satisfy some of my constituents in the area of Station Hill.

But the point is that the National Petroleum Corporation has to pay the Ministry of Transport money up front for reinstatement of roads before construction starts, in the very same way, I believe, the Ministry of Housing and Lands will be paying the National Petroleum Corporation money up front when they are building projects like St. Cecilia and the new projects which they have planned in the different sections of Barbados: the National Housing Corporation has plans for 135 units to be built in the Ivy, at Lammings in St. Joseph, and in Maynards in St. Peter; and 316 units on a site at Church Village and Campion Land in St. Michael.

When these developments come on stream, it is proposed that, at the same time, all the utility companies, including the National Petroleum Corporation, would be invited to become involved at the earliest possible opportunity, so that when the project is finished, everything is dovetailed at the same time. Therefore, when MTW comes to finish the road, the whole thing would be completed, unlike in previous years, where, particularly in some areas of the West Terrace development, the National Petroleum Corporation was called in to do work after the roads were completed. This meant digging up the road and placing the mains – and an additional cost to the taxpayers for resurfacing of such roads.

I have said before that this is not always avoidable, but it happens from time to time, to my knowledge, between the Ministry of Transport and Works, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the utility companies. There has been an effort in the past to try to ensure that all of the utilities could be done at the same time to reduce the cost of road repairs and to reduce the inconvenience to the road users as much as possible. My personal view is that it has not worked as well in the past as we would have liked, but I am sure that greater efforts will be made on behalf of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and MTW to co-ordinate these things.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I think I can risk to wind up at this stage. The one thing which has evolved from all these discussions from last night to this hour is that everybody in this Parliament – actually, in Barbados – is an expert on housing – and it is probably good that it is so – and therefore I have got to take a lot of advice from the people whom I have got to listen to from time to time. I sometimes like to listen to the "experts" who have to advise me, but you have to be very careful with the "experts". You probably get more wisdom from the other people to whom you listen.

It is said that whenever the late Sir Winston Churchill had to go to Parliament, he would always go and talk to people in the street, and whenever he got a good idea he would say it was one for Parliament and he would carry it there. I do the same; whenever I pick up a good idea, I take it back to the Ministry of Housing and Lands. However honourable Members have made very good contributions today, and I will take into consideration much of the views which they have put forward.

I feel that, with one or two exceptions, the debate on housing and the National Conservation Commission has been very constructive. At least I heard nothing but praise for the National Conservation Commission, and we only got recommendations where it was felt that there could be improvements.

If government is to have a successful housing programme, and if National Housing is to carry out the role which it is designed to carry out under the Act, it is my view that we must be honest, sincere, hard-working, knowledgeable and dedicated officers to perform these functions. The behaviour of the officers at the National Housing Corporation must be equal to that of civil servants, and by civil servants I mean the civil servants that we have come to know, who are dedicated and committed, and behave in a form that we have come to accept of good and honest civil servants. They must behave in that manner, and they must be loyal to the Government of the day. No Minister, no matter how well-intentioned, no matter how committed and hard-working, can survive long without the will and the determination of his officers down the line to support him in the task which lies before him. That is clear.

2.40 p.m.

From the withholding of the files to the wrong direction of the staff down the line can be dangerous to the smooth running of any administration. When people are bent on frustrating the policies of the Government of the day, there is nothing much you can do about it, except, if they are subject to the control of the Public Service

Commission, invite them to take action. But that body is constipated as far as taking action is concerned. It takes many years before they arrive at a decision. My respectful submission is that the time is ripe when there should be an overhauling of the whole system in terms of discipline and the role which the Public Service Commission should play in this country.

If you have a Board and the Board is unable to act, and the Act which sets up the Board gives the Minister power to act, the Minister will have to act. It has come out very clearly today that whenever anything goes wrong, the Minister must act, because the responsibility is his. When the blame is to be laid, it is laid fully at his doorstep. When there is praise, he gets the wheel of it. He does not get the total praise, but he gets all the blame, therefore, he has to take the decisions.

The honourable Member for St. James South dealt with Haynesville, the laying off of people and the inability of the tenants to have the place cleaned up because the weeders are not available and so on.

I listened to him with interest, and I will set out to see how I can remedy the problems which he addressed. But I also looked, with great interest, during last week and this week, at the delinquent payroll of Haynesville. While it is very useful for people to give the impression that they are looking after the interests of their constituents, it is useful and right that they should tell them what their obligations are.

I was impressed, for the first time, with the honourable Member for St. Philip South when he said today that he never fails to tell the people in his constituency that they should purchase the land. I hope I understood him correctly. I was heartened by that approach. I believe this goes for the honourable Member for St. Philip North as well. He has always encouraged people to buy the land.

I would like to hear the whole party making a declaration on this matter. When we introduced the amendment to the Constitution to make provision to free over 11 000 plantation lots to the tenants in this country, the Democratic Labour Party refused to support the Government in that amendment. It was unfortunate, but it was so.

We have now found ourselves with a situation in the very plantation tenantries where there are a substantial amount of sub-tenants. The Act, as it stands, makes provision only for tenants; there is no provision for sub-tenants.

There may be the extended family situation where a daughter, a granddaughter or other relative have put an additional house on the land. The surrounding lands may be able to accommodate the houses, but the main tenant may decide that he wants all for himself. This type of situation is creating a lot of hardship now. It is my view that if some arrangements can be made, an additional 11 000 lots can be freed to new people.

The problem with respect to building houses in Barbados is the availability of the land on sites and services. The Minister of Transport and Works said that he could accommodate 200 additional houses, if he could find the land. From my information, and based on my knowledge, one can only put about eight houses on one acre of land; therefore, you would have to look for some twenty-five acres of land somewhere in St. Michael to site the 200 people that he is thinking of. This is a considerable amount of land that you have to look for.

It is easier, from the Government's point of view, but probably it is not the most desirable thing, to build upward rather than across, because there is better utilization of space. Barbadians are not accustomed to living in multi-storeyed houses, and I do not believe that they will ever become accustomed to that, but I suppose that we may have to educate them in this direction.

It is the policy of the Government, to look at sites and services. We are advised that it is necessary to make a further constitutional amendment in order to give the sub-tenants the right of ownership of the spots which they now reside on in the plantation tenantries, and we should come to Parliament and challenge the Opposition – not in any defiant manner – to vote against us. I should like to see the two honourable Members put their votes where their mouths are. I feel that the Opposition should recognize by now that the time has come when this is the approach that should be made.

The honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke about tenants being moved from tenantries. We have made amendments to the Landlord and Tenantries Act in relation to security of tenancy, but most of the landlords are ignoring them. There is one retired policeman I know of in Christ Church who makes a fortune out of this business .....

(Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: That is the man.)

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: .... who goes around trying to rid the plantation tenantries of every tenant. There is also the case of a maid at the Ministry of Housing and Lands who is a tenant on a piece of land in Bush Hall with over eight tenants, and he is trying to move them off one by one, so that he can get the desired number, in his view, to remove them all. These people have to be told that they cannot do this. It is unreasonable.

The reason why there is not a better housing stock in Barbados, and why the chattel house system has

developed to the extent that it has, is because in the past, when the worker did not go to work, within a matter of days he was told to get his house off the land. He was fired from his job on the plantation only because he did not go to work for a day. He might have been ill, but the owner of the plantation or his agents felt that he went to work somewhere else. If he had a wall house, the house would come down in shambles, so he had to have a wooden house.

2.50 p.m.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North – and I always like to address questions which he puts to me – asked how we arrived at the figure given as the subsidy. We divide the amount of units by the expenditure involved in the construction, then arrive at what is regarded as a fair return on the money put out, and then we subtract what we regard as a reasonable subsidy, which we conclude to be 42 per cent.

This brings me to the St. Cecilia and the whole question of National Housing's involvement in construction. When a building is constructed in an inefficient manner – I do not mean a building that will fall down; I mean in terms of waste – waste in manpower, waste in material – and you find yourself with serious cost overruns, the tenant must of necessity carry the burden of the overrun cost, and even if you work out the figures and you arrive at a substantial subsidy, it might not be even what you regarded it to be, because the cost has been seriously inflated as a result of the incompetent manner in which the work was carried out. That is why I have come to the conclusion, and a very painful conclusion, that it is better for the Government to give out the work on contract.

It is not to say that Government is not building, but the workers – and I submit that they are good workers – will probably perform better and faster for the private sector than for the Government. The people who are not employed by National Housing cannot by themselves do all the private work which is there as well as the work which the Government is going to give, so the people who are now working with Government can be easily absorbed in the industry. Government, however, can have final control by way of the tender system, and, as was suggested by the honourable Members for St. Michael North and St. Philip North, we will keep the Technical Division.

I am very satisfied with the limited staff we have in the Technical Division, but the Technical Division is not strong enough. The honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke of having an architect. We do not have an architect nor do we have a quantity surveyor. I do not think that we need a quantity surveyor on a full time basis. I believe that a quantity surveyor can be paid as needed or can be borrowed from MTW. I do not see any problem with that; they are two Government agencies. You do not need a quantity surveyor every day, and that service can be paid for even if one is not available from MTW.

There is a need for a structural engineer. It is not for me to say, because the public is aware of it, that there was gross inefficiency in terms of supervision at the highest level at the West Terrace Project, as a result of which a number of people who purchased properties there made a tremendous amount of complaints. The legal fraternity knows this, the building firms know and engineering people know this. There was just not that steady type of supervision at West Terrace which you should have had. Sometimes when this service is paid for by outside consultants, you do not always get the best service. It is therefore best to have a person on the staff, who is your man and who will do analytical work for you. So the Government and the Ministry are giving careful consideration to the type of personnel that is required to fully staff the Technical Division of the Ministry.

It is not my desire, and I do not think that of any Minister, to interfere with the smooth running of any operation. It is when the operation is not smooth that you have to be constantly on edge, worrying when the next wrong thing is going to happen. I have to be concerned early on mornings to find out if there is not another scandal in the newspaper to do with somebody being levied on. Even if it is a legal levy, the inhumane manner in which it is done has to be a concern.

I want to put this to the other side. Do you think that a Minister should be saddled with having to constantly worry about whether or not a defaulting tenant is going to be unceremoniously kicked out of a house before the Press? Is this his duty, when you have a staff of well-paid people to ensure that that is not done, and which is paid to address the problems? I may as well pack up shop if those are the problems with which I have to be concerned. Those are detailed matters that no Permanent Secretary should have to worry about. No Deputy Permanent Secretary, nor S.A.O., not even an A.S. should have to worry about those problems. Those are problems that officers down the line should have to worry about.

When you can see this constant flaunting of a plain directive from a Minister, something has to be done. And get it straight, no Minister interferes; he intervenes. You do not interfere in what is yours. You intervene when something is going wrong, and that is what you are there to do. No manager of anybody else in the Ministry is answerable to the public. Have you seen anyone here sitting in his seat taking licks today? I have to take the licks, and I will intervene and continue to intervene.

When you see me come in here and remain silent, I am satisfied with the situation.
3.00 p.m.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central – I am sorry he is not in his place – said that I spoke of corruption among Ministers. I have never adverted to any Minister in this Government being corrupt. I am not aware of it. I would not want to be in any Government with any corrupt Minister, I would go home. I am too independent-minded to want to so operate. I adverted to the type of corruption that I have noticed even in terms of a report which came to me very recently, which I made available to the spokesman on the Opposition bench. We do not have anything to hide. This is something which was hanging fire from 1973.

You have people enough who are still living in Government lettings who were put in there by politicians, political activists, political touts or pimps, political surrogates, whatever you care to call them, acting on behalf of their bosses. They are robbing people who honestly want lettings to go into with their families. You have people who own properties all over the country and are still holding Government lettings. When you ask for information, it is deliberately kept from you, and I say that in all solemnity.

When I came into the Ministry, I wanted certain information. After I did not get it, I told the Permanent Secretary there was a way to get it – appoint officers to go and do the work independently. I have a flair for details, I like to know what is going on, I like to know that I have the answers, and I set about to get the information.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North asked about the total cost of St. Cecilia. The honourable Member for St. Michael West, in his usual hysterical form, talked about mass corruption. There could have been, I do not know. I am not a Duffus or Hanschell, I am not holier than thou, and I do not know what took place. But I have the necessary information, and I will give it as I have it. The original contract cost was $3.8 million, the revised figure was approximately $4 million, and the estimated completion cost is $5.6 million. Those are the figures which I have.

I was also asked about the position with the General Workers Fund. The honourable Deputy Prime Minister is very concerned about this, and I am glad that the honourable Member for St. Philip North mentioned it as well. I too, am very concerned about the General Workers' Fund, and I am not going to be too pleasant with the banks in Barbados either. The banks in Barbados come here with little or no money, they collect the savings of the people in the country, spend away on it and do very little. The Barbados National Bank is not behaving in a pleasing manner to me, and they are no less blameworthy than the other commercial banks.

I called them in and spoke to them, and invited them to play a meaningful role in connection with the USAID programme. They promised me that they would play a role but, as soon as they left, the promises seemed to be over. It is true that the situation is not without hope, because a few of them have come in, and while I do not want to identify those that have come in, I will shortly be doing so and holding up the others to public ridicule, because they are greedy.

Barbados has a good record of repayment, more so than Jamaica, Trinidad or anywhere else in the whole Caribbean region, and I have told all the bankers who came to see me that a small rate of return in connection with loans is small compared to what they stand to lose if they have to operate in a hostile society. The people in Barbados are property-owning people, respectful of law and order and the rights of other people: They are not going to go anywhere. I believe that if coups become the order of the day in the Caribbean, or the world, that Barbados would be the last place to go that way. Therefore, the people who operate banks and businesses in Barbados should feel happy to think that they operate in a climate such as ours, and should do all that is in their power to ensure that a peaceful and stable society continues to exist.

I believe that the Opposition and the Government are united in the belief that we need to have a stable society now and for all generations to come. There might be one or two wild people who might want to subvert the process of the ballot box and come in by the bullet, but they will not long survive. The entrenched feeling of democracy within the bones of each Barbadian will resist that to the end.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West talked about the laying off of workers and the fact that 7 000 people a week walk up to Country Road in connection with housing. That is not true. I have never known it to be so. The honourable Member likes to exaggerate everything. There are people who are waiting for houses. The situation today is not what it was a few years ago in terms of people's desires to be independent and to live at themselves. When in the past you might meet a woman at the age of 30 living with her parents, today, no matter how large the family house is, the girl wants to leave at eighteen and do her own thing. The boy wants to leave at an early age as well, and you would be amazed at the ages of people who come to me saying they want houses to rent. They are little people, babies. So when you see a large number of people on the list, you can virtually eliminate 33 per cent of those. They just put on

their names because they hear that there are houses out there and they want to add their names too.
3.10 p.m.

I have done some calculations in connection with housing in Barbados. Somebody mentioned something today about the number of housing starts. We arrive at housing starts not only through the connection of water, or electricity, but by considering Town Planning applications as well as public health inspections. If you did a calculation, you will see that the ratio of people in Barbados to the unit in this country is 3.6 to 3:7. It is fantastic.

The problem in Barbados is not that the population is underhoused. The problem is that your housing stock, because it is made of soft wood, is an old housing stock and needs to be replaced. That is why I support the view of the honourable Member for St. Michael North East (Mr. L. L. Sisnett) that we should encourage the use, if at all, of hard wood. We should also insist, and I agree entirely with the Deputy Prime Minister that the law should be amended to ensure this, that the wood which comes in here should be treated.

I also want to assure honourable Members opposite, and on this side as well, that the Ministry is considering the criteria under which you qualify for the housing loans under the USAID Scheme, the loan limit, the salary structure, and all of the points which you have addressed. The Chief Housing Planner and his staff are working on this. I myself have spoken to Mr. Wheeler on this matter, but I can tell you that countries like Barbados, which husband their resources and are very frugal in their attitudes, are never given a lot of special consideration.

I have gone to a number of African countries with very low per capita incomes, $200 and $300, and when you see the amount of Mercedes on the roads, the 290s you cannot believe your eyes. I was in Sierra Leone sometime ago, and I saw the Ministers in Mercedes. They told me that the Ministers have two Mercedes, and that one was given to each of them by President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania after an African conference sometime ago. His contribution was some twenty-five Mercedes for the conference.

Our standard of living is far better than that of Tanzania, or any part of Africa, but if a Minister goes down the road in a Mercedes – I think the honourable Minister of Agriculture has one; his own, of course – the public would be offended. But in Tanzania, with a per capita income of probably $800, you see people in Mercedes all over the place. Our per capita income is nearly $4 000, but if a Minister goes down the road in a Suzuki car, the quickest thing anybody would say is that it is the Government's car. Yet, we have got to work extremely hard, night and day, and always very faithful servants to the people.

It is very easy for a Minister to ignore the problems that exist from time to time in a corporation that is under his nose. It is easy to see a system work badly and say nothing – and be regarded as a nice boy. But if at the end of the day you want to feel that you have discharged your duties, consciously, bearing in mind that you have been given a sacred trust in here – I sometimes wonder if we know where we are when we come in here – you will feel that you have an obligation to the people who sent you here, and when you discharge your duties, you do it without fear or favour. I am not concerned about how anybody feels about any action I take. I want it to be clearly understood that any action I take, I take it in my best judgment and in the best interest of the total community.

Mr. Chairman, with the amendment to the Note, under Head 79.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It has been circulated?

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: The Note has been circulated.

I beg to move that Head 79, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS – $10.484 398

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 37, as amended, stand part.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, we are going to move through Head 37 very quickly. Under Subhead 1 – Central Administration, (c), I would like to suggest to the Minister that this function – land use policy and national physical development planning – is not properly his, and he should not be burdened with it.

I believe that note was there from the time the Town Planning Department was in your Ministry, but since it has been moved out, and you are not really so staffed to carry out this function, I think that it is appropriate that this function be moved from the Ministry of Housing and carried to the appropriate Ministry that administers Town Planning.

I am a little unhappy about the size of your temporary staff in the various sections. If you look under Personal Emoluments, you will see that you have a very big personnel staff at very senior level. As temporary staff you have a Senior Administrative Officer, two Administrative Officers, a Senior Executive Officer, an Accountant three Administrative Officers II, three Clerical Officers, one Steno and a Senior Housing Planner. In other words, as you come down the line, most of your staff, and in some important posts, is temporary.
3.20 p.m.

Something is not right here. If you need, and I am suggesting it is so, this type of staff, it cannot be right that the mix is like this. I would like to get some information from the Minister about this particular section of his administration.

I am also still a little bit surprised to see that the Minister is still operating without a property manager, or an estate management person at the appropriate level.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Submissions have been made on the matters which you have raised. I agree with you that I am operating with a little Hollywood, but I assure you that I am giving attention to that, and that discussions are taking place.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Thank you.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): Mr. Chairman, I wish the Minister to offer some information on how far his exercise in getting an inventory of the property owned by Government has advanced. I doubt whether the Government knows what areas of land it owns in Barbados or, indeed, whether the Government knows how many other properties it owns in Barbados, because I recall an instant when someone actually sought to sell to Government government property.

Sometimes, too, we are confronted with the situation where property has been leased for upwards of 50 years at peppercorn rents, and the Crown has been saddled with these leases for several years with very little opportunity of reviewing the rents. If I may use a particular example, the land on which the Empire Cinema stands was privately developed, I believe, at the turn of the century. I think the rent for that land is still $1 200 a year. I see a look of shock on the faces of one or two people, but it is a fact. The lease at the time was for 99 years. I rather suspect that the lease is due to expire some time in 1997, but I am sure that during the course of the lease there had been several years where the lease, although at peppercorn rent in this day and age, has gone unpaid, and it has not been possible for the Government to have enforced its forfeiture right and resume occupation of the property.

There are still too many bits of Government property, and not merely those of private citizens, that are either not in occupation or that are not being maintained at the level one would expect. I could cite the property of a quasi-public corporation, the Barbados National Bank, in Pine Hill, a very substantial house which has been allowed to fall almost into desuetude and become decrepit. I could also cite the house which is next door to my own in Pine Hill, again a substantial property, and I was really surprised that the roof of the cottage became so worm-eaten that it had to be rectified by the whole house being pushed down. Obviously something was wrong in that area.

I should like to make some positive and, I hope, concrete suggestions on how the Government should deal with these problems. In the first place, Government must set up a properly-manned estate management section. The Government is today the biggest land owner in this country, whether it be agricultural land or office space, or even land within the urban and suburban areas. Almost at every sitting of the House the Government, because of its public responsibility, continues to acquire more areas of land in the public interest. It must always therefore have an up-to-date inventory of that land, it must know where its title deeds are, it must be able to calculate correctly the rate of return it is getting on any land which it has leased, and its leases must be so drawn that the rent is constantly under review at reasonable periods, so it must have a cadre of persons completely qualified in estate management.

The University of Cambridge has one of the outstanding courses in land economy and estate management. It is possible to use the National Development Scholarships as well as the scholarships available under the Commonwealth scheme in order to train enough people for this exercise. I think we have to bring a greater professional management to public property.

I believe that my learned and honourable friend, the honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull), cited the Marine *sotto voce* as an example of a property that is perhaps also allowed to run down. That is so. That is only one of several Government buildings, and I would hope that the Minister will have every year in his Estimates a substantial sum for rehabilitation purposes.

I would not like to see the Minister getting rid, as my honourable friend, the honourable Member for St. Philip North has suggested, of the responsibility for land use and physical control. I think some of that responsibility must continue to reside within the Ministry of Housing and Lands, because it is not only a question of Town Planning control for development, but I think some of the conservation efforts which are necessary in

Barbados must rest with the Minister of Housing and Lands.

Let me cite an example of the houses in my constituency which are of historical, architectural and national importance in this island. The whole of the Garrison area is one in which the Ministry of Housing and Lands must take an interest in order to control development in that area and to preserve our national heritage. It hurts me that particularly the Pavilion House, but also the Pavilion Court, have not passed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and within the possession of the Crown, because it seems to me that that type of building calls for more than private enterprise and private ownership. When I was Minister of External Affairs, I tried to persuade the Ministry of Finance to acquire it and remodel it for the Ministry of External Affairs. Unfortunately, my words were not as persuasive as I would have hoped they could have been.
3.30 p.m.

I will end by repeating that any land owner with such valuable property as the Government must always be conscious of the true worth of its land. I do not believe that, today, the Minister could help me, or help this House, if we asked him now what is and what is not owned by the people of Barbados as part of the island's overall resources. I am sure that in this regard I would get the support not only of the Minister, but of the Shadow Minister of Housing as well.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, if you look under Subhead (e) where there is Servicing, Accounting and Personal Administration for the Ministry, I am certain that sometime ago, a study was done, I do not know in whose Ministry, to try and do the same type of centralization of the planning facilities available and provide data on all the physical aspects of Barbados that is used so often by the Town Planning Department, Valuation Department, Lands and Surveys, the Registries and those offices. I think the time is ripe when you should start to research this area and see what sort of appropriate action can be taken on that matter.

There is only one little quarrel that I seem to have with the Ministry this year. Sometime earlier this year, we spoke about the development of tenantries, and I drew to the Minister's attention the situation which existed at Lynch's in St. Philip.

I have to report that correspondence was sent to your Ministry since October 19, dealing with this matter and asking you to declare this a designated tenantry, with the appropriate signatures of the owners. To date, I have not had even the privilege of a reply to this correspondence. I should like to know the reason why I have not received a reply. It was dated October 19, and I can send you a copy for your information.

I am fairly certain that it was not drawn to the Minister's attention, because I have not even received acknowledgement of the correspondence to date. I should like the Minister to use his good offices to try and find where this bit of correspondence is in his Ministry and see what action he can take on it.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I should like to know from the honourable Member for St. Philip North if he had addressed the correspondence to me.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: No. It was addressed to the "Ministry of Housing and Lands, Marine House, St. Michael, dated October 12 re: Lynch's, St. Philip" and so on. We mentioned the appropriate Act and then listed the people who.....

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: What I wish the honourable Member to do for me, Mr. Chairman, is that in future, when he has problems such as these which he addresses to the Ministry, he should send me a copy of the matter and I would be in the picture.

In connection with the matter which was raised by the honourable Member for Christ Church West, I should like just to mention that there is an estate management body within the Ministry of Housing and Lands. It is not sufficiently staffed, and a request has been made to the Ministry responsible for Establishments to supply the necessary staff, so that it can carry out the functions which it is designed to perform.

In connection with the house known as "Del Mannie", which is next door to the honourable Member for Christ Church West, that is in perfect shape. I think a notice was put out in the newspapers offering it for sale, because I have come to the conclusion that there is no point keeping Government's properties uninhabited, because the worst than can happen to an old building is for it to be closed up; it will deteriorate very quickly.

This would also happen with "Buttals" in St. George, where the doctor used to live. That is another problem. "Buttals" house. We have to look at "Buttals" as quickly as possible. The other one, "Malborough", was out for tenders, tenders came in, and there was an agreement with respect to the purchase of that. It is only a question now of tying up the legal knots.

We are looking at those properties that are neither used or useful to the Government at the moment to find out what is the best purpose to which they can be put. We are going ahead with the inventory – undertaken by a section which was set up by the honourable Member for St. James North when he was in that Ministry – of all Government properties, and we are working with the Commissioner of Valuations so that we can get a proper inventory of those facilities.

I welcome the suggestions made, and I want to stress that we are not sleeping on these matters.

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

HEAD 76 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Head 76 – Ministry of Education, as amended – was called.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 76 do now stand part, Sir.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman.....

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Are you the Shadow Minister of Education.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not your business who is the Shadow Minister of Education. We have enough stalwarts over here, so it does not matter.

Mr. Chairman, there are a few matters relating to the Ministry of Education which we have to raise, and I think that since the subject has been raised under Capital, we should take this opportunity to discuss them.

I should like to ask the Minister, first of all in relation to the World Bank sub-project, what is the deployment of schools which we might expect during the next three years. I notice that recently there was an indication that another school would be built in the general Cave Hill area, the Wanstead area.....

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: West Terrace.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT:..... and I notice – West Terrace, I think it is called – that not a great deal of detail has been given about where we might expect the other schools to be located. Again, we are suffering from not having the population statistics made available to this Honourable House so that one can make an intelligent observation on the deployment of schools and other similar services, but I should like the Minister to indicate whether it is planned to build any more primary schools, and where.

I should like the Minister to indicate what is the replacement for the decision that was made sometime ago to turn what is now the Roebuck Secondary School into a secondary school at the expense of the planned primary education for that catchment area. You will recall that that school was intended originally, under the Democratic Labour Party, to be a primary school, and soon thereafter, the then Minister of Education made a decision – with which I am not quarrelling – that it was necessary to have a secondary education, and that he wanted to turn that school into a secondary school.

I should like to know what is the replacement that will fill the void that was thereby created, because I do not think that the Minister before him, who had made the decision, made it in a vacuum. I believe that he would have been informed by the same set of information that the subsequent Ministers have had – at least one would like to think so. One would like to think that there is a continual process in terms of the technical and other related information that is given to various Ministers of Education. But I do not recall that there has been any construction of a primary school to replace what is now the Roebuck Secondary School.

3.40 p.m.

I note that there is still some pressure in the general area surrounding the Country Road and Passage Gardens areas. In terms of the Wesley Hall School. Wesley Hall, I believe, is one of the feeder schools, but it has also become a bit of a specialized school – and zoning has not yet applied to primary schools – and therefore, Passage Gardens and the areas going further north, Brewster Road and the areas surrounding the St. Leonard's Secondary Schools, are short, in my view, of primary schools at the correct ratio. But I will wait until the Minister indicates what her policy is before I go any further on that.

I want to raise some questions concerning the administration of the Education Act. It would seem to me that there is some confusion concerning the ability of the Ministry to come to grips with the fine points of the Education Act. One anticipated that it would take some time before they would settle down, but there have been problems raised nationally by the attitude of the Ministry concerning some of the secondary schools.

I have spoken on the floor of the House, and I have spoken to the Minister privately, about my own views and the views of my party – that the primary objective of an education policy must have as its focus the children. I think there are a number of people who have come to feel that the Minister, or the Ministry, or both, may have lost sight of the focus, and that, in their attempts to implement the letter of the law, they sometimes fall short of the spirit of that law.

I do not propose, unless driven to do so, to go into any detail about certain aspects of the education policy. I am sure my colleague for St. James South (Mr. N. K. Simmons) and my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford), will go into

these areas in a lot more detail. But I think the Minister cannot escape the very searching question which is in the breast of many a parent as to why the policies of the Ministry of Education appear to be so "jerky". There appears to be a lack of cohesion, or a certain smoothness, in the application of her policies. Changes appear to happen suddenly; sometimes radical changes appear out of the blue. An example would be her decision to impose a fee of $40 for examinations, apparently suddenly, but certainly announced on an unsuspecting population at a Speech Day. Again, the decision, which is not well trumpeted in Barbados, imposing a fee for certain of the books in the secondary schools which hitherto had been free – for example, dictionaries, atlases and other reference and source books – happen rather suddenly, or at least it was announced suddenly, and I would point out it has brought a measure of difficulty to a number of parents in this community.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, added to these difficulties which parents have been visited with, the Government made certain promises, by way of the former Minister responsible for Social Services, to the extent that parents with more than a certain number of children could expect, some assistance in the light of the increase in bus fares.

We on this side do not accept, nor do we like, the concept of welfare being doled out as opposed to persons having a position by right. But even so, one got the impression that the Government was stating, as a matter of policy, that bus fares would be subsidized beyond the normal subsidy, which has been in existence for some time, if parents had more than a certain number of children going to school. That policy seemed to have fallen by the way side.

The Minister might rightly say that is outside of her portfolio. But that notwithstanding, because of her interest in what happens to her children and her interest in seeing that they go to school, she should, in the absence of the information from the appropriate Minister, be able to tell us what has happened in that regard.

Another point that has created difficulties in terms of the attitude of the Minister, is this sudden emphasis on settling disputes in the courts in relation to a subject like education. I wish to suggest that it cannot be good for the children of the community if it appears to them that the Ministry of Education, which they are taught to respect as the authority on education, and the immediate headmasters and headmistresses, whom they have been taught to be their immediate authority for their education, are in constant conflict. As if that were not enough, they hear a teachers union having to promise the Government action of a certain kind if the Government does not show some degree of reason with regard to teachers.

I would like to deal with that in some detail, but I am going to wait and let my colleagues put those cases before I jump in, because they are the spokesmen for the policy, and I would not wish anything I say to be misunderstood.

I noticed recently that a Principal of Erdiston has been appointed. I believe that those who know him will wish to rejoice with him that he has found another rung in this climb up the ladder of success. I really regret having to say anything which may even remotely suggest that I am not in favour of the young man, whom I do not know, but I have to raise a matter.
3.50 p.m.

It is a source of serious regret – and let me hasten to add, Mr. Chairman, that I do not know this young lady I am speaking of either – when an officer is required to remain in an acting position for a long enough period, after serving apprenticeship as a deputy, and then that officer appears to the public to be passed over, when in the public pronouncements made, and in the evidential material as to qualifications, it appears as if that officer was eminently qualified to fit the post. It is a source of serious regret when at an institution such as this one we can have that kind of problem rearing its head, and I want to suggest that the Ministry of Education owes it to the population not to be invidious, but to assuage the rising concern of the thinking population that there may have been matters other than educational which may have played a part in this appointment. I go no higher than that. Again, I am going to wait for information before I go any further.

I am going to finish this segment of this input by making a charge against the Minister of Finance under this Head. It is a cruel, I might even say wicked, but in any event a dangerous policy, which the Government is following with regard to teacher training in this country. I wish to record my own, and my party's, very solemn and serious objection to a policy which is going to exclude many a teacher from the opportunity of teacher training. Many a talented teacher is going to be wasted along the wayside because of this backward policy, which I know is spearheaded by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

There was a time when persons who left school, who had the need to earn some money, could join the teaching profession, and after having been attached to a school decided by the Ministry of Education, they could look forward to going for proper teacher training at the Teachers' Training College. The Government, by stopping that particular methodology, is depriving the community of talented teachers for generations to come, because what the Government is saying is that unless you are able after leaving secondary school to withstand

the two year hiatus in your earning capacity, and you can go into Erdiston, you have no chance whatsoever of becoming a teacher.

A strange thing happens. A person who does not go for apprenticeship, as it were, to any of the schools in the country, may go and do a Bachelor's Degree, and then make application for a job as a teacher; and that person, without any experience, and perhaps without any talent at all, would be accepted as a teacher, because that person would have a Bachelor's Degree in the appropriate discipline. This is a policy that requires urgent and immediate re-evaluation if we are not to lose a substantial number of talented people who can be available to us, not perhaps in the next five years, but in the generations to come.

I recognise that my time is up. I will make another input.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS (St. James South): Mr. Chairman, I believe that this Head is one of the more important ones to be discussed during the debate on the Estimates. Of late, it has caused some concern for the majority of Barbadians.

I want to begin with Subhead 1, looking at the repairs and extensions to primary schools, and the provision for the purchase of books and other teaching materials needed in primary schools. It seems to me that the Government is bent on only providing materials for new primary schools, because little or no attention is paid to the repair, maintenance and upkeep of existing primary schools. If one were to go throughout this country, one would be appalled at the condition in which our older primary schools find themselves.

I went to three primary schools – Good Shepherd, St. John the Baptist and Wesley Hall – and from time to time I have occasion to use the Good Shepherd and St. John the Bapitst Schools. Although the new Good Shepherd School was erected after my time, I still think that very little has been done to improve its condition. As a matter of fact, the PTA at Good Shepherd, and this is a laudable thing, does more for that school than the Ministry of Education, because from time to time they carry out a number of repairs.

At St. John the Baptist, unfortunately, it is a total disgrace. I do not know if the intention of the Ministry is to use the West Terrace School instead of the St. John the Baptist School; that is something which the Minister will have to answer. If that is the case, then I can possibly understand the rundown of the school, but knowing the catchment area from which the children have to come, I cannot see it possible that the new West Terrace School would be sufficient to cope with the needs of the people in the area.

While I am on the West Terrace School, let me say here that there must be some reason for putting it there, rather than what I consider, and indeed what other people consider, to be a better site. I have more or less canvassed the people in Oxnards, Husbands, Wanstead and Haynesville, and it seems to me that the worst site has been selected. For one, the site seems to be very small, considering the number of children who are to go there, and I have always believed that it is essential for young people to have space in which to play, because it helps to develop the communication skills. The West Terrace School seems to have little or no space for children to exercise these skills, and I would have thought that the area near the Melbourne playing field would have been better. In canvassing the area of Oxnards and Husbands, one thing was pointed out to me which I did not even think of, that is, that most of the parents in those two areas in which the school is situated go out to work on mornings. They take their children with them, and it is more convenient to do that than to allow the children to stay there and go to school. I believe it might be a bit too late now to change the plans, but I believe that the people in the area need an explanation for that.

In the area of the supply of text books for primary schools, I have spoken to a number of primary school teachers and they are very concerned about the fact that the children have no text books in the schools, and at many primary schools they have to purchase their own text books. If this is the case, it means that we are discriminating against the poor child who would not be able to afford text books. When we went to school, all the books were free.

4.00 p.m.

If it is Government's policy that books must be bought, then the necessary publicity should be given to people. People should know what is required of them when they send their children to school. This is creating severe hardships for a number of people. As a matter of fact, I believe that a number of schools now have fund raising activities for the purpose of purchasing text books.

My recollection of the General Paper is that there are nineteen reference books. I am not saying that each child must have nineteen books, but what I am saying is that the child who has a better chance of purchasing those books would, obviously, have a better chance with getting through with the examination. I said that from my recollection there are nineteen; it might be seventeen or twenty-one, but the fact is that there are a number of books, and if we are saying that education is free – and I believe it should be freer at the primary level than it is at the secondary level, for obvious reasons, because unless you have a primary foundation, then you cannot go on to the secondary level – it is important that more is done at the primary level.

I have been noticing from time to time that a number of children from the Ivy, around the city, Black Rock and St. Stephen's are going down to St. James to Good Shepherd and St. James Mixed School. I should like to know if there are no all-age primary schools in St. Michael, if there is really a need for those children to go so far to school. If that is the case, then I can see why a number of children are finding it very difficult to complete their primary education, because they have not got the money. These are matters to which the Honourable Minister must pay special attention.

The teachers themselves and the children in the St. James area are finding it difficult to adjust to the influx of these new students, because they are bringing different habits, to say the least – I would not expand on that – habits which we in the country are not used to. Most of the teachers in these schools in the country are country folk, and they are finding it very difficult to cope with what is happening in the primary schools because of the influx of children from the Bridgetown and other areas outside their own environment.

This brings me to the question of the extension for secondary schools. I notice that a lot of secondary schools are being built, and that there is a massive drive to expand secondary schools. We have got to look at what education is all about, especially secondary education, and I am not blaming the present Government, nor am I blaming the past Government, but we need to ask ourselves: "What is the purpose of secondary education?" and I believe the Minister herself must have posed that question in a different way sometime ago.

A number of teachers in the secondary schools, especially the so-called newer secondary schools, are more than concerned about the capacity of their students to cope with what is expected of them at the secondary school level. This in itself breeds nothing but frustration, and in turn can create the problem about which the Minister is always speaking, vandalism. When children cannot cope, or they feel that they are incapable, or that they are not benefiting from what is supposed to be given to them, then they strike out, and this in itself has caused considerable problems.

There are a number of children who, having gone through the secondary school programme, find it very difficult to write the most simple English or spell the most simple word. This means that we are not really achieving what we are setting out to achieve, and it seems to me that more emphasis should be placed on the remedial education than is placed on secondary education.

What happens in a number of these schools, therefore, is that it is difficult for the teachers to maintain discipline as they should. We talk about parental care; that is part of it, but probably the school programme is not as it should be.

Having mentioned the word "discipline", it seems to me that the new Education Act is creating serious problems for the administration of the schools. Headteachers, teachers generally, feel that the disciplining of children has been taken from their hands. Whether this is so or not, the problem may be that there is a misunderstanding of the regulations governing discipline in schools.

I notice in the regulations that the headteacher is responsible for discipline in the school, but, at the same time, if he does not understand how far he can go, that will pose problems. For example, I was speaking to a teacher a couple of Sundays ago, and he told me that if a child who was standing in his class would not sit when he asked him to sit, then there was nothing he could do but to report the matter to the Ministry of Education. If that is so, by the time the decision of the Ministry of Education gets back to that teacher, you can imagine what state the school would be in, because, generally speaking, children in this situation are only testing the ability of the teacher to cope with their bad behaviour.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Do you really believe that?)

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: I do not believe it, but if the teachers themselves believe that, I believe there is a problem; and if there is a problem, it is better that you get it sorted out.

As a matter of fact, yesterday I was speaking to another teacher about a more serious incident where a youngster pushed a female teacher out of the way. She did not know what to do; she called in a male teacher and he handled the situation.

Teachers, generally, are concerned as to whether or not the question of discipline in the school is moving out of their hands and going to the Board of Management or to the Ministry of Education, and they feel that if they are on the spot, they should be allowed to deal with the situation. This is a serious problem, because if discipline in schools falls, then the whole fabric of society would deteriorate. I do not believe that we should just gloss over it and hope that it will sort itself out.

Whenever there is new legislation, there is always some doubt as to how one would interpret certain actions and let me say this too. I mentioned discipline in the schools as far as the teachers go but I think there is some serious concern as to how the headteachers should handle the general staff, the maids and ground staff. Here, again, a lot of headteachers are now saying that they have no

control over the general staff. I went to one school, and in speaking to the headteacher, he said that if the maid does not clean the classroom, there is nothing he can do about it. He has to report this to the Executive Secretary who is attached to the Board, and then she will decide whether or not the classroom is to be cleaned. When you take these powers away from the headteacher of the school, one can see how deterioration will set in, and this causes a problem.
4.10 p.m.

Of course, the problem is not helped at all by the situation which has developed recently with the headmasters, and I believe that this in itself is a very sad situation. Again it comes back to discipline, because a story is told to me of a headteacher who had occasion to write to a parent complaining about the bad behaviour of his child, and the parent phoned the headmaster to ask the headmaster if he, the headmaster, did not think that they had enough problems of their own to bother about the little child about whom he was complaining.

You can see that when it reaches this stage, it only takes one bad apple to spoil the whole bunch. I have never seen a cask of good apples yet making good a bad apple. It is always the other way around. Once you have one bad apple, all the other apples tend to spoil; therefore, we must do something to alleviate the fears of our teachers, because our teachers are the architects of the future of this country, and especially in these days where parents are so absent from their children, we must give our teachers the assurance that they can have the backing of the powers that be, and that when they have to take disciplinary action against a student, they can get the support of the powers that be.

Mr. Chairman, my time is up. There are many things to be said on education, and I will have to come back from time to time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is prepared to entertain a motion to report progress.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you do now report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 4.30 p.m.

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.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. 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. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): The question is, Mr. Chairman, what is happening with education in Barbados today.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The answer is that he does not know)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I admit, for the first time, that I do not know and I do not have the information, and it is clear that the Minister and the Government do not have the information either.

Education is basically about four elements: students, their parents and guardians, the professional staff, the teaching and non-teaching staff, and the general environment in which education takes place. If we examine any or all of these elements today, we will find that there are serious problems in the education establishment in this country, and that, far from improving, things are deteriorating. Why this is so, the Government and the Minister responsible must account to this Chamber and to the people of Barbados in that regard.

I am not here to encourage any irresponsibility on the part of anyone. I am not going to join anyone and say that today headteachers do not have responsibility for anything in the schools. It is patently not true. In here, we sat down and passed an Education Act, as well as regulations under the Act, which set out the duties of headteachers, in fact the duties of all teachers, the procedures for discipline and so on, so I am not in that kind of argument. These things are set out in the Act and the Regulations. What we are saying, however, is that it is clear that if headteachers, teachers and others do not understand their duties and responsibilities in relation to existing legislation, it is patently the fault of the Minister for not taking full and appropriate steps in order to ensure that they are properly briefed. I do not believe that one seminar here and another seminar there constitutes

enough; and it is clear that that has not been enough, because on the information given to my colleague who preceded me in this debate, there is still widespread misunderstanding, and more needs to be done.

I believe that we have some very experienced educators within the Ministry of Education. I believe that the professional staff is a trained and experienced staff, but I believe that they must be allowed to play their part in the administration of education in this country. There is too much interference – and I am going to use the word "interference" – by the Minister, and too much dictation by the Minister in the administration of education, and the professionals are not being allowed to carry out their functions. When was the last day we heard one squeak from the Chief Education Officer? He is not being able to carry out his functions, he is being hectored, suppressed, muzzled by the administrative staff in the Ministry, under the directions of the Minister.

When we left the proposals for an Education Act, the Chief Education Officer was supposed to be the official who was to be responsible to the Minister for the administration of the Education Act. Now there has been a complete shift in terms of the implementation of the Act, and how this has now worked out is that the Permanent Secretary, following the directions of the Minister, is attempting through the administrative staff, to direct, instruct, guide and teach – do all of these aspects of education – and this is the problem that we are having today.

The problems do not relate directly to the Education Act or the regulations as such, although all of the regulations which should be made have not been made. There are many gaps still in the Education Regulations which should have been filled, so it means that the administrators are not doing the job which they should be doing, and those which they are doing they should not be doing. The complete confusion at that level illustrates confusion of policy, and a lack of direction of one of the major departments in this country – and where we should be getting the leadership and the guidance, we are failing.

We are dealing with the Capital Estimates in this country and we have had one of our major educational institutions come tumbling and falling down. Queens College is collapsing – the headmistress herself has said so, and I can speak with an interest, because I have a daughter who goes to school there – but when I look in these Estimates, which provides a major opportunity for the Ministry of Education to make provision for improving or rectifying conditions at that particular school,.....

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Subhead 8.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: .....I can find no explicit statement at all about the proposals for the improvement of conditions at Queen's College. I cannot see it at all. I can see all kinds of other things identified – St. James Secondary School, the Lodge School, the Alleyne School, West St. Joseph Secondary School, Alexandra School, and Parkinson School. Apparently, it is more important to identify projects which are being funded from outside of the country than to identify specifically and clearly what we can do for ourselves out of our own resources in this country. That, apparently, is another problem.

In the past, we carried out a major educational transformation in this country and did all of the expansions to the schools at the secondary level. We built a remarkable number of schools at the primary level, and we extended and renovated many of those schools out of the resources of this country. But now, with massive borrowings from abroad, which we have to pay back in due course, we still find that the fabric comes tumbling down, and that we are not doing the things that we should be doing.

There is a very serious charge that the Minister has to answer today.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Name it!)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: She knows it very well. The headteachers of the schools are at loggerheads with the Ministry and Minister of Education. In almost all of the schools, there are problems between the Minister, the Ministry and those schools. Do you want me to name some of them for you? Combermere, and there are some distinguished old Combermerians in this Chamber, Foundation Schools, ...

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: What is the problem?)

(Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Did you not talk about it yesterday at the Speech Day?)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: ..... Queen's College, Harrison College, the Lodge School.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: What is the problem at the Lodge School?)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: You must tell us what the problems are.

We would really be lacking in our responsibility to this country, if we do not highlight the fact that, all around us, what we are seeing is degeneration and .....

(Aside: Coleridge and Parry.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am not talking about Coleridge and Parry. Other people can talk about that. That is a separate problem.

We are seeing degeneration, decay – it is patent and it is clear – and we cannot go on pretending that all is well, get up and make a few phrases, and believe that we can just continue with more and more of the same thing. Things are not going right and it is better that we admit it. I am therefore asking the Minister to get up and say exactly how she proposes to deal with all of these massive problems that we are having.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: You have to identify them specifically.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: When we get to the Current Head, I am going to talk about what is happening inside of the schools, and we are going to highlight all the problems, and – let my warn you to get the information now – I want you to come and tell us what percentage of the students scored exactly zero in the last Common Entrance Examination. I want you to come and tell us exactly what it means, because the number of students who scored below the set level is alarming.

We are not looking merely at someone who wins a scholarship, we are looking at the general health of the educational system. So come with those figures and tell us it is 10 per cent, or whatever it is. Get the information and show me what has been the developments, the improvements and so on. I want the full numbers. I understand that you have two or three computers in the Ministry of Education, so you can go and set them to work now. You can punch in that information.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I want you to particularise these tensions between the Ministry of Education and the schools.)

Asides.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I am going to pause here. This is going to be a long debate: we are going to be here again tomorrow on it. All of us will be speaking on this Head, because it is a matter that concerns the public very deeply, and this is the time for an accounting.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Minister may speak.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (City of Bridgetown): Mr. Chairman, I welcome a long debate. If the Opposition did not waste so much time on Monday, Tuesday and yesterday, we could have had two whole days to debate Education. I am willing to come back on Saturday morning, too.

The first honourable Member who spoke, the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt), spoke like all the speakers who followed him. They know everything, anything, speak in the most general terms, and yet, still they ask questions of me.

They want to know if we are building any more primary schools. The Government Printery goes to the trouble to print the Draft Estimates. The Capital Head 76, Ministry of Education starts at page 70, and the very first thing it starts off with in the Explanatory Notes, on the other side of page 70, is the improvements to primary and special schools.

Under Subhead 2, under the World Bank Project, you would see St. Patrick's, which has been just completed and will be officially opened next term. Next is West Terrace School, the construction of which started just a few weeks ago.

That school is meant to service the catchment area in the middle of which it stands. I do not have any reason to believe that any other location would have been better suited than the one on which we are now building. It is meant to service Wanstead, Oxnards, and those surrounding areas. It will also relieve some of the overcrowding at the St. John the Baptist, which the honourable Member for St. James South (Mr. N. K. Simmons) enquired about, and some of the overcrowding at one or two other surrounding schools, but St. John the Baptist is the most overcrowded.
4.45 p.m.

It is not true to say that St. John the Baptist is in a disgraceful state. It may not be known to a lot of people, but I visit the primary schools, every week – at least half a dozen. If they are large schools, I may get through four. I go unannounced – I do not go in my car; I just arrive with a few officials, and I visit. I do not just go and shake hands.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Spy? I do not have to spy, teachers welcome me. You are talking out of both sides of your mouth. If I did not go, you would hear that I do not visit the schools. If I went announced, the people on the side of the road will tell me that I must not say I am coming, they have prepared for my coming. I told a few schools I was coming, and all like Gearbox was outside at the gate waiting for me. You do not do it that way, because you will have all the teachers in their Sunday best. Oh no! I arrive unannounced, and I look at every single thing.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford), you ran the Ministry of Education in the way you saw fit when you were Minister, and I will run it the way I see fit now. This is the way I run it.

I go to the schools, I visit every classroom, and I speak to the children. I visit the nutrition area and I have conversation with the ladies who serve there. I look in the bathrooms, I look at the library, and all the other facilities that they have. For the most part, the schools present a very fine impression. Most of the schools, if not all of them, are clean, well-kept, and well-run.

I am not saying that a lot of our primary schools are in a state of repair which makes me happy. We must remember that at this time we have some 109 primary schools. A lot of them are old church buildings and have been serving us for well over 150 years. Some of those buildings need constant, heavy maintenance, because they are at the stage where, really, they ought to be replaced. It is not an easy job and, under the circumstances, I think that in the Ministry we do a relatively good job of keeping those schools in good repair.

Sometimes, of course, you are going to have a disastrous event. What happened at Queens College was clearly a disastrous event. The building that we are talking about there used to be the original Combermere School. It is a very old building, and it has been undergoing constant repairs, year after year, and it is at the stage where the super-structure cannot take it any longer. But I do not want to stray into the area of secondary schools, I want to stay with the primary schools for the time being.

The Roebuck Primary School has been phased out of existence. This school sits in my constituency, and if anybody knows the catchment area for the Roebuck Primary School, I do. The children who went to that school have long since been happily relocated at other schools, depending on where they lived. The honourable Member for St. Michael South knows how the exercise is done. It is not a haphazard, *ad hoc* operation. We look at the addresses of children, parents are interviewed, choices are solicited, and then we try to make a decision which we think is in the best interest of the children. Some of the children who went to the old Roebuck Primary School now attend the new Lawrence T. Gay Primary School, some of them go to Hindsbury, some of them go to Buxton. It depends on where they live. Some of them have gone as far as St. Giles, bearing in mind, of course, that Buxton, itself to be phased out when we build the Sharon School.

It would not be easy in an exercise like this to go into great detail as to how allocations to primary schools are done when you have an amalgamation exercise or when you phase out a school. But, roughly speaking, that is how we do it. We look at a whole number of factors. You have to look at the population ratio in the catchment area. You have to look to see if in a particular school the population in the surrounding district is declining or whether it is increasing – all of that sort of thing. The point is that there is no need anymore for a Roebuck Primary School to be replaced to serve the catchment area which it used to serve many years ago when generations before us attended it. But that catchment area does not exist today. It turned out that of the young children who attended the Roebuck School, very few came from the immediate city of Bridgetown.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: A Member must be heard in silence.

Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: The honourable Member for St. Michael West is operating on the principle that if he heckles, that will put me off what I am saying. Nothing will put me off what I am saying.

More than one honourable Member spoke about the new Education Act, the administration under it, the fact that disputes are arising out of it, and the fact that there is general public unrest about the way in which we are implementing the new Act.

Let me start off by saying this. The new Education Act, as the honourable Member for St. Michael South quite rightly pointed out, is not something that dropped from heaven like manna. Years of consultation, from his time, went on with the teachers, their various associations, unions, and personal allies to teaching. In my predecessor's time, the honourable Attorney General, that process of consultation deepened. A Bill was drafted, it was well-considered, and then it was brought to this Chamber – and all of us sat down, in 1982, and we agreed to it.

The Education Act would have been the first piece of comprehensive legislation on education in more than 80 years. The main reasons why the Act became urgent in more recent years, not that it had not been urgent before, was that it was very badly needed for two main reasons: firstly, to regulate education and the education system in this country and, secondly, to give us again a vehicle for the correction of abuses in the system.

The secondary schools, which were known as the old grammar schools, as opposed to those which used to be known as the newer secondary schools – they are now all secondary schools.....

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: You could fool me!)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, anybody can fool you!

Mr. Chairman, in the schemes of government of the old grammar schools, the governing bodies and heads wielded considerable power. Before the Act, the newer secondary schools were administered almost exclusively by the Ministry itself. What we have tried to achieve in the Act is a balance, so in some areas, the old grammar schools have lost some of the powers they had, and the newer secondary schools have been given powers which they never had before, and everybody now have the same power. Let me just use one example. Before the Act, a headmaster of a grammar school could look at a boy and say: "I do not like the colour of your hair. Go home and stay home until I choose to call you back." That has happened and it has been attempted already in this year.

Under the new Education Act, headmasters no longer have the power to chase home pupils at every whim and fancy. A headmaster may suspend a child for up to ten days. If he wants a longer period of suspension, if he thinks that his disciplinary methods require that, he must then go to his Board of Management, which can suspend for a further five days. Beyond that, you have to deal with the Ministry.
4.55 p.m.

It is all there in the Act, so the teacher who told the story to the honourable Member for St. James South, that if a child is rude to her she does not know what to do, is somebody who does not want to face responsibility, and there is a lot of that, and not only in the teaching system. Everywhere in Barbados, and particularly in the Civil Service, you will find people who run away from responsibility. What difference do you think there was before the Act and now in respect of an incident like that? It is the same. You go to the Headmaster and the Headmaster dishes out what discipline. If it requires a caning, it is a caning. If it needs a detention, it is a detention.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have another minute.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: If honourable Members who sat down in here and, clause by clause, passed that Education Act, would only look at it and try to understand it, a lot of the folly that I am hearing in the public domain and now being dribbled in here by Members would not be said at all. It is a terrible reflection on an honourable Member who gets up and makes a statement, or brings a sad story in here, the answer to which is clearly to be found in legislation.

I know I have to sit down at this point, Mr. Chairman. I have a lot more to say and I am afraid that I am going to be getting up on many occasions.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Chairman, I have not heard the debate up to this point, since I have just come in, but I have gathered that the Opposition has been criticising the policies of the Ministry of Education. They must have a colossal gall to get in here and criticise this Ministry. For over a century every Government in this country boasted of universal primary education. All the time the Democratic Labour Party was the Government of this country they boasted about universal primary education, and the first time they had universal secondary education in this country was since this Government was running the affairs of State. Is that an achievement, or not?

I will have a long debate, because, like the Minister, I am going to cover the whole spectrum of education from now till tomorrow afternoon. If you start it, I will complete it.

I understand that there is constant talk about the new Education Act. I do not know how an Act that is three years old could be new. This Act was introduced by me here in Parliament three years ago. The Minister has just said that it went through a number of Administrations and Ministers of Education. That is a big joke. When the honourable Member for St. Michael South was Minister of Education, he talked to the Teachers' Unions, and they dismissed him with contempt. He was succeeded by Frederick Smith, who spent a year totally at sea in the Ministry of Education. He did not have the slightest clue as to what was going on, and that is as kind as I can put it. The Teachers' Unions refused to deal with him, because he came up with a lot of harsh, unthinking, insensitive ideas and sought to impose them on the teachers. He did not know how to deal with them.

I had at least twenty-two meetings with the teachers' unions – BUT, BSTU, Association of Head Teachers, private schools, National Parent Teachers Association, the whole lot of them – over a period of about eighteen months and went through, clause by clause, line by line, word by word, every single thing in the new Act and in the new Regulations, and arrived at a consensus. When I brought the Bill before Parliament, not one teacher or one teacher organisation was objecting to one single comma in what was put out.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: They did not even come in here).

Hon. L. R. TULL: Do you know why they did not come in here? They used to come in here by the hundreds when the Democratic Labour Party was trying to railroad a lot of foolishness over them, like they did at Lodge School in 1969. They filled up the public gallery, but they had nothing to complain about. All the things had been agreed on, and we came and passed the bit of legislation.

The Minister says that it was the first major piece of legislation in 80 years. The legislation under which the Democratic Labour Party operated for all of its 15 years

in power was as anachronistic as the DLP itself. For any Government to spend 15 years in the post- sixties period dealing with an educational system based on that outdated, antidiluvian legislation for the government of education, is an Administration of no account. They have a lot of gall to come in here criticising the Government now over its educational policy!

When I came in, I heard honourable Members talking about ministerial interference. You cannot interfere in your own Ministry. What foolishness is this? How can you interfere in your own Ministry? You have responsibility to the people for the running of your Ministry, and when they are telephoning the Minister of Education at 2.30 in the morning asking why she does not get up off her rump and fix the broken window at All Saints' School, all of you are sleeping. I do not understand what you mean by the Minister interfering in her own Ministry. It would be a serious dereliction of duty if the Minister did not get directly involved in the operation of her Ministry and of all the schools under her control.

This foolish argument about interference, which you hear every time the Opposition members open their mouths, should stop. The Minister has an instrument signed by the Governor-General saying that she and she alone in Barbados – no headmaster, no Chief Education Officer, no teacher – has responsibility for public education in this country. Interference! I do not know why the Opposition never gets around to tell me that I am interfering in my Ministry. I want them to tell me about that so I can tell them a few things.

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Even now you do not want to talk to me. You want to start the debate over there with three Ministers of Education, one from St. James South, one from St. Michael South and one from St. Michael West and the three of you want to gang up on one Minister over here. It is not going to work that way.

We have the facts, and anything you want to know about the Ministry of Education, you can ask me. I am operating out of recollection of three years ago.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: And you are still better than her?)

Hon. L. R. TULL: No, no. She is the mistress of her Ministry; she knows it. I have no doubt about that. I listen to her, I hear her put her cases.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Are you complaining? I remember when the honourable Member for St. Michael South was Minister of Education. I remember seeing a confidential UNESCO report giving large numbers of illiterate children coming out of the primary schools who got zero.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: It is not the same amount; only probably 10 per cent of those, whom the honourable Member for Christ Church East used to say they got nought, spelt "n-o-t."

Barbados Scholarships went out of style during the Democratic Labour Party's regime. Nobody could get them. There was some demotivation in the schools that made it impossible for children to produce their best. The teachers were hostile to the Ministry, and the Ministry to the teachers, and it was projected into the classroom, and, as a result, the children were not producing.
5.05 p.m.

I understand that they are now having 27 Scholarships and Exhibitions in a year. During the incumbency of the honourable Member for St. Michael South, he was scrambling to get two or three. But he has the nerve to come in here and criticize our policy!

The honourable Member for St. Michael South used to chase children out of the school at the ages of 13 and 14 and say, "Go and cut canes and pick pond grass." This Administration disagreed. Not only did they bring the legislation that said they had to stay in school until they were 16, but we said that if they did not go to school, we were going to send the School Attendance Officers to get them and put them in school, and if they still gave trouble, we were going to prosecute their parents.

We want children in school until 16. We want a literate, educated citizenry. We believe that that is the best basis for a stable society. But they used to chase them out of school, at 13 years old; they had a lot of little girls knocking around the village when their parents had gone to work, trying to increase the population and going against all the work the Family Planning Association was doing. That is your contribution.

I was trying to remember what could give rise to all this talk about cadavers by the Opposition, because the last time I had heard the word "cadavers" before a few weeks ago was when I used to learn Latin years and years ago. At the St. Patrick's Boys School in Christ Church, right next to the church, they used to bury dead bodies, cadavers, six feet away from the School Meals Room. I have been to that school, seen a grave with wreaths still on it and a stench still coming from it, and children six feet away getting their milk. You have the nerve to criticize us?

A multi-million dollar school has been built at St. Patricks.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: No. When the honourable Member was going to that school, the Barbados Labour Party was the Government, and we never used to bring the dead bodies close to the children's milk and biscuits.

Laughter.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: What schools are we building?

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. L. R. TULL: The Government of Barbados negotiated with the World Bank sometime ago – I do not get these dates right anymore – maybe 1978 – to get money to construct primary schools in Barbados because the Democratic Labour Party had allowed the primary school plant in this country to run down to an unacceptable level. When we looked at those schools, we could not believe the state they were in.

I know that the honourable Member for St. Michael South will get up and call off seven schools that they built in 15 years and say, "I am a good boy Jack", because he built seven schools. The Barbados Labour Party did not like what you did. We did not like how you allowed all the primary schools to run down, so we went to the World Bank and they borrowed money to refurbish and rebuild primary schools in Barbados, because we believe that at the heart of a good education policy, is a proper training for the people at the bottom – the little kids.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South built some big, old place up there in St. George. He did a disservice to the parish in which I live. I understand that there was no planning permission to build it. You built it up there and you did not put a tree on the grounds. You did not plan how many children in St. George were of secondary school age – you did nothing. You built the school up there.....

(Asides.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: The honourable Member says that I am talking foolishness. This debate is going to go on until tomorrow and I am going to ask the Ministry of Education to produce the files. Do not behave like the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, who can sit down there and easily lie straight off the top of his head. I will bring the files. There was no planning permission to construct the secondary school at St. George.

(Asides.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: Do you want to hear about the school for Roebuck? The children, as I remember, who went to Roebuck Primary School, substantially came from areas far from Roebuck Street, so we built schools in St. Michael to take care of them. We built the big Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School in Spooner's Hill, the Eden Lodge School, and the Pine/Wildey School, and we built them all around the periphery of Central Bridgetown. I see that they are starting one at West Terrace.

(Asides.)

Hon. L. R. TULL: Did she say so? Well, I have to reinforce it. I know you do not like to hear it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute more.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Already Sir? I am now warming up. Since I have only one minute, I will sit down, because there is hardly anything I can develop in that time. I will come back later in the day.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I really believe that the honourable Member, who has been in the Ministry of Education for seven years, will do us a disservice if, in his misguided belief that he must defend the Minister, he must take us back to the debates that occurred in the General Elections for 1976. The Barbados Labour Party has had responsibility for running this country for the last nine years. Why, like you, we do not wish history to be put away, we think that we have to put the debate in focus today, and I really do not think it falls well from the mouth of an honourable Member, who has been respected as a Minister of Education, to get up and make the kind of speech that you would expect on the hustings.

If he wishes us to make it a political debate this evening and let us do the technical debate tomorrow, we can do that. You cannot come in here and try to give anybody the impression that the Democratic Labour Party buried dead people six feet away from somewhere. Do you think that we are Public Health Inspectors or something? Which of the Ministers gave the instructions to bury the dead there?

You are talking about eating. The honourable Member, who is Minister, represents a school, in Westbury Road, and you have a garbage can, which smells so bad that the people who live in Westbury Road do not even pass Westbury Road, right under where the school meals are prepared today, in 1984, in spite of your information and knowledge of the nastiness that happened at St. Patrick's.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No cross-talking. Please do not let the debate degenerate to the mundane.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it is not degenerating. It is trying to rise up, but I have to put him in perspective. There is no degeneration here. The honourable Member is not going to be allowed to come and put this debate into a free-for-all about the Democratic Labour Party. This is nine years later.

I will just show you how inconsistent the honourable Member is. He started off talking about "universal secondary education", whatever that means. I have no doubt that he knows what that means, but we are going to put a meaning to it. You talked about universal secondary education, and within fifteen minutes you were criticising the honourable Member for building secondary schools.

5.15 p.m.

Hon. L. R. TULL: On a point of order: I will not sit here and be misrepresented. I never criticised the honourable Member for building secondary schools in Barbados. I was talking about the construction of a school in St. George without planning permission and without a proper study for the needs of that school. That is all I said.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is why I want to come to that particular school. The honourable Member, a representative for St. George, should be getting up in here and crying shame on his colleague, the Minister of Education, for putting out a brochure telling the people of Barbados that we have all the secondary schools equal when, only recently, an article was published, accompanied by a photograph, of the bad conditions at the said very St. George Secondary School, built only the other day by the honourable Member whom you now criticise. Would you really put out to the people of Barbados that the St. George Secondary School, in its present condition, has equal facilities with other secondary schools in this country?

The honourable lady Member said we should refer to these notes. Do you know, Mr. Chairman, in these estimates for Capital, in spite of the situation at that secondary school, that if you look at Construction and Improvement to Secondary Schools on page 72, you will see St. James Secondary, Lodge School, Alleyne School, West St. Joseph, Alexandra, Parkinson, Samuel Jackman – and it runs out.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, please.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what does the honourable Minister rise?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order: I did not think that after all these years in here, I would really have at this stage now to be explaining the explanatory notes in the Estimates to honourable Members on the other side. Opposite page 72, it says "Description of Subheads", Subhead 8: Construction and Improvement of Secondary Schools. Description: This subhead provides for improvement of existing schools. Subhead 9: St. James Secondary (Trents) (World Bank Project)". The school you are talking about is not under the World Bank Project. It is an existing secondary school which is catered to under subhead 8.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am grateful to the honourable Member, because that is the same explanation she gave to my colleague when he raised the question of Queens College, and if you look at the amount in the vote, even a jackass can see that the $2 million you have in here cannot deal with Queens College and St. George Secondary.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER rose.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There are two honourable Members on their feet.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order: It is not parliamentary for the honourable Member for St. Michael West to describe himself as a jackass.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member described nobody as such.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not going to describe the honourable Member at all. The names that parents call her, I cannot say in here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the honourable Member please address himself to this matter before the House. He is straying a little too far.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I know how you feel, but, with the greatest respect, if the honourable Member for St. George South goes into a political debate, and then the Minister gets up and tries to suggest that I do not know how to read the Estimates, you cannot tell me I am straying when I try to respond to her. With the greatest respect, the honourable Member will have to take her blows. I know that the noise gets to you after a certain time. I will try to hold it down.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will take care of the noise, and I will take care of honourable Members, too.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am disappointed, as I was saying, with the honourable Member for St. George South who, if anything, ought to know that the creation of legislation does not a system make. He said that the old Act was anti-diluvian, and he is amazed that the Democratic Labour Party could live with it. He should know, because he himself, as Attorney General, at another time and on another occasion, has talked about how long it

takes and how difficult it is to get legislation through. He should know that the honourable Member for St. Michael South did have a new Education Act, which did come to a House of Assembly, and which died in the way that the system we have allows legislation to die, and when the Barbados Labour Party came in, they found certain changes which we wanted to make in an Education Act. It is really not fair for him to score cheap political points by trying to suggest that the honourable Member did not do anything.

Hon. L. R. TULL: On a point of order: The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, who is causing a disturbance, knows a lot about schools, because he said that he went to Workman's School when he was four years old, got four double promotions, and left school at the age of eleven.

The point of order is.....I have forgotten what it was.

Laughter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I wish to recommend to the Honourable Attorney General that he takes a break, go out for a little walk and come back. The Minister can take care of herself. We are not going to unfair her. We are just going to chastise her a little bit.

The point I was making is that the Act is only a guideline. It is the implementation of the Act that will determine what kind of educational system we have in this country, and the Minister and her officials must administer that Act in such a way as to bring peace, harmony and a certain amount of inspiration to the people whose jobs it will be, not only for the next five years or the next decade, but maybe hopefully for another 100 years, to fashion an education system of which all of us can be proud.

Three years is not so long for an Act of this size and proportion – the honourable Member is more than 40 and he is still new – and I think that when the Ministry, whether it is the officials advising the Minister or the Minister directing the officials, lost the opportunity to have a more gradual change over of the management of the secondary schools, when the Minister wrenched almost all of the schools with a sudden replacement of all those persons who were familiar with the various schools and how they were functioning, when she threw an additional load on the Ministry suddenly, when the Ministry, especially the administrative s section, that had been accustomed to operating in a particular way suddenly found itself having to make day-to-day decisions concerning schools, because of a certain degree of confusion arising out of the sudden change of management structure in all of the secondary schools at the same time, I submit that this is part of the problem which is now beginning to bare itself in terms of how some of the headmasters and Boards of Management are reacting in terms of the schools.

I will give you an example. I have said it before, but I thought this debate requires it to be repeated. Combermere School is a school that has a long history of attachment for a large number of people, but, more particularly, there were some people on the old Governing Body of Combermere School who had been associated with that school for over 40 years, in one form or another. When the honourable Minister sent home the chairman of that governing body, she not only broke a relationship that had gone beyond public service and had been meshed into a love relationship between the chairman of that governing body and that school, but she then brought a number of people who have had no idea whatsoever of the traditions, concepts and the directions of that particular school. The result has been that neither the Board of Management nor the managers, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the senior teachers, have come to have the kind of confidence which is required in that kind of service.
5.25 p.m.

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: A member must be heard in silence.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am submitting that these Boards of Management and the headteachers must have a cohesive and co-operative spirit between and among them. And no matter what structures we pass in this House, if that kind of co-operation does not exist, the Ministry and the schools are going to be at loggerheads. That is not in the interest of any of us. All jokes aside and politics aside, in the final analysis, it is the children at the respective schools that suffer, which is contrary to the objectives of the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party.

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Are you sure?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, they say that they have objectives. I believe so. Most of them over there have children, and, therefore, have the same objectives that we have as parents. So I will grant them that they have the same objectives, although I am beginning to wonder about the honourable Member who was the last Minister of Education. Up until today, I have.....

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It was he that ran down all the schools in Barbados.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: All right. I am not getting into that row between the two of you all.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Correct. Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The two of you all are scholars, so you will have to work that out. Although I accept what you say – that he is the person who ran down the schools.

Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is a very serious point. There is a feeling abroad.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I shall have to give the honourable Member two minutes more because of the interruptions.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Clerk advises me that it should be three minutes more.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Plus two. Thank you, Sir.

The honourable Member for the City must understand that, whether it is true of false, there is a feeling abroad that she has a personal attitude towards some headteachers. There is a feeling abroad that the honourable Member has a personal vendetta, for example, with the headmaster of Combermere School. It is the Minister's duty to ensure that she inculcates in the Ministry and in the schools that that is not true, if it is not true.

We have never put a headmaster in court. We have never sent home a headmaster. Maybe, we ought to have done so, but the point is that it never occurred to the honourable Member for St. Michael South, as Minister of Education, notwithstanding what she said was his relationship with the unions, that he should go into any school or should direct that the attitude in any school should result in a headmaster being sent to court, or a headmaster wanting to put the Ministry in court, or the headmasters having to get an injunction for children who were not going back into school.

I am submitting that this is disruptive not only of the particular school, but of the whole fabric of education, because we in Barbados rely almost exclusively on education as our chief means of social mobility in the total body politic. I am submitting that when there is no peace in education, there can be no peace in Barbados. It is a very serious matter when people begin to feel that the Ministry of Education is at war with the schools.

My time is up and I will be back. But I wish the Minister to give some consideration to these matters.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN and Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER rose.

(Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: No, I have to get a chance again I have a lot of questions to answer.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I request at this stage to hear the honourable Member for the City.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to clarify Subhead 8, before I go back to the Education Act. Under Subhead 8 – I know that they are not talking about the Heads, but I have a duty to talk about the Heads – it says "Construction and Improvement to Secondary Schools" – that is existing schools – and you will see that there is a sun in excess of $2¼ million.

Under that subhead, we have only put in a token vote for Queen's College – this is particularly for the benefit of the honourable Member for St. Michael South – precisely because the engineers, the architects and the quantity surveyors are not yet in a position to tell us exactly what the construction works there are going to cost.

In truth and in fact, Queen's College has to have a new building on that land where the old GIU was. We have done soil tests and the Board of Management of Queen's College is now meeting with the staff and so on to do a complete physical reorganisation of the school. We know that we are going to have to start it in this financial year, but because we do not have an end figure, I have put in a token for that.

A large sum of money is also in that figure for substantial repairs at Harrison College. There is a token in there too to begin a school at Wotton in Christ Church. We have had an estimate for some years now; it is not a World Bank Project school. That estimate is in the process of being reviewed now, and when that final figure is put in my hand, I will, of course, have to come back here in respect of the total, but that is another school which we hope to begin in this financial year. That and St. George and several other schools are covered under subhead 8, 'Improvement to Existing Schools'.

To get back to the Education Act, as I said before, everything is set out in the Act: the role and function of the heads, the Boards of Management, the terms and conditions; it is all there. But let us remember that we are dealing with human kind. There are a lot of headmasters, and headmistresses too, who are reluctant to give up powers which they formerly held.

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: And rightly so, because they exercise greater discretion.)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is saying in an aside, "And rightly so, because they exercise discretion." How can we have that, when a headmaster looks at a boy, as has happened in this school year already, and says, "Why

have you put in gerry curl? If your hair is knotty, it is knotty. Go out of my sight and stay away from this school until I choose to call you back;" when a headmaster enters a boy for the CXC Examinations for June coming and three weeks later, writes at the bottom of the report that he is expelled from the school because he is not showing enough diligence, and then on two subsequent occasions defies the Board of Management – the Board of Management is the body with the power to expel – when the headmaster can ignore the Board of Management and chase this child out of the school on three separate occasions since December, a child who has just missed his "mocks" and has to sit exams in June; a headmaster who, on the second occasion, in front of his entire class, humiliated this child by saying, "You know you do not have any right in here, man leave and go."

The parent appealed to the head and got no satisfaction, and then she wrote me a letter. I made it quite clear that the child is to be reinstated, and that if the child is a child who the head felt was to be expelled, well then, that is a matter that he had to put before the Board of Management. I do not want to get in that. All I say is, go through the right procedures.

What worries me is that, all like now, that child is still out of the school, Mr. Chairman. It is all right for honourable Members over there to talk. If it was their child, I would be hearing a different story. It is not every child whose father is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Nation* and can make a case to the whole of Barbados.

Aside

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is my job. I have to get flustered about it.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is no one child who I have to defend.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: An honourable Member is on a point of order. Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: The Minister may be a little upset. But I am drawing to Your Honour's attention the rule, the Standing Order and the Convention under May's Parliamentary Procedure, that during debate, honourable Members do not normally refer to persons by way of identification.

There is only one Editor-inChief of the particular newspaper. I do not think that the honourable Member would wish to do that. I recommend that you strike it from the Record, Sir.

5.35 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, that was printed at the top of an editorial in the *Nation* newspaper on a day in January this year. I am not saying anything that is not in the public domain.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask honourable Members on both sides to avoid these personal references.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: When we talk about discretion, let us face facts. It is easy to talk about discretion out there, I have to live with it on a daily basis.

The power to expel a child, according to the Act, is surely now more fair, when it is going to be weighed by a group of people on the Board of Management, rather than in the old-time way in which a headmaster had the power of life and death over children. I will defend that. We sat in here and agreed to that, so that is what we are having.

We have twenty-one secondary schools. How is it that the heads of these other schools have no difficulty in trying to accommodate what is the new dispensation? In every society, once you introduce something new, you will always have some mavericks out there who would want to defy the establishment, and that is a growing tendency in this country.

There is something else that is growing in this country about which we must be very mindful. In Barbados, we have an amorphous middle-class; at the ends of our society, we have small minorities. We have to be very careful that the very things we rose up against those who governed us before to claim and protect, now we govern ourselves, what was right suddenly becomes wrong. We have to be very intolerable of allowing a situation to grow in this country where a few middle-class people feel that they have rights and privileges above the rest of us.

The school system is open to all, and there is no good reason, as far as I am concerned, why some children should be more equal than others, and why a headmaster would think that he could arrogate to himself the power and privilege to say to a child – "Go home because I say so", or "Go home, because I do not like your hair". We are not having that under the new Act. So when you get these tales from the honourable Member for St. James South about the teachers telling you that the Act is taking power from them, and they do not know what to do now, and that if a child is rude to a teacher, the teacher will have to go to the Ministry of Education, and it has to be a ten-year plan before you can get back to discipline the child, they are absolute lies. You are dealing with a teacher who does not want to discipline, and who

does not know how to discipline, and that is a problem that I have to deal with.

Do you know what all of this shows us today? That school masters are more trouble to me than school children – and there are 65 000 school children, and only twenty-one headmasters and headmistresses. How can a headmaster try to instil in his children a respect for discipline if he himself flouts the regulations under which he is to operate? It is not an easy thing, and it is something that we cannot sit down in the Ministry and countenance, and encourage.

I will answer a few other points. The Member for St. Michael South, I think it was – it might have been the Member for St. Michael West – talked about fees for books. It is true that there is no rental of dictionaries, Bibles, and atlases. These are books that children will keep for all of their school lives and are encouraged to buy. We do not rent them. These are books that they must own, that they should keep forever; even after they have left school these are books that they should still keep. If they cannot buy them, the wherewithal to buy them will be found, and it is found on a daily basis.

The only reason why a child attending any of our secondary schools does not have the required books, lies in the explanation which I made at Presentation College a few days ago. It is where the children will not bring the rental books back. We, therefore, have to order new books, and in the interim, the children who would expect to have to use some of them are forced to do without. I do not want to go into any more detail on that. I spelt that out very carefully at Presentation College, and I really hope that parents will be a little more responsible in this question of the return of the school books which are rented and in the payment of the $20 fee for rental.

Mention was also made about the lack of books in the primary schools by, I think the honourable Member for St. James South. Under the Democratic Labour Party's fifteen years, there were no text books to speak of in primary schools. Textbooks in primary schools were sporadic; you would see some one year and then a couple of years would pass and you would not see any. Only last year $200 000 of the taxpayers' money in text books were distributed to the primary schools of this country. There is no primary school in Barbados which is in a position to say today that it has not got an adequate supply of text books. Some schools even have libraries.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A MILLER: The honourable Member for St. James South is saying St. Stephen's. I have not yet visited St. Stephen's, but I will see and I will inquire. If St. Stephen's does not have enough books, it may only mean that the headmaster has not come forward to receive his books.

The primary schools are really very much better supplied with text books than they ever were before.

I was quite impressed with the St. Thomas School to see that there was actually a room, which was a library, with chairs and books. The children are encouraged to come in their lunch hour and after school to read books and borrow them.

I think that perhaps the honourable Member, like myself, ought to do more actual visiting of the primary schools and see for himself what the conditions are. It is a wonderful thing to approach a primary school and to hear children spelling after a teacher, to hear dictation being given, sometimes to hear singing going on, a very studious atmosphere. Our primary children are alert, bright and keen, and turn out a better performance altogether than our secondary school children.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West, who has a habit of bringing personal cases in here, talked about the recent appointment of a new Principal for the Erdiston Teacher Training College. He well knows that I have nothing to do with appointments; appointments are made by the Public Service Commission. What I can say to this honourable Member, is that the candidates for that post, which was advertised both at home and abroad, were interviewed by the Board of Management, recommendations were made, and, in the end, as usual, the Public Service Commission made an appointment.

I want to say this. The lady who acted did act for an inordinately long time, she acted from May of last year. But I want to stress that there is no way that I will support a policy which dictates that simply because you are in a post for a long time, acting or otherwise, or because of longevity or whatever, that that will automatically qualify you for promotion. What I would like to see more of in the Public Service is promotion on the ground of merit.

5.45 p.m.

I have looked at the C.V. of the man who was appointed Principal of Erdiston College. This is a man who is into research, who is publishing.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member will give way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable Minister give way?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No. He is trying to interrupt me, Mr. Chairman. Wait for your turn to speak again.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member sat down, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member sat down because the honourable Member recognises that two honourable members cannot be on their feet at the same time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But she sat down.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am not disputing that. However, the honourable Member stands on a point of elucidation, and the honourable Minister does not give way.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not giving way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member will have his chance.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, in the new Principal of Erdiston Teacher Training College, you are dealing with a man who is into research, a man who publishes, a man who is clearly very well qualified for the job. I am not saying that other candidates who were interviewed were not qualified, but he was obviously definitely judged to be the person best qualified for the job, and it really has nothing to do with me.

You are always coming in here making cases for people. You were making a case for the former Chairman of the Board of Combermere School, you will make a case now for the Deputy Principal at Erdiston College. I do not deal with people, I do not know who these people are. I am interested in the quality of their performance.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order: The honourable Member said that the Public Service Commission makes the appointment, but ask her if they make it with advice from anybody.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order. When my eye catches the honourable Member, he will have an opportunity to speak again.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I was careful to say that the candidates were all interviewed by the Board of Management, that recommendations went forward, and that the Public Service Commission made the appointment. I play absolutely no role in it, thank the Lord. That is not my job, I do not have any competence to do that, and he well knows that.

Asides

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is true. There are no Leroy Murrells in the Ministry of Education. I do not send home people to draw the taxpayers' money just because I do not like the look of their faces, or because they belong to the other party. You are going to have Leroy Murrell's name written on your heart till you leave politics. I am not going to let you forget it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up. The honourable Member for St. James South.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I want to refer to some of the comments made by the honourable Minister when she spoke about this 17-year old boy having to leave school. I want to refer her specifically to the Education Act, the Interpretation Section, Section 2(1), which talks about the compulsory school age being between 5 and 16. It seems to me, therefore, that it is at the discretion of someone. He does not have to be expelled at 17 any more; he has not got a right under the Act to be there, because the compulsory age is 16.

Are you sure that the teachers at the school want to teach the boy? Are you sure that the Board of Management carried out a proper investigation into the conduct of the youngster? Was he not in the fifth form a year previously? If that is so, why is it that you are discriminating, or that there is a different policy between that school and Alexandra School, where, when the children get 16, whether or not they have a good chance of doing better, they have to leave school after spending one year in the fifth form?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation: This is the very point I am trying to make. I am saying that that is a matter for the Board of Management, not for the headmaster to make an independent, sole judgement. Those matters go before the Board of Management, it has nothing to do with me. Policy will vary from school to school.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! An honourable member must be heard in silence.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: I believe the honourable Minister said that she gave instructions for the boy to go back to school. I am saying that there seems to be a double standard in the Ministry as far as fifth forms are concerned, because at two or three schools in this country, as soon as you spend one year in the fifth form and you are 16 years of age, you have to leave school. Here is a youngster with two years, endless trouble, as I understand it – and it is very possible at that same school to which you are referring that there is a difference of opinion between the headmaster and the Board of Management – and he remains in school.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I must try to elucidate again.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On the same point. I am not denying that any of that is so. What I am saying is that the headmaster has no power on his own, without reference to the Board of Management. I also have great difficulty in believing that the headmaster would enter a boy for the examination and a few weeks later expel him from school.

Hon. L. R. TULL: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is it procedure?

Hon. L. R. TULL: I am dealing with the Standing Orders, Sir. I am making a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow that.

Hon. L. R. TULL: If the House is going out of order, must I not help to bring it back in? What am I hearing at all?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before I can entertain the honourable Member, the issue involving the Lodge School is a matter which cannot.....

Hon. L. R. TULL: I have not said anything yet, how do you know what I am going to say? Mr. Chairman, why do you not let me make my point of order? I believe that I am the legal adviser to this Chamber, and I am entitled to get up and put this House right on matters of order.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! order, order, please! Order! The honourable Member for St. James South was speaking and the honourable Minister of Education asked him to give way. The honourable Member for St. James South gave way and the honourable Minister spoke. The honourable Member for St. George South stands on a point of order. Would the honourable Member indicate to me which Standing Order has been breached?

Hon. L. R. TULL: I have not got the copy of the Standing Orders here, but I am referring to the Standing Order that prohibits discussion in this Chamber on matters that are *sub judice.*

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. L. R. TULL: This fellow is always jumping in where it is too deep, Sir. I am advised that something has been filed in the courts in relation to this matter.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Do not interrupt the Chair.

Aside.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Do not ask me when.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! A Member must be heard in silence. I cannot have this sort of behaviour.

Hon. L. R. TULL: In the circumstances, since there is a matter pending in the courts, I would suggest that any reference to the matter go not to the content of the action that is before the courts, and I think it is going in that direction.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The point is very well taken. Thank you.
5.55 p.m.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: It was not my intention to go to the content of the action, but I can assure the honourable Attorney General that up to 12:00 o'clock today there was no action filed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue your speech and leave this matter out of the debate entirely.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: What I am saying is that I hope that the honourable Minister of Education is not saying that because somebody has been entered for an examination, that that person can do nothing which would exclude him from school, because it seems to me that once you are entered for an examination, no disciplinary action to expel you can be taken.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: I was also making the point that there seems to be some double standards in allowing children to remain at school and to take the CXC examinations or the Ordinary Level examinations. In one instance, you are saying that the youngsters can remain at school up to a certain year, and at another school, Alexandra School, when they spend one year in Fifth Form, you are saying that they must leave. This has been to a great disadvantage to a number of children in that school. As a matter of fact, I believe that last year, they only knew of that decision in the last term of that year, in the term in which they were sitting the examination. I mentioned that because I think it is important that these policy decisions be communicated at the earliest possible opportunity so people can adjust to them.

I am not quite sure if the Minister is aware of the fact that there are two St. John The Baptist Schools, because if the Minister can tell me that St. John the Baptist Junior school is in a good state of repair, then I would suggest that she has not visited it for at least three years. The St. John the Baptist Junior school is disgraceful.

The morale among the teachers in the schools today is at its lowest ebb. There is no teacher that I have come across within the last six months who does not want to get out of teaching. I do not know if they are terrified by the Ministry. I do not know what the problems are, but I believe, as I said earlier, that teachers are the architects of the futures, and if teachers feel this way, it is the duty of the Ministry to assure that all will be well and to communicate with them.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, I am not going to get into the Education Act, I am not going to be technical at all. I will just explain to this Chamber an incident that happened to me, and tell you how I feel.

A couple of weeks ago, I was on my way to the University of the West Indies, and, on my way past Combermere School, to which I have a very deep attachment, I saw a youngster, about 13 years old, outside the school when he should have been in school.

I stopped and I enquired why he was not in his classroom, because I remembered overhearing that morning that the Ministry was going to bar some boys from Combermere School, and then, when I saw him, I thought that he might have been one of the boys involved. I asked him why he was not in school and he said to me "They might put me out." I said to him "That is not true. Why do you not go into your school?" He said "My mother is up there talking to the headmaster and I am waiting until my mother returns." I then said that I would go and ask his mother to come and take him into the school.

At the same time, the *Nation* photographer turned up and attempted to take the photograph of the little boy. The little boy went into the corner of the wall, broke down in tears, and said to me: "Oh my God, I cannot take any more." I asked him what had happened to him, and he said that he had not slept for nine nights, neither had he eaten.

His mother came down, and I talked to the mother, and I asked her what was happening to this little boy. She explained to me that that little boy was taken from Ellerslie School and he was one of the little boys involved in the power struggle – call it whatever you will – between the headmaster and the Ministry.

I am not getting involved in the power struggle, the Education Act, or anything. I am speaking as a parent, and the way I felt that morning and he was my son, and the Minister of Education, or her Permanent Secretary, or the Chief Education Officer or anybody had come anywhere near me, I might have lost my temper. There is no way any system at all in Barbados should have put such pressure on that little boy that, at 13 years he felt that he could not have taken anymore. I am not saying who is responsible, who has put the pressure on him, all I am saying is.....

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Why you do not say that it was orchestrated by the Members of your Party?)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I am not getting involved in that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order please.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I want the Minister to understand that I do not have anything to do with the Press.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I cannot have this cross-talk. A Member must be heard in silence and, even more important, the Hansard Reporters cannot do their work in this atmosphere.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, I am not interested in what is the Minister's feeling on the matter. I am just telling her how I felt at the time as a parent, and as an old Combermerian. If the Minister does not have that type of feeling, it is not my fault.

Whatever or whoever is responsible, I want the matter resolved to remove that pressure from any child whosoever in Barbados. I am not getting involved in the Act, the Minister, nor the struggle – nothing like that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Do not lose your temper.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Thank you.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM (Christ Church East): Mr. Chairman, education has for many years been consuming a significant amount of money in this country, some 20 per cent of the total expenditure. In the year ahead, we will be spending some $98 million, about 18 per cent, on this important area, and so I join with the members of the Opposition in welcoming a thorough and long debate on Education.

I used to feel very disappointed when, a few years ago, we would discuss the Estimates for five days and, often, not reach this important Head, but, at the same time, I must admit to a certain disappointment at the

level at which the debate, thus far, has been conducted. I myself would have welcomed some discussion, at least as a start, on the role, philosophy and strategy of education in this island, rather than what thus far we have been getting.
6.05 p.m.

The Opposition seems interested in repeating anecdotes, parading isolated cases to make no general point and, generally, making exaggerated and baseless accusations against the Government. For example, the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) said – and these are my words recapturing his substance rather than his exact words – that the Minister was presiding over a system that was falling down at the administration and physical level. He pointed to Queens College, where one or two buildings are in a state of acute disrepair, and he also pointed to what he called the tensions between the Ministry of Education and the teaching profession, particularly headmasters. The headmaster at Combermere and the headmaster at Foundation were the two instanced by way of illustration.

The new Education Act, and it is still relatively new – three years is not a long time – was discussed at some length here in this House, and I think that we too agreed that education had, as it were, outgrown its legal clothes in Barbados, and that there was need for a new legal framework within which education could operate. There is some element in the teaching profession that is resistant to change in any form, and to some extent, in so far as there is some dissatisfaction with the Act, it arises from resistance to change.

It is also true, and I think the headmaster at Foundation made this point yesterday at the school's Speech Day, that the Act is in many quarters insufficiently understood, but he said that, given the passage of some more time, he had every reason to believe that the Act would work in a satisfactory way. I myself hope the anomalies which come to light, and I have no doubt there will be some anomalies, will be reviewed in another year or two, at which point the Act would have been in operation for five years, and, if necessary, then we can come back to Parliament and make one or two amendments. Not every problem that crops up from day to day would have been foreseen by the architects of the legislation, so it might be necessary to make a few amendments in another year or two after the Act would have been in operation for about five years.

As I understand it, however, the main cause of collision between one or two of the headmasters instanced and the Ministry of Education, relates to something very significant and important in this country, and we ought to get our principles straight. The integrity of the Eleven Plus Examination system must be protected by all of us. We cannot tolerate a system where some children, notwithstanding the fact that they do not do well, or fail the examination, are able to go through the back door and take places in the good grammar schools, as they used to be called, the first grade and second grade schools – I am using language that is somewhat dated, but you understand what I mean – Harrison College, Queens College, Foundation and Combermere and so on.

The worst thing that could happen in education in this country would be for people to lose faith in the integrity of the Eleven Plus examination system, and that has been the main issue. The fact that there are fifteen or twenty parents in this country who are dissatisfied because of the fact that their children have been wrongly placed and they have been told that they have to take them out and put them where they belong on merit, is not a matter that should attract too much sympathy in this House. Remember that the fundamental principle, and we must not lose sight of it, is that the integrity of the system must be upheld, because the maids in my constituency and yours, who have children too, and the agricultural workers, who do not know the headmasters and headmistresses, would have no way possible of getting their children through that back door.

So, since that is the issue, what is the Opposition, and in particular is the honourable Member for St. Michael South, saying on this issue? Is he for upholding the integrity of the system or not? And if he is, let the message go forth from this Parliament tonight to all the parents concerned that no parliamentarian, either on your side or this, support what they have done.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation, if the honourable Member wants to know what I am saying on this issue.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable Member give way?

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I give way. I take it he is on a point of order.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am on a point of elucidation. The honourable Member is asking me what am I saying on this issue, and I am saying that the matter has been badly handled. If a problem occurred arising out of the Eleven Plus Examination, the solution to that problem is not to take your headmaster to court. The solution is to correct the defects in the regulations so that the problems will not occur again, and do not bring psychological and educational harm to the children.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: As far as I know, these back door entries took place notwithstanding clear regulations to the effect that they ought not to have

taken place. So there is no defect in any regulations. That brings me to another point relating.....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation.....

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I am not giving way this time.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: What is the regulation? Point out the regulation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: How can the honourable Member stand up in here without catching the eye of the Chairman!

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Point out the regulation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. Michael South knows better than that.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: You will have the opportunity of speaking again, and I am not giving way on this occasion.

I want to turn for a moment to the role of the Press in these matters, which strikes me as one that is irresponsible.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: A Member must be heard in silence.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: In principle, I wish to address my remarks.....

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what do you rise?

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Which Standing Order do you complain is in breach?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Standing Order which ways that a Member may not mislead this Honourable House. The honourable Member has referred to regulations that do not exist.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order. Please take your seat.

6.15 p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I was saying, Mr. Chairman, that I want to turn my remarks for a moment to the question of the role of the Press in these matters.

Not for the first time in this country, we have had difficulties between children and the school, the headmaster or a master which has reached the point of a child having to go home. Boys were sent home in my time at school and before my time, and I have no doubt that they will be sent home even long after we have all passed. I never knew of any situation in the past when, as soon as a boy has been sent home from school, for whatever reason, you could somehow call up the newspaper, and have a boy leaning up beside a wall at the school, or a hundred yards from there, pretending that he is crying and his parent or guardian standing looking in distress, and get a front page picture of that.

It seems to me that the Press has no role and no responsibility. No responsible editor or sub-editor would pass any such photograph. If all the boys, many of whom are now standing citizens in this country, who were sent home for a day or two, a week or sometimes two weeks, in my time had to have their photographs put in the newspaper, a lot of them might have suffered later in life.

The Press has no particular responsibility in my view, in publishing photographs such as the ones we have been seeing recently. The question therefore arises, "What right did any *Nation* photographer have heading up there when my friend, the honourable Member for St. Philip North, passed and saw the boy?"

Obviously, the parent or guardian must have called the Press.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: It was the Ministry.)

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You are a liar.)

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: No responsible Press would respond to any such invitation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman.....

(Dr. R. C. HAYNES: There are two honourable Members on their feet.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what does the Honourable Minister rise?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. No order has even been issued from the Ministry of Education, and no directive was ever given, about debarring any child from school. It was a straw man put up to be knocked down by the Press.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order. Would the honourable Minister of Agriculture please continue.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I have to say this about the *Nation* newspaper, for which I have a lot of

admiration and regard. The *Nation* newspaper must not allow itself to be used as an instrument for the prosecution of a lot of suspect causes. I notice that there are people all over this country, who as soon as they have a grouse, call the *Nation*. The *Nation* must not allow itself to be misused and abused in that way.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: They want circulation.)

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, there was the second charge that the physical plant is falling down; that school plants somehow are in disrepair and delapidation, and that the children who go to these schools are in some form of physical danger. That is a baseless and distorted allegation.

Already, honourable Members on this side have pointed to the wide-ranging and the thorough-going programme of new school buildings, expansion, refurbishing and renovation that is going on all across the country. We have had the Lawrence T. Gay School, the Luther Thorne School, which is a new school, the St. George Primary School, and the Ellerton Primary School, which is a new school.

We now have the St. Patrick's School, to which reference has been made, which is virtually completed, and which will be opened in another month or two. I look forward very much to having the honour of making the address on that occasion. St. Patrick's School deserves well of this country. In this Cabinet alone, we have three Ministers who have been schooled at St. Patrick's Boys' School. I am glad that the Minister responded to my urgings for a long time that we should build a new St. Patrick's School, since the old one was unfortunately located almost situate in the centre of a burial ground.

But I must not stop at the St. Patrick's School, because the Alleyne has virtually been rebuilt and so has West St. Joseph. We have had a new block at the St. Michael School. Alexandra is under renovation. Parkinson School has been expanded and partially rebuilt. Coleridge Parry School has been rebuilt in many respects. And Lodge School, now very much in the news and enveloped in controversy, will be rebuilt soon.

The question that I want to raise in relation to St. Patrick's is this. The new school accommodating boys and girls will leave two existing school plants empty, the St. Patrick's Girls' School and the St. Patrick's Boys' School. The St. Patrick's Boys' School belongs to the church, and I think that the Ministry will have to return it in a good state of repair. But as far as I know, the church does not have use, certainly not immediate use, for the upstairs section of that school. I think there are plans for using downstairs, but not the upstairs section, and that can be used either as a skills training centre, or a community centre, or even as a baby crèche.

(Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: You cannot put babies in that.)

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I am advised that it might be unwise to put babies in the old Boys' School because of the proximity to the graveyard.

The real problem, apart from occasional stench, with which we all live and never die, was the fact that there was really no playing facilities at St. Patrick's. It was virtually situated on a very busy public road. I think that that was a more compelling argument for the new school than the actual stench, which was more occasional than regular.

The basic point I am making is that we will have two buildings there very shortly, and I would really like to have some intimation from the Minister as to what plans they are making, even though some of the plans might be outside of her Ministry, for their proper utilization. Certainly, as I have said earlier, we can consider a community centre, a baby crèche, or a skills training centre. The area is in need of all three of these facilities. I hope that the Government, insofar as they may still have the uses of both plants, will consider establishing these facilities in place of the school.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, this is now the fourth day of the Estimates, and the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, who has just sat down, was making his first contribution. I was looking forward to a major contribution to the Estimates from him, but, in fact, he said nothing. Indeed, it was only in the last two minutes that he tried to bring some parish pump politics into what he initially sought to present to this House, that he was bringing the debate into the area of policy and the institutional framework in relation to education in Barbados. If that was the objective of his speech, he has failed miserably.
6.25 p.m.

As a father, indeed as a human being, I think we should all be concerned about the fact that any child, as a consequence of matters outside of its own area of responsibility, as a consequence of problems between various branches of the administration should find himself in the situation which was portrayed in the Press sometime earlier. Indeed, to come on the floor of the House and castigate the Press for bringing to the attention of the public a matter which is of human and emotional concern, is something that should be deeply resented. Those over there believe that, because they are shareholders in the *Nation*, they can control editorial policy. But there are professionals working at the *Nation*.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: On a point of order: The biggest shareholder in the *Nation* is the honourable Member.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Which honourable Member?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That honourable Member who just spoke, he hires some of the staff and pay some of the reporters additional money to report what he and his Party says. Everybody knows that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, I should like to ask all Members to be less provocative in their speeches. There is a rule against such conduct.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I should like to point out to the House that I am not a shareholder in the *Nation*.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): I rise to suspend the sitting until tomorrow morning. I called the Capital Head under Education, and I must confess that it is a debate for over the past hour in which I have heard absolutely nothing from the other side regarding anything about the capital expenditure of this Head. The Minister in her own way pointed out the projects which she was setting out to do, and the projects which she did in the past. I was hopeful that Members on the other side would have taken a note from that and debate the capital expenditure under Education. All that I have heard so far, Sir, is which child's hair was knotty, which child's hair had jerry-curls, and which child was sent home from school. We have no doubt had an exhibition of what I consider in my own opinion, not necessarily in here, the Parliamentary clown of the century, and I refer to the Member for St. Michael South Central.....

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are two honourable Members on their feet.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order: I think the time has arrived for another enema by mouth tomorrow morning before you come to Parliament.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I have no doubt that my enema will wash my mouth, but no injection will cure your lunacy. My mouth will be clean but you will still be mad.

I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you seconding the motion?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I rise.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a motion before this House. Are you seeking on the motion?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did not hear the motion, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a motion before the Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am sorry, Sir.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to second the motion for suspension, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may proceed. The motion has been seconded.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I must say that I was very disappointed that in moving the motion that we could have certain words used to describe an honourable Member. Your Honour obviously did not hear the words, because I am sure you would not have allowed them, but the honourable Member referred to the lunacy of another Member. That is unparliamentary in every respect, and it is one of the words that is never allowed. I am sure if Your Honour had heard it, Your Honour would have not allowed it.

I regret that when we have these motions for suspension, we have to have words thrown in which are themselves provocative, and which do not lead to the spirit which should form part of this Honourable Chamber's behaviour. I am not questioning Your Honour's prerogative. I am merely speaking of my own disappointment, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not regard the word "lunacy" as being unparliamentary, because one cannot be deemed a lunatic until he has been certified in the appropriate manner. There might have been such cross-talk between Members in the Chamber, but I would not rule it to be unparliamentary.

The question that the sitting be suspended until Friday, March 23, at 10 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.
6.35 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

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. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, it is very difficult from the notes in these Capital Estimates to determine exactly what provision is made for what project, apart from the World Bank Project, and it is for this reason that I would have to ask the Minister to give us an assurance that no funds are included in these Capital Estimates for the construction of facilities for the St. George's Medical School. This is a very important principle that we are talking about. All along, the whole question of medical education has been the prime responsibility of the Ministry of Education, so we would really wish to know what is the position of the Ministry of Education on this particular matter.

We have gone to considerable length in this Parliament to put on the Statute Books an Education Act regulating and co-ordinating a system of education in this country and putting that responsibility under the leadership of the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Education is therefore charged with a responsibility of giving educational leadership to the educational community in this country. And bearing in mind that the establishment and development of medical educational facilities, as we understand it, were subjects to take place within the framework of the expansion of medical education through the University of the West Indies, and we want to make it absolutely clear that, on educational grounds, nothing should be done in any way to retard or to diminish the impact of such medical education as may be provided.

We would want to know, therefore, in accordance with the Act, that the Ministry of Education is taking a leading role either in promoting medical education, if it is in the interest of this country, or, if it is not in the interest of this country, in speaking out loudly on behalf of this country against the development of any kind of medical education which may be contrary to the best interests of this country. We will want that kind of assurance from the Minister, who is responsible under the Act, for her Ministry to examine, investigate, regulate and approve all kinds of educational institutions.

I would like to know what steps or what action the Ministry of Education has taken in relation to the powers granted under the Education Act as far as the establishment of that school may be concerned. There is a considerable responsibility on proprietors of both public and private institutions to conform to the legislation that this Parliament has passed, and we wish to hear the Minister on that particular point.

Mr. Chairman, when we make points related to Education in this country, we are not going in for any comparisons, however invidious these may be. The record of the Democratic Labour Party in education is plain for all to see, so when we make criticisms, it is because we are concerned that the existing state of affairs can be improved, and from time to time we will high-light and illustrate certain areas where we believe there is need for improvement.

I know that the Minister of Education is having a difficult task, not only through the ineptitude of persons and administrations inside of the education community itself, but I do not know if she conceives it as a problem, because you first have to be able to recognise that there is a problem – when we look at the Estimates, what is happening is that the funds provided for Education out of the total cake in this country is being reduced over the years. I think the Minister said yesterday that the Education budget is about 18 per cent. I am certain I heard that figure yesterday. I have not checked the figures, but that is what I heard. I speak subject to correction.

What the reduction in the funds for education means is that teachers are being sent home, and, secondly, we have the problem inside the teaching establishment of these so-called 'uncertificated sick days', matters affecting the teaching establishment. We would like to hear something on that.

I can take my seat now because our Shadow Minister has now come in; I am not the Shadow Minister for Education.

I am going to pause at this stage. Let us not debate primary education. We do not have to do anything about the record of the Democratic Labour Party in terms of primary education. Even in relation to the very new schools that are being put up, such as the school on Spooners Hill, which you can call a World Bank Project, the fact is that I recall my officials visiting up there and identifying the very site on which that particular school has been located. We can put out the record for you. As I said, it is not a question of going over that, because our record can stand scrutinies, and I will at this stage give way to my colleague, the Shadow Minister of Education, to continue his very perceptive analysis of the situation in education.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS (St. James South); Mr. Chairman, yesterday when the suspension was taken, I believe we had more or less reached the stage where we were discussing the question of transfers. Since then I have done a little bit of research, and if my research serves me correctly, then there is nowhere in the regulations, or in the Act, which deals with the transfer of students to secondary schools after the Eleven Plus Examination. I believe that this is a matter which the Minister of Education will enlighten us on, so that not only the Members on this side, but also the general public, can be aware of what is the true position.
10.15 a.m.

So it seems to me that the system which prevailed before, whereby the headteacher had a discretion as to who he or she should take into a school; still holds good. I believe, generally speaking, that no headmaster or headmistress would want to take a child into his or her school unless that child reaches certain standards. But what concerns me even more is how the operation of these transfers work. My information is, that for those children from non-sixth form schools transferring to schools with sixth forms and going through the Ministry of Education, it takes a matter of about six weeks before they can get places.

Let me say exactly what I mean. Prior to the Education Act coming into force, when a youngster from a non-sixth form school took his or her GCEs, that youngster would go to a school or to a number of schools in the island with sixth forms and would explain to the headteacher there – I take it with a letter from their headmaster – that he or she expects to get about five subjects. The headmaster would then say that as soon as the results come back, the student could come back, and once he or she has reached the standard, then the student would go into sixth form. Within a day after the results of the exams, the student was transferred. At the present moment, it means that they have got to go through the Ministry of Education. I understand that at some schools, for example, Combermere, it has taken six weeks after the results for a child to get in.

All of us here have had the opportunity of going to secondary schools, and we know that especially.....

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is not true.)

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: You had children who went, so you would know. I do not feel you can bat as well as your son, and I know a lot about that.

Aside.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the point I was making is this, that when it takes six weeks for a child to transfer into a sixth form, by the time he gets there, knowing the amount of work that he has to do – two set books could have been completed within that six week period – the child would have a lot of catching up to do. And this does not only apply to the children; there are a number of schools in the country where, only at the beginning of the term, does the headteacher know that there is a need to fill a vacancy. Again, it takes about six weeks before the vacancy can be filled.

Let me explain what I mean. For example, there might have been a need for a Maths teacher at Coleridge and Parry. As you know, the Maths results in Barbados are not the best. Therefore, it is essential that, from the beginning of the term, it is essential that a teacher is there. But they have to go through the Ministry, and it means that it would be six weeks before they get the Maths teacher. Before, what would happen was that the headmaster would take someone on the staff, inform the Ministry of Education, and the application would come through. It was a simple matter.

So we have got to look carefully at the Education Act and see how it is operating. It is one thing to have legislation and rules, but the operation of those rules, to my mind, is more important. I am of the view that rules are only for guidance to assist one when one seems to be in difficulty, or when one is not sure what is happening. I believe that it is essential that we look at these areas.

Last evening I said that in the application of the rules, it seemed to me as though there were some double standards operating, and I want to make reference to this question of double standards. As I understand it, in the rules it states that school should be held from Monday until Friday, and that the question of transfers do not come into the rules. I understand that certain headteachers are being penalized for transferring children outside the Common Entrance Examination age. But yet, I have not seen anything being done – possibly something has been done – where a headteacher is holding school on Saturday.

This is of grave concern to parents. Furthermore, my investigation has shown that even the teachers of the school were unaware of the fact that the headteacher was about to hold school on the Saturday. And if I have my information correct, even when the children went to school on those Saturday mornings, they were not doing school subjects; they were placed to do agricultural work at school. I also understand that one female student, aged 13, arrived home at 6.00 o'clock the evening from a detention on a Saturday.

We are now made to believe that the headteacher said that the children had an option. But it is not a question of having an option. This is contrary, as I understand it to the rules and regulation governing education

in this country, that no child must go to school on Saturdays.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: That is right. They should go to church.)

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: They should go to church, as the Minister of Transport and Works would tell you. There is no better schooling than church, Sunday School. It is a pity that more children do not go in these days. This is of grave concern.

While I am at Coleridge and Parry, I think I had better stay here a little bit. There seems to be a lack of communication between the headmaster at Coleridge and Parry and the majority of his staff. I believe there is some need for an investigation of what is going on down there.

How can a headmaster really explain to anyone that he has time-tabled out of the work schedule a teacher who is supposed to teach Science? I believe that every school has a set established staff, teachers for Maths, English, Geography, Science, but in an effort, as I understand it, to get rid of the teacher who is supposed to teach Science, who has had very good results up until then, he has been time-tabled out of the programme altogether. This cannot be fair to the children. We are dealing with the future leaders of this country, and if we adults were to behave in that manner, is there any small wonder at the present time that they do not show us the respect which is due to us or which we should demand?

Here you have a headmaster, and the children are in school wanting to do Science, and he, for one reason or another, decides that the teacher who has taught Science so well before can no longer teach at this school. And rather than report the matter to the Ministry of Education, he time-tables him out of the system altogether. That cannot be right, and that is not the only teacher.

My understanding about Coleridge and Parry School is that the person who is teaching Home Economics knows nothing at all about the subject.

Aside.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: I do not know who it is. There is now no Home Economics programme at Coleridge and Parry. It is a very sad situation, and these are matters which should be considered. I understand.....

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: I understand that at some schools they are asking teachers to retire at sixty. There are some teachers at Coleridge and Parry who are still there at age sixty-three. Furthermore, there is one member of the grounds staff – and this is even of greater concern – who seems to have more say at the Coleridge and Parry than even the headmaster himself, and this is causing great dissension in the ranks.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

When the teachers are unhappy in a situation, then the pupils suffer. I understood – and the Minister may or may not be able to help me with this – at the present moment there are twenty teachers on the staff at Coleridge and Parry who are not appointed. If this is true, and if they have not got any security of tenure, can they operate properly, especially when they can be time-tabled out of the system and got rid of?

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: A Member must be heard in silence.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS: These are matters which we need to investigate, especially at the Coleridge and Parry School. I also understand that the children are no longer allowed to use the lawn tennis facilities at the school, which were provided for them. If this is so, it means that, soon from now, the situation at Coleridge and Parry will become so bad that one day there will be a sit down. It nearly came to that sometime ago. You would remember the incident with the droppings from the sheep in the staff room, when the newspapers were called in and the teachers said that they were going to stop. But it is for a different reason now, that there seems to be little or no communication between the headmaster and the majority of the staff there. I believe something should be done quickly before we have a stoppage at the Coleridge and Parry School.

Going back to the general topic of Education, I believe that the text books for children in schools can become cheaper if there are standard text books set. Apparently, throughout the whole school system, teachers are allowed to select various books in the different subjects. If we are to have some equality in education, I believe the first thing we should do is to have the same syllabus throughout all the schools; that would be one way of ensuring that there is some equality in education.

If we want our children to go to school, it is pointless appointing Truant Officers or inspectors to go around to see who is at school or who is not at school unless we make it possible for them to go to school. At the present moment, the bus fares are so high that a lot of children cannot go to school. This is nothing out of the hat. You should remember the situation where some

youngsters went and lodged at the Parkinson School, rather than go down to West St. Joseph. We have got examples of these things, and we must consider what we are doing before we put these things into implementation. Therefore, I am asking that some consideration be given to the bus fares and indeed that there be one bus fare for children.

I think, too, that if we want to further motivate children as far as examinations are concerned – and I understand that the Minister is worried about the number of children turning up for exams and not taking them – those who have passed should be given back their $40. If the reason for the fee is that some children go to the examination room and then do not remain for the subject, it seems to me that what you are doing is penalizing the innocent for the guilty. I would suggest that everybody pays the $40 examination fee, but that those who pass have the fee returned to them. It seems to me to be the more equitable situation.

Because of the recruiting of overseas staff, especially at headship level, for some of the schools in the country, the locally-trained teachers feel that they are being discriminated against. Here, again, I am asking the Minister to consider the possibility of making headships more available for locally-trained teachers. They have served us well in the past. Some of them feel that they are being overlooked, and they are asking that more opportunity be given to them.

Mr. Chairman, I will come back later in the debate.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (City of Bridgetown): I wish to make another intervention. Last night the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) inquired as to the failure rate in the Common Entrance Examination. I do not now see him in his seat, but I showed him the results last night. Perhaps that is why he is not now in his seat. In answer to his question, I now report to the House that in 1982, out of 5 371 students who wrote the Common Entrance Examination, thirty children scored zero, twenty-three were boys and seven were girls. Girls always do better than the boys in the Common Entrance Examination. In 1983, out of 5 464 writing the Common Entrance Examination, seventy children scored zero. Fifty-four were boys and sixteen were girls. In 1976, 142 children scored zero in the Common Entrance Examination. One hundred and two were boys and forty were girls. I cannot tell you offhand how many children took the exam in 1976 – I am sorry I do not have that figure – but it would not be many less than 5 300 or 5 400 who now take it.

The honourable Member for St. James South (Mr. N. K. Simmons) is asking for further subsidy in respect to bus fares, as I understand. Taxpayers now subsidize to the tune of $2.8 million. I have great difficulty believing that there is a substantial number of children who do not go to school or play truant from school because they cannot afford the bus fare. One of the most easily applicable considerations for transfer from one secondary school to another is this very question of proximity, how close children live to schools. Of course, traditionally in Barbados, and it is a tradition that we are seeking to continue in this country, every primary school child should live within walking distance of a primary school. With the secondary schools, you must remember that we give parents three free choices, but parents still go out of their way to put down as their first and free choices schools which are at a tremendous distance from where they live. Even in a recent controversy, I had occasion to read in the newspaper of one parent screaming at the top of his voice that he lived at Welches, St. Thomas, but his child was going to Lodge School and he wanted him moved to Combermere. What he failed to tell the Press, or what the Press failed to report, was that he chose Lodge School for his child, the child achieved the mark which made him eligible for that school, and he was allowed to that school.

I want to say something about the question of transfers and what people and headmasters know, and what they do not know. Every year the Common Entrance Examination is sat – it soon will be next month – and there is a committee, known as the Allocation Committee, which looks at the scores and, according to those scores, allocate children to the various secondary schools.

10.35 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know how many honourable Members in this House are aware of the fact that the Allocation Committee comprises the 21 heads of the 21 secondary schools, an independent Chairman, who is usually a minister of religion, and an officer of the Ministry of Education, who really services the Committee. That Committee sits, it looks at the marks, it looks at the choices of the parents, and it allocates the children to schools. It is really very unfair and dishonest that some of the head teachers would then go behind the backs of their colleagues, with whom they sat on the Allocations Committee, and make allocations privately of their own choosing for transfers from one secondary school to another.

In 1970, by a circular dated 15th December, 1970 and headed "Admission of pupils to Government Secondary Grammar Schools" from the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education to the heads of all schools, this is what was said – I am willing to make it a document of the House and I will just quote two paragraphs from it –

> "I am directed to inform you of the Government's policy of admission of pupils to Government Grammar Schools, which is as follows:....."

Among the matters which are drawn to the attention of all the Heads is this particular article of policy.

> "Any child over the age of 12 years and between Forms 2 and 5 whose parents or guardians make a first application for entry to a grammar school, or seek a transfer from one school in the island to another, may be accepted for such entry or transfer with the prior approval of the Minister –
>
> (a) if a case of genuine hardship is established;
>
> (b) if there is an available place at the appropriate level in the school;
>
> (c) if he has reached the required standard for the form appropriate for his age; and
>
> (d) if he qualified for at least a bursary in a previous common entrance examination.

In other words, that he had at least reached what would approximate to a pass mark at the common entrance examination.

That was the Government's policy in 1970, and it continues to be the Government's policy in 1984, in respect of transfers from one Government secondary school to another in respect of children between forms 2 and 5. Form 1, of course, is governed by entry under the Common Entrance Examination.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael South has been throwing out things. I see that he continues not to be in his place; he was here a few minutes ago – he throws out wild and general statements. He has thrown out the statement that the overall percentage allotted for Education from the national budget decreases on an annual basis.

That is patently untrue. We are doing the Estimates, the figures are before us. On the table behind the Speaker's Chair are copies of the approved Estimates for several years previous to 1984. It cannot be difficult for Members to simply look at the figures and understand very clearly from them, if they can do the simplest arithmetic, that the amount of money which we allocate from year to year in this country for Education, as a sector in the national budget, is far from declining.

We are still one of the few countries in the developing world which will allocate between 18 and 21 per cent of its national budget to Education. There are very few countries which do that. In the United Kingdom, less than 6 per cent of the national budget goes to education. You only have to go next door to some of our neighbours in the Caribbean to see how much priority we give to education. The only country in the Caribbean which comes close to Barbados in the percentage of its national budget which it gives to education is the Bahamas, and, even so, they are still behind us, so I find it very difficult to understand why honourable Members should get up and deliberately attempt to mislead the House in a matter which can be very quickly and easily verified.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South went on to throw out another statement in which there cannot be any basis of truth. He said that teachers are being sent home. I am not aware of this, and I would want to invite the honourable Member for St. Michael South to give me the names and numbers, if it is possible, of those teachers who are being sent home.

I do not know if this will help the honourable Member for St. Michael South, but perhaps I could give the percentages for this year. This year the percentage for Education of the total recurrent budget is 21.5 per cent. That is the percentage for Education in this year, these Estimates which we are now debating. In respect of Capital, it is 9 per cent, and the percentage for education in the overall budget for the financial year 1984–85 will be 18.5 per cent. If any honourable Member can show this House how this indicates a decline in the quantity of money which we allocate to education, I shall be pleased to know it, because that Member would obviously have discovered a new method of arithmetic which is not known to any of us at present.

The honourable Member for St. James South spoke about imported heads. I am not aware that heads have been imported into this country. All of the head-teachers in Barbados are Barbadians. I am only aware that when we advertise for the headships of schools, and there has been a number of advertisements over the last two years simply because a number of retirements have come about. Advertisements are made both at home and abroad, because there are a lot of well qualified Barbadians living and working and teaching abroad who are anxious and willing to come home; they write us letters from time to time to that effect. Again, I can only invite the honourable Member for St. James South to submit to this Honourable House the names and identities of non-nationals who have been imported to head any school in this country.

He also raised the question of the Coleridge and Parry I am not getting any broad debate on education in this Honourable House in these Estimates. In fact, we are not getting broad discussion on anything in these Estimates. I get the impression that the Opposition is going through the motions, and here I have a lot of *ad hoc* nit-picking questions about Coleridge and Parry.

There is a problem at Coleridge and Parry; I do not deny it. The new headmaster at Coleridge and Parry had a very, I would say, unhappy introduction to that school. At the first meeting with the staff he was told that they did not want him and that they would never want him. Not one member of staff saw fit to take the new headmaster on a tour of the school, and the groundsman, to whom the honourable Member for St. James South referred, at least had the courtesy to do that. It is at that level that the new headmaster started.

There is a serious dispute at Coleridge and Parry. I was hoping that this would not have to come into the public domain, but I can see now that we have no choice. Do you know what the kernel of the dispute at Coleridge and Parry is about? If, and how, and when, members of staff should drink a liquor in the staff room. It is a shocking and it is a shameless matter.
10.45 a.m.

On the staff of Coleridge and Parry are two Ministers of Religion. This dispute centers around the fact that the headmaster felt it necessary to put up a notice on the staff room notice board saying that if members of staff are going to drink liquor, they should close the staff room door – because the Staff Room is on the ground level and children pass from time to time – or if they felt that they did not want to close the door, that they should remove bottles with labels or be discreet about it. The honourable Member for St. James South knows the story, too.

This is my personal view. If I was the headmistress of a school, the question would never arise, because in my school the drinking of liquor would not be permitted, not by pupils and not by staff. It really is a shocking thing in this day and age that that sort of matter could have been the hub of a dispute between the headmaster and his staff.

The headmaster has taught abroad for many years. He is keen. He wants to do the best for Coleridge and Parry. We only hear about the dispute; we do not hear about the wonderful things that he is doing at Coleridge and Parry. We do not hear about the personal expense to which he goes for the Coleridge and Parry. We do not hear of the marvelous rapport that he has with the parents and the Parent/Teacher Association of the Coleridge and Parry. We do not hear that 99 per cent of the staff is, in fact, supportive of the headmaster and the new policies that he wants to carry out. We only hear about a little hard core of four people who want to argue whether it is right to drink rum, beer, or whatever it is, in the staff room or not, people who go out of the school in school time, in open defiance of the headmaster, down into Speightstown, to buy liquor to bring it back up to the school to openly defy the headmaster. It is really a shocking revelation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time. The Minister is not talking about crack liquor, is she?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, Mr. Chairman. I am not talking about crack liquor. There are no cracks in these bottles. This is the kind that leads to drunkenness.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has expired.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I have been trying to make an intervention.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: My eyes have caught the honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is not in his place, Sir.

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

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Chairman, I remember that when I was at school, just after returning from lunch we had to say a prayer: "For what we have just received, may the Lord make us truly thankful." I say this, because during the past couple of years, since 1981, the St. Michael South East constituency, my constituency, benefitted from two projects, the Luther Thorne Memorial School and an extension to the Parkinson School, and I wish to go on record as thanking the Ministry of Education and all those concerned, the Minister, the Attorney General, the present Minister and the entire Ministry of Education staff, for having provided the people in that area with two wonderful buildings to continue their education.

I heard the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) yesterday trying to convey to this House that he was the only one in here who was concerned with the plight of children and the plight of parents. I want him to understand, and, to make this Honourable Chamber aware, that we on the Government benches are not inhuman. We feel that there ought to be a speedy resolve to the question of transfers. It does not benefit the Government, and certainly it does not augur well for the future of education in this country, for these issues to be dragged out, but, at the same time, we have got to think in terms of certain moral principles, and we have got to try to set some very high standards, especially in the area of education. We should not try to perpetuate a system that we know is wrong and we, as responsible politicians, and those of us who are in certain positions, certainly should not pander to the cheap policies, whims and fancies of persons and cheap popularity. We owe it to ourselves, as leaders in this country, to denounce what is wrong and try to rectify those things that we see as wrong, or threatening the very fabric of our society.

As I understand it, we have a situation in Barbados where some people are hell-bent on continuing to disregard certain moral values and established principles in education. The new Education Act passed through all its stages in here and it has now become law and, as far as I am concerned, anyone who seeks to breach those laws is wrong.

Over the years, we have had a situation where people, because they were privileged, benefitted from an education, which was regarded as the best, at Harrison College, Lodge School, St. Michael's and Queen's College. They benefitted because their parents knew the headmaster or headmistress or maybe someone in the Ministry of Education. They could pull strings; the string pulling is a feature in our educational system.

As I understand it, the new Education Act seeks to put an end to this, because that practice was unfair and certainly cost many a child an equal opportunity. If it is fair for one, it should be fair for the other, but what did we see over the years? Because some people were not privileged to have parents who were among the well-to-do, or in the so-called society, they could not approach the headmaster with a view to getting their children in those schools.

I suffered as a result of this bad practice. Many persons had children who did not pass examinations but, because they knew the authorities then, were able to make approaches and get their children in schools, and I say there are a number of persons in our society today who are dissatisfied with it. Parents are dissatisfied. Let us not fool ourselves; the majority of parents in Barbados are supporting the Government on its stand on this particular issue because they know that they are in the majority; they know that they are the poor ones, who cannot approach the headmaster or board chairman of any board and ask to get the children in school. But it is only also fair for me to disclose that some of the very persons who are making a lot of fuss about this issue where children are sent out of school because they did not pass the exam are persons, as I understand it, in one case like the editor of a newspaper, a high-ranking person in this society, and, in another case, a politician or potential politician's son.

10.55 a.m.

I think we ought to understand what we are talking about and whom we are really making a fuss about. Why is the Opposition and other people making such a fuss about a child being asked to return to a school that he had passed for, and why should a child who failed to pass an examination for a secondary school, say, for Harrison College be taken into Harrison College? Why then should we not say that all persons who did not pass should be admitted to Harrison College? Why do we have Common Entrance exams? I would have thought that the purpose of having the Common Entrance exam is to be able to find out those children who are more intelligent than others and accord them places in the first grade schools according to their results in the Common Entrance exam. It is not right, it is not fair for someone who passes for one of the newer secondary schools to be transferred to an older grammar school because, let us say, the parents know the headmaster. I think the headmaster or headmasters know that it is not fair, and they should not seek public sympathy in this particular matter.

I am firmly supporting the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education in taking this stand.

It is quite all right for us to say it has happened in the past. Yes, it has happened in the past but I also know that children who passed the Common Entrance exam the first year were told to go to the school which they were qualified to enter, and after that year they sought to get into one of the older secondary schools, and they had to go by way of an examination. But if we have a situation now that people who did not pass the examination in the first year find themselves in these older secondary schools, then I say that this is something that the Ministry of Education should have arrested long ago and not wait until now, and we should give no grace period.

It is all right for us to say let those who are in remain and we will start from September this year. The Minister and the Ministry of Education were right in challenging this sort of practice by the headmasters. I know them very well; one of them taught me at the Modern High School, and he knows how I feel about this. I do not support him, it is not fair.

And let us understand that the Opposition should not come in here and express this concern and sympathy and alarm. I heard the honourable member for St. Philip North saying yesterday that if it was his child he would find out who is the Minister of Education and the Permanent Secretary. I do not really go for that. I think the honourable Member should have behaved like a responsible father and responsible politician and try to investigate to find out what really went on, whether it was the Minister of Education, or the Permanent Secretary, or the headmaster, or the child, or the parent or who was responsible, rather than say that he would have gone for and identified the Minister of Education and the Permanent Secretary.

For years I have been calling on the Ministry of Education to look at this question of recognition of the certificates, particularly those classes, of certificates that are issued by some of the Secretarial Colleges in Barbados. It was drawn to my attention quite recently that the diplomas that are issued by some of these Business Colleges are not recognised by the Ministry of

Education, and I am taking this opportunity on the floor of this House to invite the Ministry of Education to look into that question so that they can set up a proper certification system, so that the certificates which the young girls and boys have gained through the tuition fees they have paid, which are expensive at times, can be regarded as worth something. It is not fair for us to continue to allow them to remain in limbo.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael South East, who just sat down, has made what I consider a very good speech, and has zeroed in on a number of issues that are of importance in consideration of matters raised in this debate.

We have to strike a balance between the demands of the law and the range of discretion of headteachers. I am not going to spend very much time on this matter, for very obvious reasons, but the honourable Member for St. James South (Mr. N. K. Simmons) keeps talking about rules being made only for guidance. He has to draw a very clear distinction between rules and laws, because the laws of this country are not merely for guidance, they are for obedience.

In this whole matter, the matter before the court in respect of the illegal transfer of children to schools and so on, I understand, that what is before the court, and therefore it will not attract too much detailed attention, is that there is an application for a declaration as to the law. I say this because it is abroad and it is said by many people who are informed, and a number who are not informed, that somehow the Ministry of Education has put headteachers in court. That is as tenuous an argument as anything you can find.

I am sure the honourable Member for St. James South, who is himself an attorney-at-law, and who is the Shadow Minister of Education, should try to point out to his colleagues and to others the distinction between a mere application before a court for a declaration of a law and, to use the vernacular, putting somebody in court. I believe that when an order is made by a judge, it will signal a clear message to all parents and to teachers and to headteachers in Barbados about exactly what they will be expected to do in the future.

I have a point of view that a quotation fr m the Merchant of Venice will adequately sum up.

"The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

I do not want to take a position that deviates from that of the Ministry of Education. I am only urging that when a declaration is made, and I have no doubt at all as to what will be the result of that declaration – because the law is as clear as the midday sun, and the point has been made and the message has been voiced abroad as to what the Ministry of Education will be expecting – that there can be some consideration.....

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: The Minister of Education is asking me not to go too far. I am asking that justice be tempered with mercy.
11.05 a.m.

I think the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) went wrong, after he made his earlier submission. But in relation to his earlier submission, I would be less than a man, Mr. Chairman, if I did not say that I felt moved by the experience he related. I say no more; let the matter rest.

I want to talk about a new development in the schools, that is the importation of computers into the secondary schools in Barbados. All of us will agree that it is necessary, with the tremendous impact that the computer is making on the daily lives of people throughout the world – and there is no doubt that it will be of great importance to all human activity in the future – that it is important that those in our educational system, which is to prepare young people in our community to meet the challenges of change, should be themselves involved with the computer and its use in the classroom. But I want to sound a word of caution.

I had to read a lot of material over the past two to three months on the experience of computers in classrooms where there was no comprehensive planning for the use of such computers. I had to do this because I am a member of a Board of Management of a secondary school in Barbados and that school was considering the use of computers for the teaching of children. There was a sub-committee set up to look into all the implications of this new development, and I was asked to serve on that new sub-committee. I started out from a position of total ignorance about computers, so if I were to make any significant contribution to discussion in the sub-committee, I had to do a lot of reading and research.

What I discovered in my research is that the unplanned and unscientific placing of computers in the hands of children in the schools has done untold damage in many parts of the world, principally in the United States of America. There are several reasons for this, and I do not propose at this point to go into a whole summary of the things that I have read, but I think the predominant one was that the unplanned use of the computer tended to divert the attention of children from their regular academic studies, and they tended to deal with

computers as they dealt with the space wars and the things that one finds in the fun and games shops. It said that it often did some damage to the whole approach and use of the whole mental process in dealing with problems.

This is not to speak against the use of the computer. This is to say that a proper study, carried out by people who understand these things, not only computers, but psychologists and such people, is needed so that proper guidance can be provided before these things are foisted without warning on the children in the schools. I serve that as a note of warning, and I am sure that the Ministry of Education will pay due attention to that concern. Indeed, I am told that the Ministry of Education has already set up a committee to study all the implications of computer use and teaching in the schools. But that is my submission, as a member of the public and a parent.

During the course of these debates, for the whole of the five days, a phrase that keeps coming through is "self-help". If one was talking about housing, we heard about self-help; whatever we talked about, we heard about self-help. I want to use it in relation to one school, Harrison College, although it can be equally applicable to all schools in the country.

Harrison College has produced a large number, thousands, of distinguished and successful Barbadians over the long period of its history, and there are thousands of them who are alive and well; and not only alive and well, but are alive and doing well. But when I see the condition of the physical plants at Harrison College, I wonder how much regard the multitude of graduates of Harrison College have for their *alma mater*. I believe it is time that those people who benefited from education in that school – I am not going to suggest that the education there was always perfect – should feel an obligation to make some significant contribution to the institution that did so much for them.

I walked through the science laboratories, and they are in a state of disgrace. I walked into a room in what I think they call the technical wing, and that room has been abandoned because it has massive cracks in the wall, and that part of the school is a danger to anyone using it. I have seen a room called the Geography Room, which was built when I was going to school, and it looked like some of the pictures you see on television at night of the walls in the city of Beirut. I want to make a special appeal to Barbadians who have had the benefit of education at that institution to pull their pockets and make contributions to the improvement of the physical plant and, indeed, to bring new programmes, both curricular and extracurricular, to that institution.

I said that I am dealing only with Harrison College, and I say that only because I am a member of the Board of Management of that school. It is not to support any elitist position. Everyone who has known of my record over the years in the Ministry of Education will know that there has been no stronger advocate for the democratization of education and the removal of elitist labels to certain schools in this country as I have been, so I am not making an argument for an elitist school. I am making the argument only because I am a member of the Board of Management of that school. But, Mr. Chairman, you will agree with me that the type of argument should be made for the St. George Secondary School, and I am sure that you would not hesitate to start it, pull your pocket first, because you have a vested interest.
11.15 a.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If there is anything in there – yes.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I want to make one other point before I sit, and this relates to the question raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael South about the St. George's Medical School. It keeps coming up, and I want to say some of the things that I have said before.

In 1971, the Inter-American Bank was commissioned to do a study by the Governments that contribute to the University of the West Indies and by the university itself. The bank reported that there was an acute shortage of medical places in the Caribbean, and that it was necessary for an expansion of the medical training facilities in the Caribbean to meet the need. Not much has happened since then. I know that Trinidad and Tobago are building a new medical school complex at Mt. Hope. I understand there will be 65 places and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, despite occasional attempts to throw a cloud on the issue, has made it quite clear to anyone who is studying it that the 65 places will be going to the students from Trinidad and Tobago. The whole purpose of the university restructuring exercise, which was principally by the Governments of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, was to bring within the hands of the governments of the university campuses a certain measure of control of what is taught and who is admitted in those courses.

We in Barbados are talking about the introduction of the National Health Service, and all the reports tell me that they require more doctors. I also hear that for the last seven years, the Ministry of Health has been making major thrusts in the areas of primary health care and community medicine, and, as a result, will require a fairly substantial increase of the number of medical practitioners in this country.

I want to tie in these two things, and, like others, I want to testify. I am not interested in having any sub-standard medical education delivery in Barbados. Secondly, I am not in favour of having any offshore medical school setting up in Barbados as a private venture

and using the medical and clinical facilities provided by the Government of Barbados. That is not only my position, but the position of the Government of Barbados. But I believe that poor, developing countries, with limited resources, must devise new ways, more creative ways, of meeting their needs. We can look forever at the standard of how you are going about these things, that is by finding millions of dollars more to pump into the U.W.I. Medical School to provide 20 or 30 other places, or we could look at a number of other ways of meeting this need.

I remember that when the Government of Trinidad and Tobago set up a task force to look at its Mt. Hope complex, it invited Barbados to nominate someone to work with them, and that was Professor Waldron, whom I nominated at the time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Minister has two minutes to complete his debate.

Hon. L. R. TULL: One of the useful reports that came back was the concern of the Government of Barbados' nominee that the plans for other medical schools, at Mona and Mt. Hope, did not contemplate a provision of additional places for Barbadian students. That was three years ago, I think it was, when I was put on my guard. I support the establishment of the St. George's Medical School in Barbados, but on terms, precise and definite terms, that reflect the priorities and the thinking of the Government of Barbados. I think all right-thinking people would seek to see how we can use the offer of the St. George's Medical School for setting up in Barbados, looking at the needs of the Government of Barbados to train people in medicine and see how we can sit down and bargain, and get something that suits us. We determine the standards of all public educational institutions in this country, and if we have a hand in it, we can determine what kind of standards, quality of teaching and quality of admissions that we want in this country. We may be able, if we get away from all of the emotionalism, sensationalism, and all the rhetoric, to work out and weld together the interest of the American entrepreneurs on the one hand, who probably might be primarily interested in making money, and the interest of the Government of Barbados, which is to provide more opportunities for the training of doctors in this country.

I want to reiterate our position. We have decided that we will set up a high-powered committee, which will look at the whole span of medical education in Barbados and its needs, and which will take into consideration the informed opinions and advice of people who know about these things. At the end of the exercise, we will put to this country the conclusions, and make decisions for the future of medical education in Barbados, as we see fit for the people of this country.

Sir, you have told me that my time is up. I will have to come back, because there are other things I want to speak about.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to interfere with the last part of the honourable Member's statement, because our positions on the St. George's Medical School are fundamentally different and, therefore, I am not going to attempt to debate that in fifteen minutes. I wish, however, to agree with the first part of what he said, especially in relation to this question of the young people who have to suffer, and that justice should be tempered with mercy. It is the position which I have put to the Minister on the floor of the House and personally, and I hope that, in the interest of all concerned, she will see fit to solve this problem in a manner that is commensurate with a rational and civilized people.

I wish to deal with two other aspects of the educational system in Barbados in relation to these Estimates. The Minister has apparently made a decision, and appears hell-bent to introduce in the next Common Entrance Examination, of having a third subject for those pupils to take. The Minister has made a few public statements on this issue, but the issue has not been the subject of any indepth analysis in the public domain.
11.25 a.m.

I am aware that the NACE has been battling with this, and I believe I saw in the newspaper somewhere that they had made a recommendation. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the Minister not to proceed with a third subject as a determining factor of the movement of children from the primary to the secondary level of education in this year, 1984. I am not suggesting that what machinery has been put in place should be discarded. I want to recommend to her that she should use this 1984 try-out of the third subject as a monitoring device; that she should allow this year's examination to work to indicate whether, in fact, the addition of the third subject is useful, whether it is desirable and whether it is necessary.

I took the trouble to refresh my memory on some of the recommendations made in the report on the transfer from primary to secondary education in Barbados 1974. You will recall that that committee had made a number of fundamental recommendations for change in our total approach from primary to secondary school for children. I want to just look at a recommendation in paragraph 203 – times does not permit me to read 202:

> "It will be noted that the proposal is for a straight-through, direct transfer, and that this transfer should be on a basis other than an examination

such as that recommended for Phase One operations."

You will recall, Sir, that this committee envisaged 1981 as a watershed in their recommendations, in their packages, and that, by 1984–85, they had hoped that the Common Entrance Examination would have disappeared altogether. It is clear that a number of the recommendations which they made have not yet come to fruition, and that, therefore, it is impossible, given the different levels and standards of the different secondary schools in this country, notwithstanding the propaganda put out by the Ministry, that the recommendations of that committee are hardly likely to be capable of implementation at this stage. But it is clear that that committee was motivated to recommend that we go toward the elimination of the Common Entrance Examination, without reverting to the old-time days when selection was made on the basis of social class.

Everyone has determined that some form of delineation is necessary. However, when the Ministry introduces a third subject at this stage in the development, and when at the same time she is still reporting that there are pupils who are getting zero in the examination, it seems to me that all of the problems outlined in the 1974 report are being compounded and multiplied.

There was a recommendation in that report, for example, that we should pay special attention to the fact that fully 10 per cent of all the students who were taking the examination then were getting between 1 and 10 marks in the total examination. So it is not only those who get zero, it is those who show a complete lack of comprehension of what they ought to have absorbed in the primary stage of their education, and they are incapable of understanding even simple instructions such as are given in this examination.

On another occasion, I have had cause to display a model examination which was being offered as a third subject. I have spoken to a number of teachers and other educators involved in this exercise, and it is a fact that a substantial amount of time and effort has been diverted, away from the two subjects that were offered in the past, to this new paper. As a result, I will offer that a substantial number of pupils in the primary schools are now more confused than they were before, and this would have been as a result of their getting less instructions in Arithmetic and English.

My understanding is that the curricula which have come out from the Ministry have been so compact that the teachers have not found it convenient, generally, to devote the amount of teaching, and the method of teaching, they would like to apply for this new subject. That is why I am recommending to the Ministry, with whom I disagree fundamentally – I do not think there is need for a third paper, but since I could be wrong, and people like me could be wrong on this – that the Ministry use this year as an opportunity to monitor the situation.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member is saying it would be a pilot scheme. I accept that as a definition of what I am saying. Do not let the anxiety which has ridden the breast of any parent who has an 11-year-old child to get into a secondary school, be heightened by the application of this particular subject this term.

If the Ministry is right and the subject ought to be introduced, then the results from monitoring it this year would assist the Ministry in putting its case to the population, and would allay the fears of persons like myself, who may be entirely wrong in our concept that the Ministry is not doing the right thing. I cannot think of any reason why this should not be done, and although the Minister in her dealings with the headmasters, and on certain issues which we have raised, seems to feel that she must maintain her reputation as the iron lady of Barbados, I would suggest to her that this is not an issue on which she needs to make the point.

I turn now to the school meals programme. You will recall that the Minister announced, with great fanfare, that she was going to introduce a balanced diet in the school meals programme, and, as a result, she was removing, to a large extent, the hot meal concept and introducing a packaged meal. I will use one example, because I do not wish to be too contentious. Last week at Carrington Village Primary School, on a given day, the children had boiled macaroni and a banana, full stop.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Last week on that day, which was Monday, I ate school meals at Lawrence T. Gay and I had something called savoury macaroni, with macaroni, meat and vegetables, and a banana. It is one of the most popular of the school meals.
11.35 a.m.

You can look at it and call it boiled macaroni, if you want, but it is more than boiled macaroni. You do not know anything about cooking, so you would call it boiled macaroni. I myself ate it at Lawrence T. Gay with the children.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If I may interject here, I am sure that it was not prepared only for the honourable Minister.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: They did not even know that I was coming to the school.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Minister likes to eat boiled macaroni and a banana, that is her business. I am saying that while that might be exotic cooking for you, or while it might be the speciality in which the honourable Member can cook, the people in Barbados, generally, are not a boiled macaroni and a banana people.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I can only speak for the Carrington's Village School. The Minister said that she was at Lawrence T. Gay, and maybe they prepare it a little differently up there. Maybe she saw the meat, but at the school in Carrington Village, the meat was a little absent.

Laughter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did not raise it for the levity of it, because that is a serious matter. At least you know that when you were younger and your parents could only afford a half pound of meat, they used to cut it up into small pieces and boil it so that the stew would be thick and everybody would have the concept of beef stew. But that was in the days when we had to do that, but now the honourable Minister has introduced a balanced diet, and I do not know how macaroni and a banana could be considered a balanced diet. But she knows, I am not questioning that.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There were no vegetables.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: How do you know?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This was reported to me by someone who was there.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I thought the honourable Member might have seen it and tasted it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, let us get ahead.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But I do not know why she is going to get upset.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: A resident of Carrington Village told me.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order in the gallery, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But that is not the gravamen of my point. My point is that the honourable Member, while talking about shifting the school meals, will have to admit that her experimentation in the School Meals Programme has not turned out the way she anticipated. There has been a shift back to the original concept, and I am recommending to her that she allows her officers in the Ministry to take charge of this programme, as they used to in the past and get the School Meals Programme back on track, because the School Meals Programme in Barbados at the moment is a fiasco.

I also wish to take note, as I pass the School Meals Programme, of an unfair attitude in the Ministry, where persons, for whatever reasons, are being treated in a manner that cannot be commensurate with what is fair. For example, one particular lady I know of in my constituency, working at Westbury School, was transferred to St. Clements in St. Lucy, and has to get to work at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Persons in St. John have been transferred to St. Lucy and the only thing these persons seem to have in common as identified by the Ministry – I am not accusing you – is their political persuasion.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I just want to make two brief interventions here, Mr. Chairman. One relates to the question of the transfer of pupils between the ages of 12 and above, and, like the former Minister of Education, I will be restrained on this matter because of the situation elsewhere.

I wish to make the point that the situation is that this Parliament passed regulations relating to the admission of pupils at age 11 on the basis of the Common Entrance Examination, but the Government failed to bring down any regulations relating to the transfer of pupils between Forms 2 and 5. And while it is true that we had to regulate the transfer by circular in 1970, and there has to be order in this matter – I said yesterday that I am not supporting any disorder because it may be popular at any particular time – the Ministry failed to provide the regulations which should be made. Then, to go to court to have it declare what the law is, to me was administrative ineptitude, because the Ministry, if there was a clear gap in the law – and the law requires regulations to be made – should have brought down the regulations. That is the only point that we are making in respect of that.

The second point relates to the question of the third paper in the Common Entrance Examination. I

believe that I was the first person to make a public comment on that after the proposal was made, and it was because I was aware that the whole pattern for the development of the Common Entrance Examination had been perceptively studied by the Committee referred to by my colleague who just spoke, and it set out a clear pattern for that development; that the two major areas of study which were not being questioned at the moment were the areas of Science and Social Studies – the papers are currently set in English and Mathematics.

I believe then, and I believe now, that if we are living in a scientific age, and in an age in which human relationships and understanding among people apart from getting better may be getting worse, it is vitally necessary that our children be given the necessary experiences in those areas, and that they should be appropriately tested. I also made the point that to call something a General Paper was either a misnomer or it was bad educational practice.

But it has turned out that the Ministry has back-tracked and is now not talking about a General Paper that anyone can understand what a General Paper is, because these things have definitions to them. It is not a General Paper *per se*. What it is is a mismatch of Science and Social Studies, so what you are calling a General Paper now, according to my informed advice, is a mixture of Science and Social Studies misnamed a General Paper, and the last institution in this country which should be attaching bad appellations to papers should be the Ministry of Education. This is bad.
11.45 a.m.

Apart from that false appellation or misdescription, we are now getting, on top of that some extremely bad administrative practice – I refuse to believe that the battery of professional educational officers in the Ministry of Education could advise that we could introduce such a paper without the necessary time given to the schools in order that they become familiar with it, and to carry out the appropriate tests and so on on it. That is why I am saying that it is my belief that the advice of the professional officers in the Ministry of Education is being down-graded, under-played and ignored, and that advice from elsewhere seems to be the order of the day. It is not too late for the Minister to admit that it is bad educational practice and to forget the whole thing altogether; to say that they made a mistake, are going to do away with it, are not going to implement it this year, the exam this year should be in the traditional two papers, and will plan properly for the phasing in of the other papers.

But, Sir, the pig-headedness was continuing to such an extent that they wanted to put all the papers on the same day, and it was only after the pressures mounted up from the educational community in this country that some kind of light of good sense permeated into the heads of the decision-makers on this particular matter. That was a step in the right direction, but we need more than that.

I refer now to the question of the amount of money being allocated to the Ministry of Education in relation to the total capital and current expenditure. I admit anyone can do the addition and find out what is that percentage. It is true that the amount being provided ranges from 18 per cent to 20 per cent, but during the years 1977 to the current year it has been more in the area of 18 per cent than up to 20 per cent, and in the preceding years it has been nearer 20 per cent and 21 per cent and over, so there is a clear case. Do not bring one year, look at the bottom and then look at the top, and say you do not understand what is happening. Do the addition and you will find that, over the years, the percentage has been falling, and this is part of the problem, because when it is falling, you do not have the resources to put into the schools the kinds of materials and other inputs required for the improvement of our educational system. That is what is happening.

What we really wish is that greater attention be paid, and that the present shift in educational administration should be placed fully on to the shoulders of the professional staff, where, in the field of education, it should be.

I will not delay the committee any longer.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, first of all I wish to claim.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: My eyes have caught the honourable Minister of Education.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I think you need to see an optician.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make some replies before the list gets so long and I cannot reply to everything in 15 minutes. It is very difficult trying to cover all the answers in such a short period.

I want to begin first by thanking the honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull) for his contribution in respect of computers. I could not agree with the honourable Attorney General more on this question of computers. I want to assure this entire House of Assembly that the Ministry of Education is very mindful of the dangers implied to the extent that I have set up an advisory committee in the Ministry to advise me on this whole matter of the introduction of computers into the education system in Barbados. On that committee are members of the public who are into

computers, to use the slang, persons from the University of the West Indies, persons from the schools themselves, and persons from one or two of the various firms who are into it. I cannot remember off-hand the actual names of the members of this committee, but I will give them to you in a moment.

The point is that I am going to be very careful about the introduction of computers. We see very clearly that, in the first instance, teachers have got to be trained, and that is why even now as this term has been progressing, and during the Easter vacation in particular, special workshops are going to be set up to introduce teachers to computers. I am not suggesting for a moment that in the vacation we are trying to teach teachers computer science. What we are trying to do at this stage is to introduce as many teachers as possible, and I am speaking not only of teachers in the Government schools, but in the private schools as well. In fact, on the whole, I am trying to encourage teachers from the public and the private sectors to work more closely together in a lot of these areas, and what we are trying to do is to introduce the teachers to the computer as an instrument which might aid them in teaching and to make them aware; the term that is being used in business is "computer awareness" and this is what we are trying to bring to the teachers.

The Rotary Club of Barbados, in a very magnanimous gesture, has made a computer available to all secondary schools, both public and private. These are the computers that we are using to do the training session, and I am hoping that during next term the computers themselves will be introduced into the schools. The advisory committee continues to sit, and will continue to advise us on the pace and phasing of implementation of computer education into the schools, so I hope that will bring some measure of reassurance to honourable Members.
11.55 a.m.

The matter of the General Paper has been raised. The honourable Member for St. Michael South stood up in this Honourable Chamber last year and said to us that he hoped that when the General Paper was introduced, it would have the significant component of Social Studies and Science.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That same honourable Member.)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That same honourable Member. He has so confused me – and, I believe, other honourable Members today – with his most recent contribution, that I am now not sure whether he is contradicting what he said last year or what he is saying at all. That is all that I can say on it.

The General Paper does, in fact, have a significant component of Social Studies and Science. The Common Entrance will be sat this year on two days, the 26th and the 27th. The English Paper and the Mathematics Paper will be done on one day, and the essay and the General Paper will be done on the second day. The General Paper is going to have a rating of no more than 10 per cent in the entire examination.

I should like to remind honourable Members of something I have said in here before. The children who will sit this year are being examined on only a half of the syllabus. That is as close to the proposal I am hearing from the other side for a monitoring exercise to go on. I do not know why Members feel it necessary to split hairs on this.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member would give way, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not giving way, Mr. Chairman. I am absolutely not giving way on this.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is the whole point. You are too.....

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not giving way.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You do not have to shout. Just do not give way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please honourable Members.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: All we are hearing is a rehash and a rehash and a rehash. We hear about the School Meals Programme again. Nobody on the other side makes mention of the fact that the National Nutrition Survey of 1981 showed a serious rise in obesity among children between the ages of 11 and 15 in this country.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: When you give them macaroni.)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The School Meals Programme is being constantly revised. Children get bored with one thing and another. For instance, this term we have reintroduced the chicken pelau, and they love it. Friday is the day for chicken pelau and rock cakes, and they love that. It goes on and on. I did not know that in here is a place for Members to be quarrelling about that; the only person in here who eats school meals or samples school meals from time to time is me.

I am satisfied that there is a better balance in the School Meals Programme, constant monitoring is going on, and that a greater effort is being made to try to offer

to children the things that they accept best. There is no point in continuing to put a meal before a child which will eventually be thrown into the stuff bucket. When I visit the schools, I particularly go out of my way to visit the nutrition rooms, and I talk with the headteachers and the people who work in the nutrition area. What I hear is that there is less wastage and better consumption.

The one item in the School Meals Programme that children do not receive well is fish cakes. Barbadian grown-ups and adults may find that difficult to believe, but it is so. But I have discovered that that is true not only in Barbados, but outside as well. I discovered last year that in the United Kingdom, it is the same thing. Somehow fish, in whatever form, cannot be made acceptable for school children. I do not know why it is so, because grown-ups like fish. Barbadians eat a lot of fish, fish is good for us, but little children tend not to care for fish, especially if it has bones in it. No matter how we try, there is the largest rejection rate with fish.

But they like the pelau, as I said. They like the savoury macaroni, which has meat, vegetables and cheese bound into it and bread crumbs on top of it. They have that every Monday morning. Somehow they associate it with Monday morning, they like it and we will continue to do it.

Every term we try to introduce a different item into the School Meals Programme. It is not easy. We are catering for 31 000 children every day in the School Meals Programme, and it is not every single day that every single child is going to like what is put before them. I think we need to get back in this country to a practice which I grew up with, and I believe that most of us in this Chamber grew up with, that you were made to eat what was put in front of you. We were given a long story about the children in Africa who had nothing at all put in front of them, but now, our children have elaborate choice.

I am trying to move away in the School Meals Programme from cakes, when local fruit is available. I do not know that the honourable Member could have a quarrel with a banana, as opposed to a piece of cake, by way of dessert. The children eat it, and the children love it. Bananas are very popular. If I could get more golden apples, and if I could get more guavas, more local fruit, the children would love it.

One of the reasons why I have asked the Soil Conservation Unit, under Mr. John, who also sits on a Board of Management, to help us to launch a tree planting programme at the primary schools is because I believe that, in due course, this would help to supplement what the children demand. Dunks, cherries, golden apples, sower-sops, all of the surrounding edges of the playing fields are being sheeted with these trees. We have started with the primary schools and hope, in due course, to involve the secondary schools. That is an on-going programme. You do not hear people talking about that, but the children are keen on it, and they help in that programme.

Mr. Chairman, much earlier on, the point was raised in respect of computers. The Chairman of the Committee which will advise the Ministry on the introduction of computers into the Barbados school system is an officer of the Ministry, Mr. Mike Owen, who is our Chief Audio Visual Aids Officer. There is also Mr. Stanley Medford, who is a Senior Education Officer in charge of Planning. I felt it was important to put Mr. Medford in because of the planning component in the Ministry.

I meet on a quarterly basis with all of the senior officers in my Ministry, all of the heads of the various sections and divisions in the Ministry to discuss broad matters of policy. Contrary to what the honourable Member for St. Michael South said yesterday, I do believe that there is more free and easy consultation across the table in the Ministry of Education today than there was in his time.

Also sitting on that Committee is Mr. Julian Burton, who is a teacher at the Westbury Junior School, a person who is very interested in this area, who has educated himself in this area and who is actually conducting the training course which is presently underway for officers in the Ministry and teachers.

We have on that committee as well, Mr. Peter Gibbs, who is a lecturer at the University of the West Indies; Mr. Robert Williams, who is the Director of the Computer Unit at the University of the West Indies; Mr. Marville O'Neal, who is another lecturer of the University of the West Indies; Mr. Alvin Barnett, who is the Principal of the Barbados Community College and who is himself a scientist; Mr. Tony Watkins, who is Head of the Information System at the Barbados Light and Power and who is very much interested in computers; Miss Pat Fields, Computer Supervisor in the Ministry of Education, and Mrs. Binks, the Headmistress of St. Winifred's School. 12.05 p.m.

I want to move on, Mr. Chairman, to the Head of Training. This is a very important priority in the Ministry of Education. From the time of its inception, the Erdiston Teacher Training College was a regional college really designed for the training of primary school teachers. Since the establishment of the Erdiston College, most of the other countries in the Caribbean now have their own primary teacher training colleges. It is for that reason, more than any other, that it was found necessary to close the boarding establishment of Erdiston a couple of years ago.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that my 15 minutes go faster than anybody else's.

Dr. R. C. Haynes and Hon. L. R. Tull rose.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please order. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for St. George South.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Thank you, Sir.

I would like to make a few observations about the university. I find that it is an amazing phenomenon that Barbados, a small, developing country, is perhaps unique in that it has a surplus of graduates. There are a number of people with university degrees in Barbados who find it extremely difficult to find employment. I am wondering what kind of consultation takes place between the Ministry of Education and the university, and indeed the Ministry of Labour, to find out what are the manpower needs in Barbados and in what areas they are short of trained graduates.

I think that we spend $20 million a year on university education. I think that for all of that money, we need a little more planning. There is need for the setting up of a unit between the various agencies of Government and the university to determine what are our priority needs for training at any particular time, and indeed do a long-term projection as to our future needs so that we will not be wasting our money – I use the word "wasting" in a very special sense – in training our young people in the university in disciplines which are not necessary, or cannot be immediately of use on their graduation.

I find, for instance, the university makes out a case that it is not a polytechnic and that they are interested in research and scholarship, and they are not concerned with such pragmatic things as to what are the Government's or the community's needs at a particular time. If they have a Professor of Sociology or a Senior Lecturer in Sociology, work must be found for him, and therefore they will continue to teach Sociology even though Sociology graduates have difficulty in finding jobs in the work force. That needs a careful study, and I do not mean an *ad hoc* study. There has to be a continuing, high-powered standing committee that deals with these things, to make sure that we get value for every cent of the $20 million we spend each year.

Related to this is the need for a proper system of counselling and career guidance. I know that there is a counselling service in the Ministry, but I do not believe that the type of counselling service that the Ministry of Education is providing is what I am talking about. That service is necessary, it advises the secondary school children in what direction to go and so on, but I want something beyond this. There has to be a serious attempt made to set up the type of quality career guidance at this stage of our development to prevent the tremendous wastage that we are experiencing. I think the Ministry of Education would do well to initiate action in that area in association with other agencies in Government.

I am also a little bit concerned about the under-utilization of the Community College for pre-university training. I know that they do some, but I think Barbados has now reached where they can produce two types of graduates. In the U.S.A., they have people with Associate Degrees and people with Full Degrees. I think there should be a proper dovetailing between the courses taught at the Community College and the courses taught at the university that there can be a natural progression from the Community College, from any year, year two or year three, into the university system. Again that requires some study, and I am throwing these things out as suggestions to the Ministry rather than criticisms.

Indeed, I am in no position to criticise, because that was very much the situation when I had the responsibility in that department, but I think we have to think in terms of the two-year Associate Degree at the Community College, because there are some people who reach their peak at that point. There are some people who, for economic and other reasons, do not want to go any further than at that point. There has to be that natural progression between the end of that two-year course at the Community College and the third year course or whatever at the University.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Never mind about the sixth forms. When you were in Government, you vetoed the Minister of Education, who was the only one who had any sense. The honourable Member for St. Michael South is a sensible man, and if the Democratic Labour Party were prepared to be guided by him when he was in the Ministry of Education, we would not have run into all these troubles. I remember the honourable Member for St. Michael South advising the Right Honourable Member for St. John to go to the World Bank and borrow money for Education, and the Right Honourable Member for St. John said he was not wasting time going to the World Bank for money for Education; he had other priorities.

You are telling me now to abolish the Sixth Forms? When the honourable Member for St. Michael South advised the then Government, of which you were a member, to abolish the Sixth Forms, it buckled under the pressure of the middle-class pressure groups, who felt that Sixth Forms were the be-all and end-all education, and he was silent. You should have listened to him; he had good ideas.

But to get back on the track I was on before I was interrupted by the honourable Member for St. Michael West, I believe there is a dialectical link between education and work. You cannot separate the two, especially in a country such as ours.....

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I cannot educate you. I think you have now reached the stage where you cannot take in anything. Mr. Chairman, let me talk about education, because I cannot do anything for him.

On the subject of the Community College and the University, there has to be a closer look at the demands of the work force. There also has to be continuing education for people who are in the work force. Again, I am only making recommendations, Sir, to the Ministry of Education, but I find that the post-secondary institutions in Barbados, principally the Polytechnic and the Community College, are not invited to work in tandem with the business people, the people who run industry, and the people who run the Public Service to find out what are their particular needs at any given time.
12.15 p.m.

One of the best things that happened in that regard is the establishment of the paralegal course at the Community College. We found that a lot of legal work in Barbados, both in the Government's legal offices and the private offices, was being done by non-lawyers, and that proper training of these people in paralegal courses would work towards the whole advancement of that area, and also make the work of lawyers in this country done with greater expedition and efficiency.

We have to look at other areas, and there are a lot of these. The Ministry of Education would be well advised at this particular juncture in our history to see how we can maximise the $100 million, or whatever it is, we are spending on education by trying to deliver where we need to deliver and not deliver just for the sake of delivering.

We are not Britain in the Middle Ages, where you could go into a monastery and spend years reading a lot of esoteric stuff which was of no use to anybody other than the person who studied it. We cannot afford to pay for that anymore. We are not saying that people should not get into those disciplines, but if they want to get into those disciplines they should do it at their own expense.

We also have to make sure that we do not go to the other extreme, that is, over-identifying areas of future needs. I am talking now about, for example, computer science. The Ministry of Education has taken a decision that people who get Barbados Scholarships should study outside the University of the West Indies. Other people must study inside the Caribbean if they are to get money from the Government, whether they be exhibitioners or they get loans or what not, unless the course of study is not offered by the University of the West Indies. A lot of persons who get Barbados Scholarships are studying computer science – I understand you have to get two As and a B now to get a Barbados Scholarship – and with all these scholars taking computer science, it means that our best brains will not work in the Caribbean or even in Barbados. Is anybody advising them as to the absorption rate of computer science graduates in Barbados? Or are we deciding that we should pick up $100,000 and train somebody to work for IBM in Massachusetts, or with some company in Ontario. These are the questions we have to ask.

I am only a layman, so I do not know too much about what are the needs in relation to the training of computer people at that level. I know you need a whole lot of computer people at a lower level to work in a company like Intel and these places, but can we afford year after year to be spending so much money – and I understand it costs $20 000 a year for five years – to train one of these people in computer science, our best students, who, of necessity, will not come back to Barbados to give us the benefit of their brains and their training, because there is not the opportunity for them to pursue work in their line of study. These are things I think we have to continue to look at over and over again.

Erdiston College. I have held the view that, as soon as the backlog of untrained teachers in the system are trained, teachers should be trained before they go into the classroom. This practice of putting them in the classrooms when they are still wet behind the ears and just finished writing 'O' levels, when they confuse themselves and the children they seek to teach, should come to an end, and they should go into the teachers' training college for two years before they set foot on their own in a classroom in this island.

I want to know what the Ministry of Education's plans are for those things. I hope the Minister can tell me. They are coming to my mind as I speak, Sir, if not I would have asked without talking in the debate.

The time has long since past, ever since the end of the Democratic Labour Party's Administration, when you pick up people with O levels, one, two and three, and put them in the classrooms to teach. I have no prejudice against people who do not achieve a great lot academically, but, indeed, they should be placed in jobs of far less sensitivity than teaching little children.

Anybody who is a parent would know that your children will tell you: "It is right because my teacher told me so". When my children were very much younger and I looked and saw them do something wrong in their homework, whether it was Maths or English, and I said

it was not right, it should have been something else, they told me quite categorically it was right because their teacher told them so, and I did not know what I was talking about. The gravamen of the point is that during those critical ages, those formative years, a teacher makes or breaks a student. Therefore, we have to set our sights high as to who teach in our schools and what training they have before they walk into our schools.

I hope the Ministry of Education is not being moved by any excess compassion. I believe that if there are teachers in the schools who are incapable of delivering the best, that these teachers should be placed in other jobs, not sent home. I do not like people being sent home. I have an instinctive distaste for people being sent home, so I am not recommending that, but certainly they could do clerical jobs in the Public Service and other jobs, but it is imperative at this stage in our development that we do not continue to keep falling into the trap of bygone days. The fact that children can still get zero in Common Entrance examinations suggests, among other things, that there is still in the primary schools a corps of teachers, who teach those young children, who cannot deal with children who are slow learners, with children with emotional problems, and so on, and we need to get that kind of teacher in those schools, because unless a child is hopelessly retarded, there is no reason why he should get zero, one, two or three in any of those Common Entrance papers.

Thank you.

12.25 p.m.

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

Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) were ordered expunged from the Record by Mr. Chairman.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If words could either maintain the standard of living in this country, or improve on the standard of living of Barbados, or improve on the social services, then the number of words uttered by the Barbados Labour Party over the past eight years on Education would have meant that we would have had the best education system in the world in Barbados today. But, the fact is, the Barbados Labour Party never had a policy in relation to education.

They came into power on a programme to, among other things, abolish the Eleven Plus; that was one of the main planks of their programme. Eight years later, we hear a Minister of Government.....

Hon. L. R. TULL: On a point of order . That is a diabolical untruth. The Barbados Labour Party's programme of 1976, to my clear recollection, states that the party would work towards the abolition of the Common Entrance Examination, but not immediately on coming into office, as he said.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I never used the word "immediately". They said they would abolish the Eleven Plus. Yesterday, I heard another Member of Cabinet, the honourable Minister of Agriculture, get up and say that we must maintain the integrity of the Eleven Plus Examination. I do not quite understand this difference in policy in education. The basic problem is that they have never had any policy in relation to education.

The second point is that they campaigned throughout the length and breadth of this country to the effect that the Democratic Labour Party had no ideas in education, and that all that they were doing is building more and more schools. I heard several members on the platforms of the Barbados Labour Party in 1976 making that foolish point night after night, and now.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order: The honourable Member for St. George South got up and told this House that the honourable Member had made a diabolical untruth. I feel that this Honourable House is entitled to hear page 13.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: When the honourable Member has a chance to speak.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. This is a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: At this stage? That has long since passed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, on page 13 of the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto of 1976, they stated the things that they would do, and they said, among them, written in big letters, "the abolition of the Common Entrance Examination". And in case anybody did not understand what the Common Entrance Examination was, they had in brackets after that, "the Eleven Plus".

Eight years later, now we are told that that is still the policy of the.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please pass that over here.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am glad....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I am on a point of order, Sir.

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

Hon. L. R. TULL: The honourable Member who just sat down stated that the policy of the Barbados Labour Party, as enunciated in that honourable document, that winning document – and when we do not have any copies of it over here, they keep it as a guide to them – was that we would abolish it immediately on coming into Government. We never said that. We were always committed to it, and we are still committed to it, as soon as the circumstances arise.

Mr. A. TRUSS: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I cannot entertain.....

Mr. A. TRUSS: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order on both sides of the House. I cannot entertain your point of order at this stage.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, you will now begin to understand.....

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. George South rose on a point of order and spoke. I cannot have another honourable Member, the moment after the honourable Member for St. George South sits down, getting up on a point of order, too. We would be having a point of order on a point of order, and I am not allowing it at this stage or at any other stage.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Another point that I would like to get on to is that there must be some compassion in the Ministry of Education. We cannot continue.....

Mr. A. TRUSS: On a point of order, Sir. There is a great deal of compassion within the Barbados Labour Party. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central quoted from the Manifesto of 1976. We can produce a document called "Promises and Performance."

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member who is now on his feet, will have his chance to reply and bring forward all his arguments. I cannot entertain that now. That is not a point of order at this stage. Please go on.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, you would appreciate why the people of Barbados cannot trust the Barbados Labour Party.

They said that we already had too many schools, that the Democratic Labour Party was spending too much money on new schools and on school improvement, and that they were misdirecting the resources of the country in relation to education. It is a direct consequence of gross neglect by the Barbados Labour Party over the past seven and a half years that the schools of this country have been completely run down, that when you go into various schools, very often you see that the furniture is in a dilapidated state. In many instances, many schools do not have enough chairs and desks, and the toilets are in an appalling state. Many of the teachers in these schools have to carry to work toilet paper in order.....

12.35 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member must be heard in silence.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, these teachers have to carry to work toilet paper with them in order to help protect the health of the children in the schools. I go around speaking at these schools from time to time, and I am shocked to see the state in which the schools of Barbados have been allowed to fall by a wicked, negligent and ignorant Barbados Labour Party, which does not understand what the needs of the country are, and then they have been going further and are now seeking to punish the children of this country because of their incompetence.

Mr. Chairman, yesterday evening when the honourable Member for St. Philip North related the story of the boy at Combermere School, I had to put on my glasses, because tears came to my eyes. I was a bit embarrassed.

Laughter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order on both sides of the House. I well understand that the Good Times circus is in town, but, please, do not let us have any of it in this Parliament.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I reflected, Sir, and it certainly crossed my mind that whilst I am living, it could not happen to my child, and then suddenly it crossed my mind that suppose I had gone and that had happened to my son, and tears came to my eyes, believe it or not.

They are not only persecuting the parents, but they are now persecuting the children in this country, and when the matter was being debated here on the floor of this House, I did not hear a single word from the other side; they did not express an apology to the people of Barbados for treating the children of this country in the manner in which they have been treating them.

There is conflict between the Minister and the professional staff, between the professional staff and the

administrative staff, between those in the Ministry and the headmasters, between those in the Ministry and the teachers, and all this is impacting adversely on the education and welfare of our children in the schools of Barbados. That is a fact.

How did we reach that stage? We reached that stage as a consequence of ministerial interference in areas in the Ministry of Education which should never be the province of a Minister. We have reached that stage by bringing politics to bear on appointments within the Ministry of Education, and that should never have been allowed to happen over the years. There is not a single headmaster or headmistress that I have spoken to in the past three or four years who is not totally depressed by the attitude of the Minister of Education towards education in this country. Every single headmaster, whether they are supporters of the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party, or whether they are neutral, when they talk about their profession, they are in an acute state of depression, and it is a fact that you have to face.

And the children of Barbados cannot be expected to respond, either in terms of discipline or educationally, to the leaders of the teaching institutions if you have these headmasters and so on before the courts of this country. You are undermining the system. It is by your negligence and by your misinterpretation of the law that you have created problems in Barbados. That is a matter that should have been settled in-house, not a matter that should have been brought into the public domain in the manner in which it was brought – to the disadvantage of the children, because the only people who are going to be scarred permanently and who will suffer permanently will be the children of this country. As a father, I can stand up in this Honourable House and express my very strong views about this kind of behaviour by the Barbados Labour Party. It is about time that we recognise that when you have this kind of capital programme, which is almost entirely financed by borrowings from the World Bank, that something is wrong. When you have to go borrowing money on this scale and in this proportion for the purpose of financing the building of schools in Barbados, something is wrong. That is not a proper purpose for borrowing money.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member will have two minutes to wind up, and that is an extension because of the interruptions that he has had.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have heard a reference to obesity in school children. Do you not know that obesity can be a manifestation of malnutrition? It might very well be. It is because the high protein calorie diet which we used to offer the children in Barbados has largely been replaced by a high carbohydrate low cost diet, including, at one stage, bread-cutters being the main item, and by bread-cutters I mean bread cut in the middle with nothing inside.

We heard that the University should be planning its programme and be guided by employment opportunities in Barbados. That would be a reasonable way to approach a University or tertiary educational programme, but where there are no job opportunities, where people are losing their jobs day after day, what guidelines can a tertiary institution have. Day by day people are losing their jobs at all levels in the society, so if the University is to be guided by employment opportunities, then I presume they can only think in terms of cutting back on the number of graduates that they produce in the coming years.

I will come back again, because I have a lot more to talk about, apart from bread-cutters.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a few comments on the matter that was raised a little while ago, which has to do with medical education. Medical education, is a form of education, like many others which come before the Ministry of Education. Institutions to teach not only medicine, but many other subjects, by the Act must come under the monitoring of the Ministry of Education. In fact, they have to be registered by the Ministry of Education. Every school, every institution which seeks to establish itself in Barbados will be examined and inspected. No school is going to get any preference over any other, and the St. George's Medical School will be examined and inspected in the same way as other schools when an application for registration comes in.

The position, with the St. George's Medical School is that a Cabinet sub-committee is currently looking at the question of medical education. I am a member of the sub-committee. When that sub-committee reports to the Cabinet, everybody in Barbados will eventually get to know, and the Ministry of Education will continue to carry out its function as an agent for registration and monitoring of the quality and the quantity of institutions which teach in this country.

12.45 p.m.

When I was in the Ministry of Health, all sorts of proposals were made to the Ministry of Education, some by telephone, where people took the attitude that you would answer, "Yes" or "No" and that was the end of the case. Do not think that it does not happen in the Ministry of Education, too. All sorts of people set up institutions and call them schools, and advertise them in the paper and so on; people who have no qualifications and people who do not even know about the subject which they propose to teach. It is not anything new.

When I was in the Ministry of Health, my policy was very clear – and it is still the Government's policy,

as far as I am aware - that medical schools, like any offshore or onshore institution, would have to submit their proposal to the Government, and the Government would give permission for them to operate or not operate on the terms and conditions of the Government – not the institution. I am perfectly sure that against the background of that broad policy guideline, the Cabinet sub-committee is going to consider this whole question of medical education, and the question of St. George's Medical School in particular will be subjected to the procedures in the Ministry of Education. There is nothing more that I can say about that.

I wish to speak, too, on the matter of remedial education. A number of studies and surveys done in very recent years have revealed, and not for the first time, and they continue to reveal I should say, that there is a serious deficiency in the reading skills of our children. A child who gets zero in the Common Entrance Examination is obviously showing that there is a very deep-seated problem. It may or may not be a sign of retardation. But reading skills are important, and not only for the English Paper, the General Paper and the essay; the children who write Mathematics have to be able to read the mathematical questions in the first place.

The Ministry is very actively involved in setting up within the Erdiston Teacher Training College courses in remedial teaching, not only as an option so that those teachers who want to specialize in it might be able to choose to pursue it, but I certainly am aware that the Chief Education Officer, who himself is a Member of the Board of Management of Erdiston, is quite insistent that we are at a stage with it where it should be a basic or compulsory subject at Erdiston.

For years we have been smug about our reputation for having the highest literacy rate in the world. But we in the Ministry of Education, certainly educators who are trained to detect these things, know that this is only a myth. I have said it before. Barbadians do not like to hear it said; it comes hard, but it is true – lapsed literacy is one of the most frequent problems.

It does not mean that people cannot read and write. Being able to write your name does not mean that you are literate. We do not write letters like we used to. Everybody uses the telephone. Children are not paid to read like they used to. When I was a child, all of us had to get ourselves to the library every Saturday morning. None of that is insisted on now. Parents are not interested in making gifts of books at Christmas and on birthdays. Oh no! They must give them transistors, Walk-men and skate boards – I am not even familiar with all of these new diversions.

I am not saying that children ought not to be given these things, but we need a far greater help from parents with this problem of remedial reading skills that we are getting. Children ought to be encouraged to read the newspaper.

I am very happy to say that in the primary schools, there is a period known as, "News". It gives me great pleasure when I go into the primary school rooms and I see that. They read the front page of the paper and particular news items are discussed at a very early stage in the primary schools.

It is very difficult when we are struggling with this in the primary schools – we have gone back to the old-fashioned methods of teaching; children are taught to spell. Grammar is being taught again in the primary schools; comprehension and composition are taught – this is what I see for myself – and some of the primary schools now boast a library – it is very hard on the teachers when those children go back into the home in the evening, and over a long, two–day weekend, parents, in some cases, are actively striving to undo what the teachers have done. In most cases, they are not encouraging the work which teachers have begun.

Mr. Chairman, it has been said that the Barbados Labour Party had promised to abolish the Common Entrance Examination. Let me say this now. The Democratic Labour Party hardly built schools in its fifteen years of government. They built something known as "Sandiford ovens." – and I agree with the honourable Member for St. George South, that if the advice given to the then Minister of Education, the honourable Member for St. Michael South, had been accepted by the Democratic Labour Party, the school building programme would have begun much earlier. It would not have been left for the Barbados Labour Party to come in 1976 to start a school building programme.

Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. Michael South were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In less than ten years, the Barbados Labour Party has built twice as many schools as they built in their time. It has to do with the kind of priority that you give it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The honourable Attorney-General was quite right when he said that the Democratic Labour Party did not give any high priority to school building. I say that, to say this.

Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. Michael South were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am saying that it is a matter of priority. The Democratic Labour Party did not give that high priority to school building that the Barbados Labour Party has given it. Nobody can deny that.

I have the greatest sympathy for the honourable member for St. Michael South – I do not know why he wants to burst out in tears in here – because I recognize that at that stage of our development when he was Minister of Education, the population bulge was in that age group, and that is why what came to be known as the "Sandiford ovens" came into existence.
12.55 p.m.

You had our sympathy, but your colleagues had no sympathy for you. I know you feel badly now and want to burst out crying, but they are not going to give you any sympathy, now either. They never had any and they still do not have any for you. What I am saying is that even if there is a sufficient number of secondary school places in this country, Barbadians must still face the fact that you must have some assessment of the performance and progress of students. I do not want people to go away with the idea that there will not be an examination of some kind, or perhaps more than one, because this same problem of children scoring zero in the Common Entrance Examination shows us that, perhaps, we need to do an assessment earlier than at the Eleven Plus, and perhaps that we need to do more than one assessment, but have a series of them throughout the life of a school child, and each school child should have a profile.

This is what I want to introduce. I want every primary school child to have a report card so that the parent can more properly understand and appreciate the rate of progress or otherwise of that child. Right through the school life, we should keep a profile of a child, so that, at any given moment, in any given school, you should be able to pull a card and say what is the overall performance of a child. Because that does not now exist, I believe some hardship is worked against some pupils.

Mr. Chairman, I want to raise another issue before I sit down, and it has to do with the very nasty accusation which came from the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central about political interference in appointments. There is no political interference in appointments in the Ministry of Education. He makes that kind of statement against a background that during the time of the Democratic Labour Party, when posts for the headmastership of certain schools came up, recommendations, which were made by Ministers rather than Ministry officials, went before the Public Service Commission. Do not force me to call names.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I categorically deny that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member must be heard in silence on both sides of the House.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: There is another point. It has to do with the manpower needs of Barbados and the important role that the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Labour in particular, have to play in this. I do not know if people are aware of the fact that within the Ministry of Education a manpower survey was done three years ago, by the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity, and that the Ministry of Labour is even now embarking upon a national manpower survey which will enable us to more selectively offer as areas of study those subjects which are of national priority rather than not.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on the question of the appointment.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair will entertain a motion to report progress.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I only waited for you to get up to talk some nonsense so I could save you from yourself.

I beg to move, Mr. Chairman, that you do now report the progress to His Honour, the Deputy Speaker, and ask for leave to sit again.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to the DEPUTY SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again; and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, before we move the suspension, I would like to give notice of Supplementary Paper No. 2. I have discussed this matter with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is a Resolution for $3.6 million, which is already in the Estimates, and I propose to have this done in all of its stages today. At this point I would therefore like leave of the House to give the appropriate notice.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there is no objection leave is therefore granted.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the borrowing of $3.6 million from Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Limited for financing the purchase of 10 per cent of the shares of the Barbados External Telecommunications Ltd.

Sir, I propose to do this in all of its stages.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg that this sitting be suspended for one hour for lunch, until 2 p.m. today.

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

ON RESUMPTION

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

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED

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

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have been talking about medical education, and I raised the question earlier about the responsibility of the Minister of Education in respect of the registration of the St. George's Medical School, or University.

The Education Act, 1981–25, requires private educational institutions to be registered. I have a copy of the Act in my hand, and Clause 31(1) reads:

> "Subject to this Act, no person may keep in Barbados a private school or private educational institution to which this Part applies unless the school in registered in accordance with this Part."

Subclause (2) goes on to say:

> "Any person who at the commencement of this Act is keeping a private school or private educational institution has six months or such further period as the Minister by Order allows to comply with subsection (1)."

The question I am asking is, is the St. George's Medical School, a private educational institution which operates out of St. Peter, in compliance with the requirements; have they applied for registration under the appropriate form as required, or whether they are in breach of the Education Act, 1981–25? The Minister, I believe, indicated that she is sitting on some committee, but, over and above and irrespective of what committee she may be sitting on, I am asking whether that particular school is in compliance with the requirements of the Education Act as far as it relates to the registration of private Educational institutions.

I would also like to know what particulars were requested or required from the St. George's Medical School in this particular regard, and particularly with reference to Clause 32(1)(a)(b) and (c). I believe the Minister should be in a position to give us some full information on this, because I would not like to think that the Ministry of Education would be handling this matter in the same way that the Ministry of Health was handling it, by saying there is no law, therefore you cannot do anything about it. In this case there is a law on the Statute Book, to which this Parliament spent a lot of time giving consideration.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Was that part proclaimed?)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I do not know, that is for you and your Attorney General to tell me. I listened to him very attentively telling the Minister that he does not agree with what she has been doing. He did it very delicately, beautifully and elegantly. That was real dialectic this morning.

I have asked the question, so I will sit and wait for a reply.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, it would appear that the Minister is unwilling and/or unable to respond to the very carefully worded query by my distinguished Deputy Leader of the Opposition. We on this side recognise that the establishment of the St. George's Medical School is not simply a health matter, but primarily an educational matter which impacts on health, the establishment of which comes well within the area of discussion of any Capital estimates related to education.

We are at a loss as to how the Government has found itself in this position. We know as a matter of fact that the present Minister of Education – and I fully agree with her, I think she has shown considerable foresight and a sense of responsibility to this country – took a firm stand against the establishment of these fly-by-night, offshore mafioso medical institutions in the Caribbean. She not only took that decision within the jurisdiction of Barbados, but she is on record as taking the fight to those other Health Ministers within CARICOM, who had

neglected the interests of their own countries and their own citizens in allowing the establishment of these medical schools. The Minutes of the CARICOM Secretariat are replete with sound statements made by the Minister of Education on this matter, where she totally rejected any establishment of any such schools anywhere within the region.

Those who have been involved in the medical education process in Barbados recognise the establishment of the St. George's Medical School as a major threat to the entire educational process within the region, and now more intimately in Barbados. The medical profession – and this is not always appreciated – is concerned, and has to be concerned, with the education of doctors. There are many people who have tried to tarnish the image of the medical profession in Barbados by trying to say that the medical profession is a closed shop and afraid of competition. This is absolute nonsense.

Any medical professional organisation has as its responsibility, collectively and individually, a major commitment to the furtherance of medical education. As a matter of fact, the Hippocratic Oath enjoins you to spare no effort in assisting persons who wish to become doctors, and to participate in the process of delivering health care. It also enjoins you to ensure that such training is conducted in a manner which would not put the lives of patients at risk, whether such patients exist in Barbados or outside the jurisdiction of Barbados.

The medical profession cannot therefore condone a situation where a group of businessmen, funded by Mafia money – and I speak very advisedly and knowledgeably on this matter, because none of the people who are spokesmen for the St. George's Medical School, either in Barbados, in California, in New York or Washington, ever had a single cent before that school was formed. Even the lawyer who has spent some time in Spain, when he came back to the United States he was bankrupt, and the funding of that school is essentially from New Jersey Mafia money. Let that be made clear. I have got further confirmation and definite confirmation of this recently. It is a Mafia-funded, Mafia-based operation.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: What about Professor Cruickshank?)

2.15 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If you want to talk about Cruickshank, I can talk about Cruickshank. Recently I saw a letter that really upset me very much, and I am going to talk about it later on the Floor of the House, because if a man is going to say that he has joined the St. George's Medical School only because he has a young wife and three children to educate and is 70 and cannot be employed by the university, then that is a very serious matter. I regard Professor Cruickshank as a man who has made a major contribution to medicine in the Caribbean; I worked hand in hand with him in establishing the medical faculty here in Barbados, and I must say that it is a matter of severe disappointment to all of us.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, on a point of order.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: There is a relevant Standing Order which you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the honourable Member should be well aware of, that you should not make reference to persons in public life here on the floor of the House without first notifying you.

It is regrettable to hear the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, by profession a doctor himself, stating on the floor of the House that the reason why a man is prepared to work for his living, as if he should not, is because he has a young wife and three children to support.

I ask you, Sir, to draw the relevant Standing Order to the attention of the honourable Member and have that expunged from the Record.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The point is well taken. There is a Standing Order.....

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: But he is not a Barbadian. He is not in Barbados. It has nothing to do with Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. The honourable Member must understand that when the Chairman is speaking, he must be polite enough to take his seat. There is a Standing Order. The honourable Member may continue.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is just a matter that is very upsetting to all the students and graduates of the University of the West Indies, and we hope that we can do something to rescue that situation and that individual, because I do not think that he knows what he is in for.

There are other aspects of that St. George's Medical School which are a matter of concern. I cannot see how a Ministry of Education can allow any educational establishment to be established here, without having some element of control over the teaching within that institution, particularly in the area of health, when the products of those institutions can do a lot of good or a lot of harm to the community.

We have institutions in Barbados where people are trained in the paramedical area, for example, the training of nurses, and lab technicians, and the programmes which have been established for the training of such persons have come under the supervision of the Ministry

of Education and the Ministry of Health. We know that when a lab technician or a nurse reaches professional status and they are employed in Barbados, either in a private or public capacity, or they are employed anywhere else in the world, we have turned out a product with the label "Barbados" on it, of which we can be justly proud.

How can you allow a medical institution to operate within your shore with no input whatsoever as to the quality of the teaching, none whatsoever, and then allow such persons to practice even elsewhere, forget Barbados, and totally disregard you responsibility in relation to the standards. I say you cannot do it; and if anyone were to sanction that sort of situation, they would be undermining the whole educational status of this country.

Medical education is a very complex and difficult thing. To start off with, there has to be supervision at all levels of the educational process, so that by the time one comes to the writing of a final examination, the only concern of the examiners by and large, is to determine whether there have been errors in judgment made earlier on by previous examiners and what gaps may have existed in the knowledge of a student which were not detected at an earlier stage. In other words, what I am saying is that the examination process in the production of a doctor is a continuous process. That is why you have had in the past things like 1st MP, 2nd MP, 3rd MP, then a series of examinations supervised at all levels, so that by the time you come to examining the finals – I have examined here and all over the world in final examinations – your main concern is whether or not there is a gap in the knowledge of the person which cannot be corrected by one year of supervision in an internship programme. That is how doctors fail their finals and that is why you will see that if 30 out of 100 students fail in an examination, 10 will be from the bottom third of the class, and 10 from the middle third and 10 from the top. It is a very interesting process.

There is no examination that anyone can call on doctors in Barbados to sit, unless those doctors have had some input into the educational process all along the road in what constitutes a final year medical student. The whole process would have to be supervised, and I have said, openly, that the Government, having made this sort of commitment, at least should insist that the St. George's Medical School should conform to the standards of the University of the West Indies, at least to the regional standards.

I have also said that since you do not have the clinical facilities here, and since a very important part of the training of a doctor is the inputs in those clinical areas, and since we do not have the bed availability in Barbados, and since those students will have to go elsewhere for clinical training which you cannot supervise, then it would be most important that you should limit any such school to being a pre-clinical school in Barbados.

Even if you were to supervise the pre-clinical training – and that is as far as you can supervise – when they go up to London, New Jersey, Spain, France, or whereever, many of them go to the hospitals that are well outside the teaching stream in those countries, and much of their clinical training is totally unsupervised.

I know what I am talking about. I know that some of those students go to a hospital at which I did a clinical clerkship for three weeks when I was a medical student in Edinburgh – that was the excuse for getting down to London. I know that at the end of the three weeks, I had not seen the consultant at all; and when I called him on the Saturday morning and I told him that I had to go back up to Edinburgh and I needed a reference, he told me to write the reference and bring it and let him sign it. Well, I wrote a wonderful reference and he signed it and I took it back up.

I am just showing you the sort of thing that happens when you have students being trained outside the normal teaching processes of a country.

The point I am trying to make is that the clinical content of the training of the graduates of St. George's Medical School cannot be supervised medically, nor can they be trained in any accredited institution.

2.25 p.m.

Indeed, Professor Cruickshank in a recent letter, which he said could be made public, and which I will make public in due course, listed all the hospitals in the United Kingdom where these students go, and not a single one is anything more than a village hospital. And we know perfectly well what happened – these students just go along as clinical assistants and never get any proper clinical training. How can we then allow a school to operate and say that these are graduates of a medical school in Barbados? It is only of interest to the St. George's Medical School if they can get the Government, and by that I mean the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, to agree that they are a medical school established in Barbados, and that the degree would be approved in Barbados as a licence to practise medicine.

I tried to get this point over again and again to the Government. The St. George's Medical School will have no interest in coming to Barbados unless you are prepared to say that the graduates of the St. George's Medical School are fit and proper persons to practise medicine within your jurisdiction, because that is the *sine qua non* for them to be admitted into the American process through the ECFMG examination.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member's time has expired. Does any other honourable Member wish to

make a contribution? If not, I shall let the honourable Member continue for another fifteen minutes.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, I wish to continue.

It is quite amazing.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I rise to draw Your Honour's attention to the fact that you told the honourable Member his time had expired and that he should take his seat, but he is continuing. Whatever he says from there should be expunged.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Chairman told me my fifteen minutes was up.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I drew the attention of the honourable Member to the fact that his time had expired, and I asked "Does any other honourable Member wish to make a contribution?" Nobody has indicated a wish to speak. Let the honourable Member continue, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, to continue, I should like the public of Barbados to be aware .....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, the words "to continue", is surely decisive. Either the honourable Member has made a speech and sat down or he is continuing. He says he is continuing. You cannot have two consecutive speeches. Am I now going to have in the Budget debate people making two consecutive speeches? You cannot have two consecutive speeches, Sir. That is my respectful submission.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee. The honourable Member spoke for fifteen minutes. I directed that he discontinue his speech. The honourable Member sat. The Chairman asked: "Does any other honourable Member wish to make a contribution?"

I will say this in favour of honourable Members who seem to think that the honourable Member should not speak, because of the fact that I had summoned the Clerk to discuss another matter dealing with the guillotine when the time arises, honourable Members on the Government side may very well have thought that I was talking to the Clerk and they should not stand. That is a possible conclusion, but I am sure that if any other honourable Member wishes to address the Committee, the honourable Member will give way, because he will be able to come back again. Does any other honourable Member wish to make a speech?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, Sir. Put the question.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, continuing on the matter of medical education,.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not say that the honourable Member had caught my eye.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, a lot has been made of the fact that soon after the news broke indicating that the education authorities and other authorities in the United States were examining – the widest examination ever in the history of that country – the offshore medical schools which had come into the United States, and which as a result of the activities of many of the so-called graduates had created a tremendous havoc in the medical system of the United States, and as a result in some fifteen States, offshore medical schools and their graduates and the various rackets connected with these schools were having an intense investigation, the Government of Barbados, no doubt, with advice from the Ministry of Health, through the Barbados Government Information Service rushed to point this out, stated that the St. George's Medical School was not being investigated.

Apart from the fact that it is difficult to accept that they were in a position at that stage to make a definitive comment, I wish to add some information, for the benefit of the Minister of Education, concerning the investigation going on in the United States. The article that was actually published in the United States revealing the investigation went on to point out that there was nothing to preclude further investigation of other offshore medical schools in the Caribbean, and the points which were being made concerning these medical schools were such as to indicate that they were very concerned about the offshore medical schools that had sprung up in the Eastern Caribbean.

The Eastern Caribbean does not include the Dominican Republic, where it is said that some 4 000 students had "graduated" from these medical schools in the Dominican Republic. And it is significant that in the same article which revealed the investigation, it was pointed out that 4 000 students, who were practising as doctors or who had applied for permission to take the Board's examination in the United States, had had to take over the exams last year because a substantial number, more than 70 per cent of those who made application to take the exams, were considered to be suspect by the authorities.

There was a racket in which they were able to see the examination in advance. There was another racket in which they were able to buy certificates for anything from U.S.$5 000 to U.S.$50 000. They went on to demonstrate that, especially in the State of Ohio, the amount of havoc that had been reeked on the population by graduates of.....

2.35 p.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Did the honourable Member say he is on a point of order?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am asking, is this matter relevant? Surely the honourable Member cannot be talking about anything that has any connection with Barbados.

The investigator he is speaking of was specifically asked if any medical school in Barbados or Grenada or St. Vincent, particularly the St. George's Medical School, was involved, and he said, "No". Therefore, I submit that what he is saying is irrelevant.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, you would remember that I said that they said that there was nothing to preclude the deepening of the investigation into the Eastern Caribbean. Barbados is in the Eastern Caribbean and more particularly, Grenada is in the Eastern Caribbean; and the St. George's Medical School had its genesis by an Act of Parliament in Grenada, according to what the Government Information Service put out in 1977.

Unless the honourable Member personally asked the investigator and got that specific answer, unless he personally telephoned the investigator in New York, then I recommend that he should read the entire article. He would find that in the final two columns of the same article, which covered some fourteen columns of one of the most important publications in the United States, the relevance to Barbados of what I am saying can be found.

The point I am making is that when the Minister of Education comes to consider the registration of an offshore medical school, these are among the matters which the Minister, in her capacity of Minister, must take into consideration. She must ignore any suasion which may come from her Prime Minister or from any other Minister on that side; she must not allow herself to be diverted from the path which she so admirably set in her capacity as spokesman of the Caribbean area, when she appeared at a conference in Singapore, and when she stated categorically the position of Barbados, a position with which we on this side agreed without the slightest doubt, that the people of the Caribbean are not interested in fly-by-night, racketeering concepts in not only medical education, but any aspect of education or any aspect at all for the region.

The fact that the Attorney-General today started to indicate that he is not supportive of any offshore medical school of a certain kind unless the standards are set in Barbados, and the fact that the Minister of Education has stated her position long before the St. George's Medical School was given permission categorically and absolutely by the Prime Minister in his capacity as Minister of Health, and long before the Minister of Health was forced to read in the Other Place a thirteen-page Statement attempting to justify the unjustifiable, it was common practice and accepted knowledge that the offshore medical schools were on frail ground. But if we needed any further evidence, it can be seen in the collapse of the offshore medical school in St. Lucia, the St. Lucia Offshore Medical School, which has been trumpeted into St. Lucia in the same way that the St. George's Medical School has been trumpeted into Barbados, which had promised so many economic benefits to the people of St. Lucia, and which advertised in the *New York Times* that it has connections with top-level hospitals in St. Lucia.

The same medical school collapsed last month – at least the announcement was made last month. And following the announcement of the collapse of the St. Lucia Offshore Medical School, a couple of months after it had been advertising in a half-page ad in the *New York Times* for its 1984 Spring semester, it is significant that the people who purport to come to the rescue of the St. Lucia Offshore Medical School are the proprietors of the offshore medical school which seeks to establish its roots here in Barbados. Again, that is a matter which the Minister responsible for Education must bear firmly in mind.

We are not discussing here the setting up of a fly-by-night secretarial school. We are not discussing even the setting up of a fly-by-night travel agents' school – because operators of all kinds, as the honourable Minister said earlier, try to set up all kinds of little "schools" in all kinds of disciplines. In the same way that it has become apparent that these fly-by-night, fledgling institutions are not acceptable to the standards set by the Ministry, in the same way that the Ministry has sent out to the private secondary schools in Barbados, some of whom have been in existence for a considerable amount of time, indicating to them that their standards were not up to those set by the Ministry, and, finally, giving those schools an extension of time to bring their physical and other plant up-to-date, I wish to know how it is possible that the Minister did not send her inspectors to St. Peter to find out how this institution could be functioning in this country, if, as I understand her to say, she has not, as Minister, given approval for that institution to function? It suggests to me that the Cabinet has one view and the Prime Minister has another view.

I have heard no comment from any Minister on that side, other than the woe-begotten gentleman who is in the Ministry of Health and the Prime Minister himself, who, obviously, is the arch-architect of the establishment of the school in Barbados, and the Minister responsible for Information, who wrote the speech which the Minister

responsible for Health announced in the Senate. Other than those three gentlemen, I have heard no one from that side get up and categorically agree that the St. George's Medical School should be in Barbados.

Do you know why, Sir? Resting in the breast of each one of them is an understanding that education in Barbados, for all of these years, whatever the shortcomings, has always had around it a certain level of integrity. Education in Barbados has always been regarded with a certain sanctity by the people of Barbados, and those honourable Members on that side, in their private moments, know and have always felt in their hearts that the establishment of the St. George's Medical School, notwithstanding what the Prime Minister says on the floor of this House, or what his colleague, the Minister responsible for Health, says outside of this House, is not Barbados' education, as it shines in its shining glory.

They believe in their hearts, they know in their hearts, that the turnabout by the Government, the tac-a-too by the Government, on the St. George's Medical School, is contrary to all that we stand for. And the final attempts, in their dying moments, to find a parallel in some decision that is alleged to have been made by the Democratic Labour Party, after nine years of office by them, is positive proof that they do not accept and do not agree with the principle of establishing any offshore medical school in this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute more.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I would say finally, in response to the Attorney-General, that my reason for not supporting the St. George's Medical School has to do with the integrity and the dignity of this country as a nation. We are not a banana republic, and we must never appear to anyone, especially outside of Barbados, as if we are a banana republic, with our hands outstretched, waiting for someone to come and give us largesse, instead of behaving like men – as I have heard the Prime Minister say people should behave like men in a free society – however small this nation may be.

I hope that the Minister will stick to her guns and take a public position that she has taken privately, that the St. George's Medical School is a travesty on the educational system in Barbados.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, we really have to know that nothing very much is wrong with Barbados when the St. George's Medical School can be the principal political issue that occupies the Opposition for a matter of three or four months.

There is $100 million in the Estimates for Education – nothing about the St. George's Medical School; a National Health Scheme is coming on stream, there is Government's plans to reflate the economy and all you can hear is the St. George's Medical School.

Aside.

2.45 p.m.

The honourable Member who just sat down is indicating that there are divisions on the Government's side over this matter. He had better look very carefully at the humiliation he was put through by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in his party's councils for shooting off his mouth about the medical school in an uninformed and unwise manner. He had better pay attention to the fact that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central refused to have him on the platform at Halls Road Corner when the "St. George's Medical School Meeting" was held.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Did he speak?

Let us have a sense of balance about this whole matter.

The Democratic Labour Party considered medical schools and considered the framework in which to operate in Barbados. The person who was then Minister of Education has perhaps made the best speech made on either side about offshore medical schools, that is the honourable Member for St. Michael South. He said that he was not against it in all circumstances, but set out the pitfalls. He was more candid and honest than anybody else on his side. He said that he was aware that this was an on-going matter, carried over from one Government to another, and from one medical school to another.

The matter is simply not so important as honourable Members are seeking to make it. I repeat, I was interviewed by a reporter of the BBC – he did not want to talk particularly about Grenada, he wanted to talk about the Eastern Caribbean – who, having gone to the political meeting at Halls Road, could not believe his ears that an Offshore Medical School could be the subject of a major political initiative by a party in a serious country.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: If the honourable Member spoke to the same man, I challenge him to tell me his name.

The story of the medical school is really quite simple. There are two strands. On the one hand, medical schools have been attempting to come to Barbados for some years. Two successive Governments have worked out virtually the same principles for dealing with them.

This is dealing with a full scale medical school whose objective is to train doctors for the American market; let us call a spade a spade. I think the other strand is the subsidiary medical training in anatomy that schools in St. Vincent and, perhaps, St. Lucia have been giving, and the school in Barbados is now giving.

In respect to the full-scale offshore medical school, there is a lot of talk, and the debate really is about that. But a distinction must be drawn first of all with the anatomy school, because the public is bound to be confused. I have on the authority of the BAMP itself that there is really no fundamental objection to students being taught anatomy in Barbados with no commitment either way – no commitment on the part of Barbados to the school or the school to Barbados. I am told so. Maybe BAMP speaks with two voices, but I am told so. So what we have here now is not something about which I am aware there is any real controversy, except the manic mouthings of some members of the Opposition, not the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, and certainly not the honourable Member for St. Michael South. What we have here now is a school teaching anatomy with no proposal that that amounts to a medical school. We have a campus of the St. George's Medical University of Grenada in Barbados at the present time.

The third fact that I would want to draw to the attention of the House is that, in the opinion of many of us, there is no general objection in Barbados to our making it possible for an American group to teach Americans to practice medicine in America. If honourable Members believe that there is any objection in Barbados from people in the Upper Volta teaching Upper Voltants to practice medicine in "Wag-a-do-do", honourable Members would have to have their heads examine. I am quite confident that Barbadians easily see the advantages of having a group of medical students here, renting rooms and taxis, buying food or whatever, and that they are perfectly happy that they should remain here, subject to good behaviour and the avoidance of scandal, as long as the educational System of Barbados is not affected by them, and as long as we have no commitment, financial or otherwise, to the medical school.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I can tell you this that no member of the Government, not of my Cabinet, will be going with any offshore medical school promoter to a bank in Bridgetown to borrow money, as a member of the Democratic Labour Party's Cabinet did in 1976.

The Government, like all right-thinking people within BAMP and the university, is trying to steer a middle course. We feel that we have the backing of public opinion – you could put it to the test if you like, but we feel that we do – but that alone is not informing our actions. We actively promote offshore educational scheme, offshore business, and Barbados as a center for offshore activity.

Contrary to what the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central implied in his address to the Chamber of Commerce, Barbados, no matter what level of wages are paid, cannot provide the demand within itself sufficient to maintain the levels of development that we have already attained. Increasing the wages in Barbados would only increase demand for foreign goods, not for local industrial activity, a very serious flaw in the honourable Member's analysis. He should take his economics from Senator Arthur rather than from ex-Senator Walcott. That is Frank Walcott's economics; it is not serious economics.

One of the ways of maintaining levels of development is to create demand from overseas. You cannot expand demand on the basis of a population of 250 000 people. You have to expand demand by selling goods and services to foreigners. You expand manufactures, sell tourism services, data processing services and educational services.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Patience! Nobody needs to sell me patience. God knows that the trials offered by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central are enough to make us all patient, not least the honourable Member for St. Michael West.

2.55 p.m.

The promotion of an offshore medical school is no more than selling services to foreigners. Both the Government and the medical school have remained reasonably silent on this whole matter, as is necessary, because negotiations, I suppose, are underway – I have not heard any more about them for a couple of weeks.

What is going to inform those negotiations? On the one hand, I have heard some good arguments from the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, wrapped up in disgusting rhetoric though they sometimes are. Everything in this country is the Mafia. If the microphone does not work in the House of Assembly, it is because of Mafia connections with the Leader of the House. If a motor car breaks down in the road, it is because of the Mafia connections with the garage that does the repairs for the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. If the rain does not fall, it is because the Mafia has seeded the clouds east of Barbados and stopped the rain.

Leaving out the Mafia and all the foolish rhetoric, the honourable Member, perhaps not today but on other occasions, has made some good points. The honourable

Member has pointed out that the output of a medical school in Barbados would produce far more doctors than Barbados could handle. He has also pointed out that it is probably very difficult for an offshore medical school to operate without obtaining conditions as to recognition from the Government of Barbados other than the Government of Barbados would be willing to give.

All of these facts, and I am quite willing to sit down and hear them repeated over and over again, but I personally would think that the general public of Barbados would be more interested in an educational debate about – seeing what I notice one of the newspapers discussing today – the use of electronic calculators in schools, the use of computers, and discussing the problems that affect education. Discuss, as some people fear, whether the complete extension of education right up to secondary level to the whole population has diluted the quality of education. All of these are matters on which we would welcome debate.

The St. George's Medical School is simply not worth it. I wonder why the Opposition is pursuing it. I am sure it has no political value. Perhaps I should encourage you to pursue it. Go and pursue it in St. Peter. Go and tell the prople in St. Peter you want to send home the medical school. I am looking forward to hearing you say that. Maybe I should encourage the pursuit of foolishness in this matter, but we deserve better than that.

Education is being debated today because there are real problems. I just mentioned about what it is worth in discussion with the Ministry of Health. We are planning in any negotiations that we have with the St. George's Medical School to ensure that we consult with the University of the West Indies at all times, and I have expressed the hope that a scheme can be worked out which will allow offshore medical schools to operate here with the consent and assistance of the university. Further to that, the Minister of Health has told me that he is seeking, if necessary, to resuscitate the provisions in our Medical Registration Act that call for examination of persons qualified abroad, and let the Medical Council, with the assistance of the University, set an examination, just as the Americans do, without taking which graduates, other than those of the UWI cannot practise. All of that is now being pursued, because we understand the hiatuses in our medical education system, as well as the dangers that threaten it for the future, and we have taken the opportunity of this issue to try to do something about them.

The country deserves better than the foolishness Tom Clarke writes in the *Nation*. I cannot say anything about that, because I have already issued a writ to the *Nation* and they have already offered me a large sum of money for repeating, basically, some of the slanders that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has put out. I understand he was telephoned the very night by Mr. Ridley Greene before the article appeared in the *Nation*. He will know whether that is true or not. Therefore, I am not going to talk at any length about it. Let them continue writing. I say no more. I believe they have already been served with the writ and the statement of claim is being served on them today. I believe it was settled and is being served on them today.

What I would like is for the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to go out and say it on a platform. I would like that.

I really rose to speak about the medical school and to indicate that we are making ourselves ridiculous by this continuing debate. It is simply not worth it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not believe that very much more can be said on this matter.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I would really not like anyone to get the impression that nothing other than the St. George's Medical School was debated under the Head of Education, a debate which started last night. The fact is that the honourable Member for St. Thomas was not here, and has not been here for a long time, so he is not aware of the fact that all the matters which he said he would like debated under Education have already been the subject of debate. The fact is that other matters have already been debated, and we have now moved into the area of medical education.

Firstly, the man from the BBC met me in my office and interviewed me at 2.00 p.m. the day before he interviewed the honourable Member for St. Thomas. I am saying that the man told me he was from Cyprus, and that he understood the feelings of certain people in Barbados.

The honourable Member seeks to make a great play of the fact that I have issued a statement suggesting to the Government certain steps that might be taken to rescue the situation. The central point is, if you have already committed yourself to a pre-clinical school .....

(Aside)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The school teaches things other than anatomy. Anatomy is only one side. They teach anatomy, micro-biology and various other things.
3.05 p.m.

The point is, if you have committed yourself to a pre-clinical school, and you cannot get out, for the reasons which I have stated on the floor of this House and for the reasons which the honourable Member has assured this Honourable House that he is going to receive a substantial amount of money, then I am suggesting how the damage to Barbados could be limited:

(1) do not let the people advertise in the name of Barbados;

(2) make sure that it is only an extension of the Grenada campus;

(3) limit the thing to a pre-clinical situation. In that way you would rescue the educational institutions of this country, because you would in fact be offshore to Grenada.

The moment you get into a clinical situation and enter a situation where you are asking the UWI or the medical profession to be involved in this exercise, it is a different matter.

The first time I ever heard about an offshore medical school was in Cuernavaca in Mexico around 1973 or 1974. I remember going to Mexico with the honourable Member for St. John in connection with computers, if I remember correctly, and I paid a visit to the University of Cuernavaca, the pinnacle of academic achievement in medicine in Mexico. They were conned into the idea of participating with the first offshore medical school that went into Mexico, and two years later, and up to today, that same medical school had undermined the University of Cuernavaca, to the point that the Government had to intervene to protect its own institution. They set up their own headquarters in a small town – I cannot remember its name – just south of the border of the United States. It is still surrounded today by Mexican soldiers, and it has become the focal point of the drug trade within Mexico and the United States. It is a fact.

It is true, Sir, that the Mexicans take a different view of this whole thing. We see it from a moral point of view.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, is the honourable Member talking about the Medical School of Guadalajara?

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am just saying that that was the first experience in Mexico. Successive Mexican Governments have always taken the ultimate moral view, as far as I am concerned, in their relationships with the United States that the United States took away the majority of their property, and anything stretching from Northern California to Florida belongs to Mexico, and anything that would undermine the morale of the United States and undermine the United States in the long term, will help them in their ultimate goal of recapturing the majority of the territories that had been lost to them. So the Mexicans will promote anything, whether it is drugs or offshore medical schools, in the hope of sapping the Americans' vitality in the long run. We all know that is a historical fact.

Where there is a fundamental moral gulf between us is that we do not feel that we can be unconcerned about the situation where a medical establishment can be established on our shores and, at the same time, produce doctors who are qualified and who carry the Barbadian stamp, even if they ultimately only practise on people outside of Barbados. That is all I am saying; that is the moral position that we are taking in this matter, and it is an important moral position. I have already set out the many reasons why you cannot just supervise a final examination; there is a continuing examination process in medicine, and unless you control the standards right through the process, then you would not get anywhere.

The honourable Member for St. Thomas, and I am surprised that he was trapped into this, joined the St. George's School in denying that they were involved in the scandal that was being investigated in the United States. The fact is, all the offshore medical schools have denied that they are involved, all of them, those in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and throughout the Eastern Caribbean. I cannot say that the St. George's Medical School was involved, and I cannot say that it was not involved; but the point is that what the investigation in the United States is all about is the fact that an environment has been created by the existence of the offshore medical schools which has allowed for the trafficking in medical degrees.

From time to time, we have come across the occasional psychopath who forges a degree and practises medicine in a hospital for a few years before he is discovered to be a quack. We had one here in Barbados for a very short period of time. I am telling you. I know that. The point is that the fact that there are about 15 000 of these knocking around the United States is because of the existence of these offshore medical schools, so now how can the St. George's Medical School be in a position to deny that someone is forging their degrees? We cannot even say that they were not forging degrees from the University of the West Indies, and that is what the current investigation is all about in the United States, so that is a different matter altogether.

There have been other investigations in the United States of substance. The American Medical Association, several universities in the United States, the United States Congress, the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom and the equivalent council in Canada, have all visited the St. George's Campus of the St. George's Medical School and condemned it as being substandard. This is long before Barbados got into the act. There was a major television programme in Canada about two years ago, which I saw, showing the absence of facilities for the teaching of Pathology, Bacteriology and Anatomy in the St. George's School in Grenada, so no one has to come here now and tell us that this

school has a higher standard than other medical schools. It is not so.

The fact is that these people are fly-by-night operators, and they are not prepared to make the kind of capital investment for medical education which will be required and make a profit. This is the fundamental problem. Either the Governments make the investment for them, or they become the leeches on the health services of the existing countries in which they are located, or on other countries, through the process of bribery and corruption, or they pull out and go elsewhere. These are the facts that you have to face.

If a reputable American medical school, an established American school, wishes to establish an offshore facility in Barbados for undergraduate or post graduate teaching, without impinging on our resources here in Barbados, I would not object.
3.15 p.m.

I can say on the floor of this House that I have tried my best to get the Rockefeller Institute interested in coming to Barbados for post graduate research studies, because it would be a major stimulus for post graduate studies in Barbados. I have even gone to Washington. The honourable Member for the City has tried, and when the honourable Member for Christ Church East was at the IDC, he also tried to help, but we were dealing with the Rockefeller Institute, which has the highest percentage of Nobel Prize Winners in Science in the United States. This is the kind of institution that you should talk about attracting into Barbados, which would add to Barbados, if you were to get them inside here.

They very nearly raised the $20 million, through USAID, to come into Barbados, and if the Carter Administration had not changed, probably we would have had here a major post graduate research institution, which would come and put $20 million in capital investment in Barbados. This thing had reached the point where they actually started a programme in Trinidad, working on certain immunological studies related to diabetes and other factors that we have in Barbados, in conjunction with our main research centre in Trinidad, and they have produced an interesting paper out of that work. That work was headed by a gentleman, John Zabriski, whom I met in 1967 when I was looking after one of the Rothschilds here in Barbados. He was at the time a paediatrician, and he called me only a few nights ago about a matter related to cancer research. That is the quality of medical institution and medical input that you would want to have in Barbados. I would actively support that.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Do not let me start talking, because I only have to pay ten per cent for the company. You have to pay 50 per cent, and I know who pays the other 40 per cent and I know who pays the next 10 per cent. I am not going to call the name of the company.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has expired.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a brief intervention. I believe that if the Government of Barbados wishes to establish an offshore medical school, it should not try to drag the Democratic Labour Party into it as an accessory to the fact, or as any kind of associate or accomplice in that particular regard. I believe it is time after all these years since 1976, that the Barbados Labour Party Government should be able to get up and say what is their position without having to go back and say: "You know, the Democratic Labour Party did this, so we are doing it too, we are like them." Independence and autonomy mean that you can stand on your own feet and take the consequences of your decision.

It has been bandied about that the Barbados Labour Party is on good grounds for talking about an offshore medical school, because on three occasions, the Democratic Labour Party Government, the previous Government, was dealing with this matter. It went to Cabinet, they said, on two occasions. I have now been able to jog my memory and to refresh my memory completely on these matters, and I can now identify those three occasions that they are talking about, and I will let the public judge on these matters. The first occasion was 22nd April, 1976, and these were matters not even on the Cabinet agenda. The Prime Minister informed the Cabinet, and I am quoting.....

Asides

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Why can I not do that? Do you think this is play-play work?

(Hon. L. R. TULL: I have the right to prosecute you, you know that.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: You will prosecute me? You would have to prosecute the *Nation* first. I have not studied the law, but you are not going to catch me in this one. If I am quoting, I am quoting from the *Nation* or from the Senate paper, an official document laid in Parliament.

April 22: "The Prime Minister informed the Cabinet of exploratory".....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is that to be made a document of the House?

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: It is already a document.

"The Prime Minister informed the Cabinet of exploratory discussions" (not the words) "which a group of medical men from the United States, led by a Dr. Merliss, had recently held with him and Dr. the Hon. R. B. Caddle about establishing a medical training school in Barbados. The proposal envisaged the use of the St. Michael District Hospital and other district hospitals at a later date."

Pure report; pure information, that is all, matter finished, 22nd April, 1976.

April 29, 1976:

"The Prime Minister informed the Cabinet that he had received a draft letter or agreement from the U.S. group who wished to establish a medical training school and that he would refer the draft agreement to the Minister of Health and Welfare."

Pure information. Those are two occasions, and the third and final occasion:

"Cabinet considered the information which was submitted by the Minister of Health."

I was Minister at the time, and I pulled whatever information we had together and submitted it for the information of Cabinet. Based on the paper, this is what I submitted:

"It is therefore impossible to assess the implications of the proposal without an in depth study involving interested bodies, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, the Ministry of Education, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners."

I also said that because of previous experience, the *bona fides* of the founders and sponsors should be investigated by the embassy of Barbados in the United States. I invited the Cabinet to note the details which I had submitted and recited in the paper concerning the proposals under examination.

3.25 p.m.

(Hon. L. R. TULL: What date was that?)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: That was 29 July, 1976. Those are the three occasions.

Aside.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Those are the only occasions that the Cabinet, the Chief Executive body in this country, gave consideration to that matter, as far as I can recall, and as I told you, I jog my memory on these matters.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Jog your memory now.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Three occasions, and there is nothing about any decision anywhere. There is no mention at all about any decision being made by the Democratic Labour Party Government on these matters.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No cross talk. Order, please.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order. Would the honourable Member agree that right up to Election Day, the matter was being pursued, and that the weekend before the Election, they wrote and told the American doctors to come back after September – the honourable Member who has just spoken himself wrote that.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Not only I do not remember, I never wrote it.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order: The honourable Member is a gentleman, and not untruthful. It is a very dangerous matter, if you cannot remember something, to deny it. We saw it happen to the Leader of the Opposition over this very matter. Do not force us now to bring a file to show a signature advising American doctors to come back after September 2, signed "E. Sandiford".

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: First of all, you said I wrote a letter to American doctors, and now you are saying that I wrote something advising American doctors.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Those are two different statements that you are making there.

(Hon. L. R. TULL: You told your Permanent Secretary to write the letter.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am saying that I never wrote anything to any American doctors on that point.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All right. Please, please.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am saying that I never wrote any such instruction to my Permanent Secretary either.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order, please. I do not think that these details at this point will carry us any further. We have been spending.....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: If a Permanent Secretary brings something to me for my decision on whether to

submit it to the Cabinet and I say, "Do not bother me with any foolishness at this time, I have other matters on my mind", that is something else.

Aside.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Who directed Dr. Caddle to go and borrow the Minutes?)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order, please.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: But this is the point. What I wish to do is to clarify these matters and to get them on the Record. You went to the Senate and put something on the Record of the Other Place, and I am getting on the Record down here that no Democratic Labour Party Cabinet, that I can recall that I was a member of, took any decision on these matters, and it is time that we stand on the record.

Applause.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I thought I had heard about the decision to investigate something. The honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I see that the Minister has included in the World Bank Loan, a project for the Westbury School. It is my understanding that the Minister intends to abolish the Westbury Infants School.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Amalgamate.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is my understanding that the Minister intends to get rid of the Westbury Infants School in its present form, and that, instead of our having an infants school and a junior school, there is a proposal to have a single school at that site, that substantial works, which she hopes to be completed before the election, would ensue, ...

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Before the Election?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: .....that there is land acquisition for the property to the south of the school, that the entrance from Westbury Road would be closed, and that one of the headteachers in that compound will be removed from that area, if there is only one school.....

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Your informant gave you a lot of information.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is right. It is my constituency.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is not your constituency, Taitt.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: A substantial number of my constituents go to that school.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, a very serious.....

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I must entertain the Honourable Minister.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The whole of the Westbury School is in the constituency of the City of Bridgetown.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Peter Miller's constituency.)

Laughter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, before the honourable Member got up and allowed her senior Cabinet colleague to put the facts in perspective as he knows them, I was making the point that the vast majority of the children who go to that school, which is in the City constituency, now represented by the honourable member in her last days, come from the constituency which I have the honour to represent. And as the Permanent Secretary in her Ministry would know, the parents from that constituency are a very strong and a very committed group. As the honourable Attorney-General was saying today, they put their money where their months are and they support the schools; more particularly, they support the Infants School.

The Infants School has been a model, as I understand it, of infants schools in Barbados; and it is very important to that community, where a substantially lower socio-economic grouping makes up the community, that there be an infants school, that a number of the children that go to that school, by virtue of being in an infants school, where the teachers are specially trained, allow the parents, many of them being single parent families, to go out to work.

I do not understand why the Minister feels that it is necessary to abolish the Infants School. I should like the Minister to make a public statement on the floor of this House, outlining the information which has informed her that it is necessary to abolish the Infants School, because if one looks at the results which we have got from that school over the years, one cannot find any indication that there is any substantial decline in the number of children entering that school.

One of the things which the Education Act has done, which, I believe, is in need of serious examination, is that it has precluded children under five from going into a public school, except I think a school at Govern-

ment Hill, which is a nursery school. It seems to me that all of us, when we were growing up, attended school before the age of five – I believe that almost every honourable Member on this side went to school before the age of five – and whereas the headteacher at that school and other infants schools in Barbados were able to accept children whose birthdays fell after a particular date, but who were over the age of four and not yet five, and thereby relieve the population of a certain amount of pressure, from the coming into existence of the Education Act, those headmistresses and headmasters are now not accepting anybody who is not five years old on the date when the term starts.

I wish to suggest that that cannot be in the interest of our total community. And while I admit that that is how the law reads, I am recommending to the Minister that some consideration by the Ministry should be given to having an amendment to the law to allow the practice of accepting that small percentage of children, whose birthdays fall in a peculiar part of the year, to go into school before they actually reach the age of five.

In any event, I am contending that, especially in the lower socio-economic areas of Barbados, having an infants' school has proved to be of tremendous advantage to the educational system.
3.35 p.m.

I am not prepared to criticize the Minister for making the decision to "amalgamate" as she says, but, to me, it is the abolishing of the school, until I hear from her what are the criteria which have been used by the professionals in her Ministry to make the decision to abolish the school. I am very concerned about this, because the constituents which I represent have all become very concerned and very anxious about this new development concerning the Westbury School. I see it in the Estimates, I note that it forms part of the World Bank Loan, and I would appreciate if the Minister would say to this honourable House what is the basis for this decision, which appears to be a fairly sudden one, to close down the Infants School at Westbury and to extend the size of the Junior School.

I understand that the Junior School is already fairly large, and I am putting it to her that, from a purely philosophical point of view, it is unlikely that a single school, which is taking children from ages 5 to 11, will deliver education in that part of Barbados and parts similar to it as efficiently as the current arrangement which has been in existence under previous Administrations, including the time when the Attorney General was Minister of Education.

I believe that Infants Schools form a substantial part of the educational philosophy that suggests that children who are starting school for the first time ought to be exposed to a different kind of training and teaching from those who can go into a Junior School at age seven or whenever it is they graduate.

I believe that the Minister herself is the product of one of those Infants Schools. I, myself, remember that when I went to Wesley Hall, there was a small part of Wesley Hall that was designated the Infants School. There was a lady in charge called Miss Watkins, a very large lady, but an extremely sympathetic old lady, whose motherly qualities played a greater role than any educational training which she might have had.

I am submitting that the kind of headteacher that would flourish in an Infants School will not necessarily be easily replaced by another type of headteacher that is accustomed to children between the ages of seven to eleven, and who concern herself or himself more with the preparation for the Common Entrance Examination than for the acceptance and guidance for those children that are coming into school for the first time. I would be most grateful if the Minister could explain the philosophical basis on which that decision has been made.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to make a substantial contribution at this stage; I believe that I have said enough for the day. I would like the Minister, when she is summing up, to say something about Special Education in Barbados.

At the United Nations, every year you will hear of the International Year of some sector – the Year of the Aged and the Year of the Youth – and I would like to focus on the International Year of the Handicapped. Barbados is usually in the vanguard of progressive change not only in the Caribbean but the world, and I am anxious to find out from the Minister what the Ministry of Education is doing in the area of the physical handicapped in this country.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I want to make one very brief comment on this question of medical education and the St. George's Medical School.

Yesterday would have been the 17th year that I was in practice in Barbados. During that period, I was a member of the Barbados branch of the British Medical Association, the predecessor organization to the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners. I attended two meetings – one in 1967 relating to the National Insurance scheme and, I believe, one somewhere between 1974–1976 – I cannot remember the date; two meetings in seventeen years. I have never known the doctors in Barbados to be united on anything apart from the St. George's Medical School because of ethical considerations. I have never known such unity, and I will strongly suggest to the Government that they listen very carefully to the

arguments put forward by the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners.

I do not know, because I have not been attending the meetings, whether the same unity relates to the National Health Service. But if there is any objection on the part of the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, it could hardly be on financial grounds, because they would be a lot better taking the money to pay their overheads and start making money thereafter. It is as simple as that. They can take the $40 000, or whatever it is for the 350 people, pay overheads out of that, and then start making money at the other places. So the objection cannot be on financial grounds; therefore, when you see the doctors take a stand on the St. George's Medical School, despite the political differences and despite all sorts of differences in the medical profession – a most difficult people ever to get together and unite on any given thing – then you have got to believe that this is motivated only by moral and ethical considerations. There is nothing else that I know of in seventeen years which would have driven the doctors to this unanimous position.

I would know only too well, because in my capacity as Chairman of the Medical Staff Committee, I got my lashes from the association too, one way or the other. But I am telling you that I have never known them to be so united on any one thing.

The other point is that the medical profession in Barbados – and this is a fact – unlike the legal profession, has always been motivated by the stongest moral principles. There is a very powerful internal professional audit in the medical profession, and anyone who goes outside of those bounds on a professional basis has enough pressure brought on him in a very short time. So when the Association takes a stand, even if the honourable Prime Minister sees it from another perspective, you can believe that they are speaking out of sincerity, and you can believe that they are motivated by honourable considerations, so do not seek to drag any dispute into the mud and suggest that the doctors are being motivated by anything else.

It will suit the doctors in Barbados, if they were like those in St. Vincent and in Grenada, to support the Government to bring in an offshore medical school and get a few dollars by taking a few students in their offices and probably collecting US$2 500 each. Every doctor in Barbados could probably get $5,000 in his pocket, tax free, by supporting the St. George's Medical School, paid into an account in the United States if they were interested in the money. Why are they rejecting that?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Is the honourable Member saying doctors would accept money illegally paid into the United States, not pay tax on it, and still describe themselves as having ethical standards?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I did not say that. I said if they wanted to be like their colleagues elsewhere they could do that, because I happen to know exactly how the system works. Let me tell you something. Ever since this debate started in Barbados, those fellows have been so ruthless as to attempt to make approaches to certain persons whom they know have been opposing it very vociferously. I was just waiting for the right opportunity to call in the police. There are two people whom they have approached, and with a lot of money too.
3.45 p.m.

Those fellows would attempt to corrupt anybody, and it requires strength of character. They believe that because they have a large cash flow, they can enter into any Third World Country.

I just want to repeat what the honourable Member for St. Michael West said. When those fellows first approached the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, they were told in Miami that Barbados was not like the other territories where they could approach the head of an administration, or the head of a political party, pay him a few dollars and come into the country. They were told that Barbados was not like that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has to be very careful, because he is incriminating the medical profession in other islands, and also the legal and political authorities. That is not fair. Quite frankly, I wish he would withdraw it.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, because I am very upset about the whole thing. It is a fact that part of the remuneration is paid in St. Vincent and Grenada, and the rest is paid outside. Doctors openly boast about it. They tell you about it, so it is nothing you have to hide.

I am sincere in the position I take in relation to the offshore medical school, I am absolutely sure that my colleagues are sincere, and I feel that the University of the West Indies is sincere in its position. I am no spokesman for the Association of Medical Practitioners, I am a spokesman for the people of St. Michael South Central in this matter – I am not even my party's principal spokesman either on education or health in this matter – so I would urge the Government to listen very carefully to the arguments put forward and see how they can retreat from the present position.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The question that Head 76, as amended, stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(as amended) $69 064 965

The question that Head 34, as amended, stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 74 – CAPITAL – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
(as amended) – $18 524 403

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to move, Mr. Chairman, that Head 74 stand part of the Schedule.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Head 74, Subhead 2, section 3 says: Construction of an agricultural station at Spring Hall, St. Lucy. I wonder if the Minister will give us his thinking behind the construction of an agricultural station when it is within my knowledge that some of the existing stations have been closed, and that the extension service is now very much smaller than it was. Knowing that the Land Lease Scheme is going on at Spring Hall and, as far as I am aware, a lot of technical advice is already available to the farmers at Spring Hall, I wonder what is the thinking on the construction of an agricultural station at Spring Hall, St. Lucy.

Subhead 11 – Grants to public institutions – Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation. I notice that there is an increase in the grant and it is now $2.75 million. I am a little surprised at an increase in the grant to this corporation, since the feeling was put abroad that the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation was now doing a lot better than it had done before. It has brought back a lot of idle land into cultivation, former Ministers had talked about the lands at Bath and lands all around, have stated that all of their management systems were working, and the plantations have been producing, and I am wondering about the need for the increase in subsidy, and why a subsidy of $2.75 million is being given to the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation.

Subhead 16 deals with the improvement of fishing sites at Bridgetown, Speightstown and Tent Bay. We have a fishing site at Skeete's Bay in St. Philip where we need some work done. We cannot even get the lights on the little shed we have there working properly, and I am wondering if the Minister would indicate if any money is in this for any further work on any of these fishing sites.

In the Minister's reply to the question on the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme, I wonder if he can give us an indication of what is the present policy of providing accommodation on the small farms for the farmers, and how many of these have already been provided.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I know that the Minister wants to get as many questions in as possible before he embarks on answering. I will start with Subhead 1. It says here the provision under this subhead covers the cost of the completion and improvements to the administration complex at Graeme Hall, Christ Church. I really would like the Minister to tell us when does he expect the completion of the complex at Graeme Hall; and if, after the substantial amount of money which has been spent in the experimentation on air conditioning via solar energy, which was trumpeted by the Government some time ago, and on which I believe a substantial amount of money has been expended, he is able to give us an up-to-date report as to whether the system is working, what is the efficiency of the system, what kind of cost savings we have had, if any, and what has been the total result of what is his experience, both as a functionary within the building, and indeed as the chief administrative officer of the whole operation?

I am told that, in fact, after substantial sums of money had been spent in this experimentation, the Ministry has had to resort to the regular air conditioning units for a number of the rooms at that complex. I am very surprised to see such a large sum of money allocated for what is deemed here to be "completion and improvement." I would like a little more detail on these improvements, I want to know exactly what they are. Is Mr. Gardner still involved with the project? Is he still advising the Ministry on the airconditioning on the complex, or is the Government abandoning it as a very bad job?
3.55 p.m.

Subhead 2 – Research and Extension. Again, it is not enough for us merely to see the words that are used in the description under the Estimates. I should like very much if the honourable Minister could give us some detail about the kind of research which is going on. For example, we know that at the Cane Breeding Station, for quite a number of years, there has been some very high level research on the species of cane which ought to grow in Barbados and, as a result, we have had a very high reputation as a cane breeding station in the Eastern Caribbean, and indeed in the world.

I also know that there has been some research going on in the kinds of equipment which would be suited to small countries with the terrain such as ours, and, from time to time, one observes that there is exportation of some piece of new equipment designed by Dr. Hudson or one of those persons working in the field. But my impression is that that research is carried on under the aegis of the private sector, the sugar cane industry in Barbados, although we are reaching the stage where, by virtue of the large amount of support by price and otherwise that the Government is offering from year to year in recent times, it would only be a matter of time before the sugar industry forms part of the public sector in

Barbados. But that notwithstanding, I believe that the research to which I have just referred is, generally speaking, private sector research.

I, and I think the population of Barbados, would like to have an idea of the kind of research which this Head is designed to assist. It seems to me that the $1.773 million to be used for crop research and extension requires some explanation, especially when the small farmer in Barbados continues to complain, either by way of the Feedback Programmes, or by letters to the Press or by letters to MPs.

Last week, I received a letter from, presumably a small farmer in the parish of St. John, who lamented that getting Crop Extension Officers to assist him in his very work endeavours is not the easiest thing in the world. I must confess some surprise at that, because I was under the impression that the crop extension area of the Ministry of Agriculture was one of those areas which was functioning effectively. But I have made enquiries from my colleagues who know more about these things than I do, and I get the impression that there is some substantial difficulty with the crop extension services, that officers are not available at the times when it would be propitious to have them – just before the start of the rainy season.

I am also advised by some of them that while some of the Crop Extension Officers, are available, the implements, the rotavators and the other small machinery which should be made available to the small farmers, can hardly ever be found by the small farmers, but, rather, certain certified individuals seem to be able to get the lion's share of the up-time use of this equipment.

As I said, I do not know these things to be absolutely correct but I think the Minister has an obligation to explain to this Honourable House, if these things are so, why they are so.

My colleague has raised a question of the construction of an agricultural station at Spring Hall and I really have a little difficulty. If I may go to Christ Church. I understand that one of the stations we have in Christ Church is supervised by persons who are not qualified in the area of crop research and crop development. I am told, for example, that a fisherman heads one of them. I am not saying that there is no crop research under the sea; I know that there is a lot of development going on these days on growing crops underwater, but I do not believe we have reached that level yet in Barbados, and I am not prepared to go into any detail on that. I am just giving that as an example of the kind of complaint which has reached us on this side about the ability or otherwise of the Ministry, in the face of the claims made from time to time in public statements by the Minister, to keep the commitments which are made in those public statements.

I am concerned, too, that from time to time in the newspaper we see that the Chinese are involved in crop development – we see this on a fairly ongoing basis – and yet one does not hear of any results of that involvement.

I remember that sometime ago when the Taiwanese were involved in Barbados, for a short time we had an indication of new crops which would grow in Barbados, and grow in profusion, and I recall very well seeing a type of watermelon which was developed while the Taiwanese were here. It seems, though, that as soon as the Taiwanese departed, all of those new crops departed as well, and the Government made contact with the Communist Chinese – perhaps I should not say "Communist Chinese", because the Government does not ever have any contact with any communists at all; I had better say with the Republic of China or the People's Republic – and they trumpeted to the population that we were going to be getting a substantial amount of technical assistance from the Chinese.

Would the Minister be so kind as to give us the extent of that technical assistance which has reached this country so far, which would be the substantial benefit from that celebrated trip which the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the then Minister of Agriculture made to mainland China sometime ago, and from which we were promised a substantial improvement in our non-sugar agriculture as it related to products which were produced in China and which would be developed here in Barbados?

I have not heard anything about it, but that may have been a result of my own ignorance, although I read the newspapers every day. It may very well be that there is a report which spells out all of this in meticulous detail, which is lying somewhere, and may have even been sent to me and I have not seen it. But I have a keen interest in this sort of thing, and I would really appreciate if the Minister could outline for us some of the benefits which have come from the Chinese connection.

I saw in the papers, just last week, one or two Chinese gentlemen who will be involved in a species of crop. That was the first time since the trip that I have seen anything of the kind, and I really look forward to hearing from the Minister what he intends to do.

4.05 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The talk of China makes me think of tea.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I believe that a little Chinese tea would not be out of order, and I understand Your Honour's position.

I do not think it is proper, but if it not wrong, I will move that Your Honour do now report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for 15 minutes.

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.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

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. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, if the honourable Minister could turn his attention to Subhead 1, the last paragraph is very interesting – for institutional study of the Ministry, a vote of $275 000. That section of the subhead has really signalled something, and I would invite the Minister to tell us fully what is involved in the institutional study of the Ministry. One would, from the mere outline of the subhead, seem to think that there are some major problems in the Ministry which necessitate a special institutional study for which funds have been allocated in Subhead 1, and I would be grateful to the Minister if he could enlighten this Chamber on what these institutional problems are.

Subhead 3 – Peanut Central Demonstration Plot. Some time ago, at Oldbury plantation in St. Philip for over a period of about five years, they had gone very much into peanuts until they had almost mechanised the whole procedure from planting to harvesting, and they eventually went out of peanuts. In one of my conversations with the proprietor of that plantation, I got the distinct impression from him that, despite the fact that he had mechanised the peanut industry, it still was not viable, but I note here that there is to be a demonstration plot, for which $126 000 has been allocated in the subhead, and I would also like to know from the Minister if further studies have been done on the viability of the peanut industry in Barbados, if they are going to introduce new species of peanuts, and if there is anything further about additional mechanism of the industry that would be taking place.

I was privileged to see a Government Information programme some time ago on the harvesters and other inputs, and it was said that the machinery would be available to small farmers for planting and reaping the peanuts. But I think that this would be not really for small farmers but farmers with a fairly sizeable lot of land, since the size alone of that equipment would indicate that it is not really viable on one acre lots or thereabouts. I would be glad if I can know for my personal information and that of my constituents, what size lots would be viable for peanuts, what sections of Barbados would be best suited, and what variety would be recommended.

I want this information because it is a fact that all agricultural farmers, particularly farmers in the St. Philip area, have been having extreme problems with the extension officers. I know this for a fact. I try to grow a few citrus in my backyard, and I myself had called the Home Agricultural Station on no fewer than three occasions to come and have a look at some blight I had on some grapefruit trees and some lime trees. If they went it was not drawn to my attention, and there is always somebody at the house who would be able to tell me if they had been. If this is the type of reaction I get from the Ministry, if the people's representative has been treated that way, I believe it would even be more difficult for other small farmers to get these services. I would like to know what is happening, and what assistance we can expect from the increase under this Head.

Under Subhead 4 – Agricultural Marketing – I am going to talk a little bit about marketing in the fishing industry. Within recent times, there have been some good fish catches – on my way to home I pass through Oistins and have been fortunate to get some fish at some fairly good prices recently – but there is very much discontent among the fishing boat owners and the fishermen of Barbados about the marketing of fish in Barbados. What has happened is that over the last couple of years, a number of what have been called ice boats have been introduced. The number that has been given to me is eighteen; they are called ice boats for want of a better name. These boats, very much with the knowledge of the Trinidad Government and the Coast Guard of Trinidad, have been fishing off some of the fishing grounds of Tobago and recently, they have been making some very good catches of flying fish.

One of the owners told me that every time his boat puts out to sea, it costs him some $2 000, $1 500 in

diesel, some $540 for ice – which is a little bit surprising to me, because I did not realise that ice would have cost him that amount of money – and about $180 for food for the fishermen. Recently, when flying fish got as cheap as sixteen cents each, it demonstrated to me that they would have to bring in some thirty thousand-plus flying fish before they started to make a profit.
4.35 p.m.

Also, the day boats, as they are called, have been having further problems. These are the boats that go off to the banks on mornings and come back in in the afternoons, and they used to be some arrangement whereby the ice boats would not come in to clash with the day boats. But with the increase in catches, the ice boats have been coming in at any time now, and when the ice boats come in and catch the day boats, there is a glut of fish on the market.

It is very good that housewives are able to get fish at a very good price, but it is also a fact that if the industry is not viable, the same fish they are now getting at a good price, they would not be able to get again, because the people who are now in the industry will go out of the industry. In one of my discussions, it was brought to my attention that the Ministry had promised to explore some markets for the fishermen, and had mentioned that there was the possibility of a market in England, but when they checked the freight to England, it was so expensive that that was not feasible.

Not only that, but they were having a problem with cold storage costs. Sometime last year, during the season, one company that was formed had nearly two thousand pounds of fish on cold storage in an effort to remove the glut situation and hold the fish until the market was a little better. But because of the cost of the cold storage, they found that even when they came back on to the market at an increased price, this was not very feasible. They are very concerned about getting an outlet very soon, particularly now that they have big boats, for which the Barbados Development Bank has advanced most of the money.

There seems also to be another problem between the boat owners, the fishermen and the fish vendors. The problem between the fishermen and the fish vendors has resulted in fishermen themselves doing their own selling at Oistins. This is causing a lot of hard feeling between the fishermen and the fish vendors.

The fishermen feel that the mark-up by the fish vendors is usually too high, and that they are getting even more out of the operation than the owners of the boats and the fishermen themselves. I can testify to this, because I went to get some dolphin, and the vendor told me that she had bought it at $2.00 per pound and was selling at $3.20 per pound. When I calculated it, I discovered that it is standard that they put on a 60 per cent mark-up.

If this is so throughout the island, I think that their mark-up is certainly too high, because when one compares the efforts put out by the two parties, one realises that the fish sellers come down on afternoons about 3.00 o'clock and, at the latest, by 8.00 o'clock they are going back home – all they pay is a small levy to the market – as against the fishing boat owner, who has these different expenses to which I have referred, and has to pay the fishermen, if he is not fishing with it himself. When you take the end product and you look at the costing of the end product, having taken out the expenses, you would find out that the fishing boat owners and the fishermen very much have a reasonable grouse and someone in the Ministry of Agriculture should look into it.

Subhead 5 provides for Irrigation. I have not seen anywhere else any talk about the Rural Integration Scheme, so I should like to bring it up under this subhead, because I do not see it in any other section of the Estimates.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: You are asking too many questions.)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, I would give way to the Minister, if he has something to say and then I would continue.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr, Chairman, this debate is taking place within the framework of the discussion of the Capital Estimates for the Ministry of Agriculture. I think it is best to begin by pointing out that in the year ahead, the year for which we are providing money, the sum of $18 524 403 would be provided under Capital, which represents an increase of some $7.3 million on last year's figure of $11.1 million. The provision here sought, of some $18 million, will enable the Ministry to maintain its current programme of facilitating and encouraging agriculture in Barbados, and will also allow us to embark on some major activities during the course of the year ahead.

The main expenditure will be in fisheries development, agricultural diversification, including fruit orchard development, peanuts and onions, marketing, irrigation and fertilization, and training and information programmes. These will also be the major areas of activities.

In the area of fisheries development, we propose to spend $2 315 000. This has got nothing to do with the funds which we are expecting from the IADB in relation to the Cheapside Fisheries Project, and the money from the European Development Fund in relation to the Speightstown Fisheries Project. Apart from these two major projects we will also be carrying out an upgrading and improvement of the facilities at the other landing sites, areas like Skeete's Bay, Tent Bay and Conset Bay.

With relation to this area of our activity, the repair and the upgrading of the landing sites, the sum of $44 207 is being provided.

In relation to Skeete's Bay, for the benefit of the honourable Member for St. Philip North, the light at Skeete's Bay will be fixed, the jetty at Conset will be repaired, and other repairs will also be carried out at Skeete's Bay and Tent Bay. They are all provided for within the figure of $44 207.

Turning to the Ministry of Agriculture Headquarters at Graeme Hall, a specific question was directed to the Administration Complex, resulting from the Explanatory Note which says:

> "The provision under this Subhead covers the cost of completion and improvements to the Administration Complex at Graeme Hall, Christ Church, and for institutional study of the Ministry."

As to the question in relation to the building itself, insofar as it has reached, whether it is completed, whether Mr. Gardner is still advising the Ministry, whether the solar cooling system is working and generally, what is the money needed for, honourable Members should know that it is now some three years since we have been occupying the building at Graeme Hall; it is one of two buildings in Barbados which are not cooled by conventional means, but by solar, the other is the Government's Lab at Culloden Road.

We did have some early difficulties, but the solar cooling is now working well. The position is, however, that it is on a time-clock, and every afternoon at 4.30 p.m., the time that the normal civil servant goes home, it goes off. So if you have to be working late then you have to rely on your air-conditioner or no cooling at all, but from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. within recent months the system has been functioning fairly effectively.

It is too early to say whether we have realized any savings by introducing solar cooling. The early indications are that it is no less expensive than reliance on conventional methods. But, equally, it is no more expensive, although I should point out that $30 000 was provided for its maintenance and upkeep.

If I may break down the subheads in relation to the administration complex, they are: building maintenance, $35 000; construction of a storeroom, $30 000; consultants' fees, $25 000; solar cooling, $35 000. That is a total of $125 000, and then we have the institutional study for $150 000.

With respect to the construction of a storeroom, I should mention that one of the deficiencies of the building is that no provision was made for a storeroom. After we have been there now for three years, the need for a storeroom is quite pressing. A storeroom is needed for government files and the Ministry's records and documents, for the solar cooling parts, which we have to keep in supply, and for other equipment which we have about the Ministry.

I should mention that there was a dispute between Miller Bulkley and the Government arising from the construction of the administration building. That dispute went to arbitration, and the arbitrator's award was given about six weeks ago, but, to date, he has not given any reasons for the award. We are awaiting the reasons, but it does look that we will have to come here for a supplementary in order to pay Miller Bulkley, unless the matter is appealed, and appealed successfully. But I just thought I would alert the House at this point that there was a dispute between Miller Bulkley and the Government. We were advised by the architects to terminate the job that Miller Bulkley was doing, and that we did. The matter was taken to arbitration, and a substantial award has been made against the Government. No doubt we will be hearing from them more about that at a later stage.

As far as the institutional study is concerned, it should be pointed out that the structure and the organization of the Ministry of Agriculture has evolved in a very *ad hoc* fashion, with various portfolios being added or removed from the Ministry at various stages. In fact, in many countries that have had the sort of history that we have had, difficulties arose after these countries emerged from dependent status to ministerial status, and then to independence. You used to have technical organizations in the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Highways and Transport, you then had a large administrative complex overtaking the technical.....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation. I would really like to congratulate the honourable Minister. He was unable to get an institutional study of the Civil Service, but he is now getting one of the Ministry of Agriculture, and I know he will get his way.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I must not be distracted, Mr. Chairman, and I will not be.

The point is, the Ministry of Agriculture for a long time has not been performing as effectively, in terms of the delivery of services to the farming community of this country, as it should be, and I think we have all recognized that, both the officers in the Ministry and observers of the agricultural scene in Barbados. In fact, when I was a student at the University of the West Indies doing a course in Public Administration, the Ministry of Agriculture was always cited as a classic illustration of tensions between the administrative officers and the technical officers. There has never been any easy transition to the ministerial system, where you move from a department

to a Ministry in many of these ex-colonies in the region, and in particular the Ministry of Agriculture.

I feel that the time has come when we have to look at the whole institution at the Ministry, the many services it performs, and the areas where it overlapse with other services in the private sector, and see how best we can come up with an improved structure and an improved organization. This study, which will be carried out by some Israeli consultants, is expected to last about six months, and it is intended that, following this study, we will be able, hopefully, to improve the efficiency of the delivery of agricultural services to the farming community of this country.

I have my own ideas. I do not want to anticipate the recommendations of the consultants who will be undertaking the study, but I have always said that systems alone will not determine efficiency. It is important that you have dedicated and professional men in the right slots, who are prepared to work regardless of what system they have, and, to some extent, I do not think that we are as strong as we should be in the Ministry of Agriculture, and indeed in several Ministries in Barbados, in that regard.

I turn now to the question of the proposed establishment of an agricultural station at Spring Hall, St. Lucy. For many years we have had stations situated in St. Philip – Home, St. George – Groves, St. Peter – Jerusalem, St. Andrew – Haggatts, and St. Michael – Codrington. I think that we must regard Graeme Hall itself as a station, there is the Central Livestock Station in the Pine, and in an earlier period not too long ago, we used to have Searles Court in Christ Church. We started the process of rationalising the agricultural stations in Barbados, and we came to the conclusion that a lot of them had outlived their usefulness.

Many observers of the agricultural scene in Barbados, and many of the advisors who pass through from time to time, have told us that Barbados is small enough, with good communications between one point and another, and that a case could be made for one agricultural station in Barbados. Nevertheless, we have settled on four. We have decided to have a station at Spring Hall, as a result of which we are going to be closing the one at Jerusalem, which does not do much anyhow. The one at Spring Hall will be situated directly within the farming community there, and, hopefully, will be far more efficient and effective than the one in Jerusalem, which is situated in a residential area, and where little farming is going on. We are going to be closing Bullens, too. We will continue to have the one in St. Philip, we will have one at Codrington, Graeme Hall itself, and the Central Livestock Station. So in another few years, we would have seen the closure of Bullens, Jerusalem, and Searles Court, which has already, as I indicated earlier, been closed.

4.55 p.m.

Turning to the ADC, a significant sum has been provided in the Estimates for the Agricultural Development Corporation. Part of the funding is needed for severance for approximately 75 workers who have been laid off, as a result of the fact that the ADC has ceased to operate Wildey Plantation, Fairy Valley and Coverley, effective from June 30 of this year. These plantations will be handed over to the Ministry of Housing, but not all of them will be immediately put into housing.

This sum is also needed because the debt position of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation with the Barbados National Bank has worsened. The lock-up in 1983–84 was $1.6 million, but in 1984–85, it is estimated to climb to $1.9 million, an increase of some $300 000.

I should mention that the ADC is now operating River Estate. You will recall that River, which is almost the largest, if not the largest, plantation in Barbados, went out of production about two years ago. We felt that we could not allow such a large track of land in the south-east corner of Barbados to go out of production, and the Government, through the ADC, leased the land from Barbados Shipping and Trading. We are carrying out an experiment on River Plantation for a new form of production, where we are using machinery rather then labour. We are expecting a significant tonnage of canes this year from River Plantation, so next year is the year when we will, perhaps, get the optimum yield as all the land, so far as it is suited for sugar cane cultivation, will be back in sugar.

The corporation's estates are expected to harvest a total area of 731 hectares, an increase of some 73 hectares, or 11 per cent on last year's total. Sugar cane production is estimated at 36 145 tonnes, an increase of 6 290 tonnes, or 21 per cent over the previous year. Total revenue is estimated at $2.8 million, a 30 per cent increase over the previous year. At the same time, the total expenditure is estimated to be $4.5 million, or 10 per cent increase over the previous year.

The net effect of all that I am saying is that the corporation's estates are expected to incur an operational loss of approximately $1.6 million during 1983–84, which is a decline of 13 per cent over the previous year. It should be mentioned that the Government's estates are some of the worst, in terms of fertility, rainfall and richness of the soil, in the island. I think the performance is no worse than the average estate in Barbados. That does not conceal the fact that there is room for improvement in the managerial efficiency – and that

goes not only for the Government's estates like the Agricultural Development Corporation, but for the whole sugar industry in Barbados – there is scope for an improvement in the management and the efficiency of the operation.

I turn now to the Chinese project at the Home, St. Philip. This is really a technical co-operation agreement programme between the Government of Barbados and the Government of the Republic of China. I think they are occupying some three and a half acres. In the first phase of the project, they are testing a wide range of vegetable crops. They are also producing the seeds locally, they are not importing the seeds.

Aside.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: A wide range of tropical vegetables – carrots, beets, cabbage, cucumber, one or two not well known to Barbados – yam bean and the flowering cabbage, which they have introduced in Barbados – and many other tropical vegetables.

The second phase, which has just begun, involves the extension and demonstration of their techniques to small farmers. We have two extension officers in the Ministry who are working closely with the Chinese team, and also with the farmers in the area.

I should point out that the Chinese are emphasising labour intensive systems of production. They are working upwards of nine hours a day, and they are also recycling animal and crop waste as a fertiliser for improving soil fertility. Not all the Barbadian farmers will find these techniques particularly appealing, but they can only demonstrate what they know, and that is what they are demonstrating, with very good results I may add, with this recycling of animal waste, what used to be called, until recently, 'pen manure'. It is not an expression that many people under 30 know, although there is nothing revolutionary about it, but they are employing a technique to a mode of operation which, in some respects we might have passed.
5.05 p.m.

The recycling techniques apart and the heavy emphasis on intensive labour application, the production of their own seeds, I think is something that is important whch we can learn from them, and also the flowering cabbage, which is a new vegetable here, and the yam bean. So in that respect, we are still looking to get something positive out of it.

We will have to wait and see the extent to which the Barbadian farmers will be attracted to the recycling techniques on any large scale, and the extent, too, to which they may be attracted to working eight or nine hours on the land. Even if those techniques were not followed, we would still have gained something from the production of our own seed material, and from the introduction of the new crops, in particular the yam bean and the flowering cabbage.

I turn now to the .....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Before the honourable Member turns away from the Chinese, for whom the country will be forever grateful to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister for bringing to teach us how to recycle animal waste, could he tell us if there is a difference between the Taiwanese approach to this seedling and the product from the other Chinese? I just want to know if there is a continuation of the programme, if the Taiwanese programme died, and if we are seeing any results of what they did when they were here, because the two programmes sound very familiar. I want to know if there is a continuation or if you are starting fresh.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I am not too sure myself, Mr. Chairman, but I will be advised in a moment, and I would want to share my advice with the House what precisely was the strength of the Taiwanese. I know, however, for sure, that when they left, whatever they had brought seemed to collapse with them. We are trying to make sure here that when the Chinese leave here, in another year or two, that at least part of the project which Barbadian farmers find acceptable can be ongoing.

Turning to the question of housing at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project, there is provision for a loan of up to $19 500 for tenants in helping them to site a chattel house on the farm. Thus far, there are seven houses there that are tenanted, and three additional ones are under construction. One of the seven has been moved to the project by a farmer – it is his own house which he has moved there – and six of the seven have been built out of greenheart.

There are funds in these Estimates to get the houses started for farmers in due course. It must be pointed out, however, that a farmer has to qualify under the present system, from a credit viewpoint, to get the loan of $19 500 and, unfortunately, there are some of the nine tenants who are still without houses on the project. Upwards of two of the tenants cannot qualify for the loan, their credit rating is so poor, and I have given thought to the ADC building the house and then allowing the tenants to rent the houses. It might very well be that in the end we may have to do that for at least a few tenants.

We have to be very careful not to allow the tenants to feel that the Government will provide them with everything. There is already, to some extent, that feeling abroad among the tenants at the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme, and I think that we must be careful how we go about providing them with additional facilities at the

Government's expense. They, too, must play their part, and I think that the ones who play their part fully and efficiently are the ones who are going to make the greatest success of the scheme.

A question was raised in relation to peanuts. As you know, peanuts, onions and fruit are crops that we are emphasizing very seriously. We really think that there is a future for Barbados with onions and also with peanuts.

In onions we have two problems. First, we have a short shelf life; our onions do not keep for the two to three months. The second problem is that with the variety of onions we have here seem to be very susceptible to blast, which is a kind of stress disease, manifested in the onions turning brownish-yellow. Work is going on with the assistance of the Israelis in correcting these problems.

In relation to peanuts, and the yield this year was good. We are carrying out experiments in variety selections, its optimum spacing, herbicides and pesticides application and fertiliser. We are also looking at land preparation methods, pest control treatment, and trying to solve the problems connected with alkaline, heavy soils. This year, we are hoping to have in excess of 100 acres under the production of peanuts, and this is one area of our diversification programme for which I entertain high hopes.

The final point that I would like to touch on relates to fishing and the problem of marketing. It is a fact, that the ice boats, and I think they are now in excess of twenty in the water, have made a dramatic impact on fish catches in Barbados. Up to two years ago, we would have, by August/September, to be importing fish from the Virgin Islands and elsewhere. Last year, for the first time, we did not issue a licence for the import of fish until November – and it was for a relatively modest quantity, to be used in the institutions – and when the season started, for the first time ever we had flying fish on ice from the season before.
5.15 p.m.

This year, the season started in glut as a result of the significant increase in the number of ice boats that went into the water. That is not the only factor, but it certainly was one of the major contributing factors, and the fishermen have been complaining about the fact that, except for a few nights, flying fish did not sell beyond $15 a hundred.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has expired.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Just one concluding thought. A major problem of agricultural development in Barbados is now marketing. It is certainly the number one constraint, and arises from the fact that we have so small a domestic market. As soon as you produce intensively, either in vegetables or in fish, you immediately run into the problem that you need to have an export outlet. I have directed the Barbados Marketing Corporation recently to set about working along with the fishermen to find a market for our excess fish.

There are some processing facilities that are being established locally, and I think that there may be some good news to be announced shortly, because we have sent some trial shipments to Canada, where they have been well received, and also to the United Kingdom. I am hearing that Trinidad is interested in upwards of ten tonnes per month of our flying fish, and, up to a few days ago, there was a large distributor from Miami here, but I am yet to get a report as to the outcome of his visit.

So initiatives have been taken by the Ministry, and we are hopeful that we will find a solution to the problem of providing the fishing industry in Barbados with outlets.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, before we move off from the purely agricultural aspects, I am really genuinely disappointed to hear the Minister talking about onions in the terms he has just spoken. These are the kinds of words that were used by Ministers of Agriculture, and to some extent, the Ministers of Trade back in 1973, 1972 and 1971. We had a flourishing onion industry in this country, although it is true that they had problems, and it is true that they had difficulties with the various varieties, but I must confess I have never heard of the Israelis as being experts in onion production. They are experts in a number of things, but I have not heard of the Israelis being experts in onion production.

I would like the Minister to check with his officials and let us get some details on the onion production between 1974 and the present time, because we are talking about a ten year span, and we really should have reached the stage now where we have perfected the onion industry to the extent that we do not have to hear the kinds of words which the Minister just used. I should like to know whether the fact that we have problems in the onion industry is related, primarily, to the type of onions we are growing, or whether in fact it is not that the onion growers themselves have taken the decision that they are not going to continue along the lines that they have started to go in the past?

I formed the impression that growers such as Mr. Bethel had done a tremendous amount of improvement ever since the days when we went into onions in a serious way in 1974. I think that by 1974–75, we had reached the stage where we were producing onions in Barbados upwards of eight months of the year. We would get an early crop in January and we would go through the summer, and we would start bringing in Egyptian onions

in the month of June, as far as I remember, but I could be wrong. The impression I formed was that we had started an evolution towards a type of onion that was becoming peculiar to Barbados.

Now I have the impression that, because of a lack of support marketing and otherwise, the commercial onion growers decided to go out, but the problem was that a number of people who had hitherto not been in onion production got into onion production. These people were primarily marketers of onions. They acquired a few acres of land since the present Government came into power, and many of them, acting on the basis of their relationship with the Government, started producing onions in competition with the *bona fide* onion growers that had borne the brunt of the experimentation stage, and these are the ones who decided to opt out. I think it was in 1978 that we had a glut where everybody and his grandmother was growing onions in Barbados, and then, suddenly, the people who had been doing the experimentation decided to go out of onions. So I am not certain that what the Minister is giving us is correct information with regard to why the onion crop is a problem in Barbados.

I think we really ought to get down to brass tacks on that one.

It is the same with peanuts. We have had four different eras of peanut growing in Barbados. In the early Seventies, one Minister of Agriculture said almost exactly what the honourable Member has just said, and then we had an abeyance of peanuts. Indeed, when we were looking at the rationalisation of agriculture in the region, it was determined that St. Kitts was where the bulk of the peanuts in the Caribbean would be grown, and that was based primarily on information from the Ministry of Agriculture, which indicated that it was uneconomic to grow peanuts in Barbados. During the period around 1974 we started getting importation of peanuts from St. Kitts, but the problem was that the size of the peanuts was so small that nut sellers in Bridgetown rebelled and said that they were not going to be forced to purchase peanuts from St. Kitts.

I believe that the Caribbean needs a rationalisation of its agricultural production, and I believe that it is desirable to the extent that we ought to grow peanuts, but it seems to me that at different times along the way we have been hearing the same story being recycled. That is why I asked the Minister – I do not think he responded and I am asking him again – to give us a little detail about some of the results of the actual crop experimentation, or, as it says here in the Estimates, crop research. I should like this House to hear some of the results. I think the country would feel a lot more comfortable if it can believe that the vast sums of money which have been spent by both Governments in the area of crop research and development is showing some result.

The present Administration came to power on a very strong agricultural manifesto. It will be remembered that they had said that the Ministry of Agriculture was in a mess and that they would straighten it out. I recall very well that the first Minister of Agriculture from the Barbados Labour Party was put there because when he was in Opposition his strictures against the Ministry of Agriculture had promised that if he, or indeed his Government, could ever get an opportunity, agriculture would take off. He did not, apparently, get a chance to settle down. Subsequently, we had the honourable Member for St. Andrew, who came in and sought to demonstrate that agriculture was now in proper hands. I need not recite the whole story. I just want to jog the memories of the honourable Members on that side and the present Minister of Agriculture, who apparently attempts to approach the issue from a public administration point of view, believing as he does that most of the difficulty in the Ministry has to do with the bottlenecks in the administration, and is now finding himself in a situation where he has, largely, to repeat arguments that were put in this House some considerable time ago. I think that eight years after you have had responsibility for agriculture, we are entitled to some finite results; we are entitled to hear.

5.25 p.m.

I formed the impression that the honourable Member is admitting that the agricultural policy of the Government has been, let us say, in some respects, a total failure. I am not even going to jump on that and say, "cheers", because, if it is so, that is no comfort for anybody, in Barbados.

We have spent too much money, and we have had too much rhetoric about what was going to happen to agriculture. We heard about the cutting up of agricultural lands under the Democratic Labour Party, and we heard about the recapturing of those agricultural lands, and now today, we have the Minister saying that the Government had decided to pass the agricultural land back to the Ministry of Housing.

I am not certain that you ought not to put out a sign and say to the people of Barbados, "Any of you who feels that you can run this Ministry of Agriculture, come and get a piece of land and see what you can do with it." Because when my father used to grow tomatoes on a plot which was about the size of this chamber, we grew so many tomatoes in those days that I had become allergic to tomatoes; we used to eat them continuously.

And we had a couple of pigs and we used to recycle the waste then, and that was a long time ago; that was over forty years ago. We have reached the stage now, after all the experimentation, a substantial number of professional officers, sixteen different changes in the ADC, and eleven different studies. All kinds of attempts

have been made by both Governments; but, more particularly, a lot of promises have been made by the Barbados Labour Party, both out of power and, especially since they have come to power, and what we are hearing from the Minister today can only be described as an apology.

I am not happy that after we have reached the stage where we were becoming self-sufficient, to the extent that it is possible in a country of this size and in a climate of this kind, in a large number of non-sugar agriculture products, that we are at the stage today when we are having the same kind of discussion and the same kind of rhetoric that we had in the early seventies. I submit to the honourable Member, without my going into the kind of detail that would turn this into a purely political debate, that the honourable Member takes the Debates of the Estimates for 1970–71, 1971–72 and 1972–73, and he will see that his arguments, his statements and his information are almost identical with what was said then.

It may very well be that the area which you have interfered with the most is the one area that had offered us hope, I speak here of the experimentation with the Development Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, and I am speaking of the Development Division of the Barbados Marketing Corporation.

I have lived to see that, in 1984, ATCO, BASIS and the Ministry itself are all now repeating a number of programmes that were already in place in 1974. For example, the collection of produce at the source is a programme which was in place in 1974, 1975.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: How much did it cost?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Considerably less than it costs now.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Oh?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Record will show it. The concept of marketing in the areas where the product was produced is another programme that was put in place.

I admit, as I have said before, that you cannot experiment, develop and do research and have a bottom line profit margin at the same time. But because a number of people, who had the same designs, were able to put forward the concept that the private sector can do certain things better than the public sector, a lot of the experimental work which the officers in the Ministries attempted to do and which was tried, fell by the wayside because of outside propaganda.

For example, the Barbados Marketing Corporation shut down the supermarket on the Princess Alice Highway.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: That has always worried you.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will tell you why. In that concept, even though it might not have been managed in the best possible way, was provided an outlet for a certain kind of farmer.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: At what cost?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: At a cost that may have been too high in quantitative terms as analysed by a certain kind of economist, but at no higher cost than it has taken for us to discover, via technical assistance, that you can recycle animal dung.

The point I am making is that the cost of paper may even have appeared sufficiently high to qualify for the strictures of the honourable Member who is now Minister of Agriculture. But what we have lost is gaining the expertise of marketing our own products in the 20th Century concept. As a result, some people in Barbados, who saw the positive aspect of that programme, have now re-opened in the exact spot that had been identified as not capable of inducing a certain level of production, and those people are making a substantial profit.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, just let me wind up.

All I am saying is, when we are adjudging agriculture, we are going to have to start looking at other criteria than the ones we use. And we are going to have to stop fooling ourselves about certain aspects of agriculture.

I do not believe that an institutional study is going to help us to move any farther, although I am not saying you ought not to have it. What I believe you need to do is to go back to the stage where you had a certain inspiration from people like Bethel, the Merrymen, and those people who took the trouble to get involved in non-sugar agriculture and who worked on the farms themselves.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of matters which are agitating my mind. The first one, which I should like an explanation from the Minister on, is the question of appointing a Commissioner for Vacant Lands. I have tried to figure out what the function of this particular gentleman would be from time to time. I understand that he receives a very substantial salary. In the parish which I have the honour to represent, he has been known not only for his political ineptitude, but also as not being a very successful farmer.

I also understand that he is the receiver for at least five or six sugar estates, particularly in the eastern side of the island, and the salary which he receives as receiver of those estates exceeds the salary of the Prime Minister, which means, therefore, that it has to be astronomical.

Laughter.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I do not know whether a person who is Commissioner for Vacant Lands has a commission, a staff, and what the productive aspect of a vacant lands commission would be in this island. I thought you would appoint a Commissioner to see about getting the lands into production, but just to give somebody a salary to be a Commissioner for Vacant Lands is something that I have never really figured out, and I have not read any activities in the newspaper which come from that particular gentleman.

I want to go very briefly back to the Extension Services Programme at the Home and places like that. The people from the Republic of China, the non-Communist side of China – not the People's Republic but the Republic of China – did a very good job. I have been to one or two exhibitions at the Home and other places in which they really produced something and inspired the present proprietors in St. Philip and Christ Church to adopt some very good agricultural practices.
5.35 p.m.

Searles Court, particularly, was a joy to behold at one time. We have some kind of youth training programme going on up there, and, like a lot of land which was formerly controlled by the honourable Member for St. Joseph, it has recently been growing 57 different varieties of Devil grass. On the Gibbons Boggs Road, if you turned left to go towards Thornbury Hill, there was a very nice stretch where there was another very good experiment going on. A little desultory farming is going on, but I should like the Minister to look at it very carefully, because it is in his constituency. You have some fowl farms, but the whole of that stretch, almost from Long Bay right down to Gibbons Boggs, is an area which I feel that we should encourage people to do a little more intensive market gardening.

I want to see agriculture really get going in this island, but right now, he has observations to make and we do not know what is happening; the Minister does not seem to know himself.

I remember on one occasion the then Minister of Agriculture applied for more staff, and in the Establishments, we looked at it. We discovered that there were 471 people working in the Ministry of Agriculture – I am not speaking about the labourers – and the Minister was applying for some 56 more people. So far from getting the 56 additional hands or technologists, or whatever he chose to describe them, we reduced his Establishment by 40 or 50.

A lot of technocrats are resigning. I was telling my colleagues this morning that I had a problem with some bees. They were not killer bees, they were an unusual kind of bees but they were making honey, and I could not get to my sheep because the bees were nesting in a place where I kept the feed. I rang up the Ministry, and eventually someone did arrive, I must say that, which is beyond the call of duty in other Government departments. The advice which the gentleman gave me about getting rid of the bees – I thought somebody would arrive with a helmet and some kind of thing like a flame thrower, or something like that, to smoke out the bees – was that I should lick them with a stick. That is the level of expertise that we now have in the Ministry. I am afraid even to pass there, far less to go attacking the bees with a stick, and there are some 3 000 of them.

That happened this morning. I hope that is not symptomatic of the general level of technical advice that you are getting as Minister from your technocrats. I turned and ran, because when he started to lick them with a stick, I was not going to be there, and I tried to get here by 10 a.m. That may sound like a funny story, but it is true.

I do think that it is time that we really get down to agriculture. There is no point in speaking about agriculture all the time and everybody criticising agriculture, paying out a big lot of money and nothing really is being done about it. We were regaled with a story from the now Minister of Housing, when he was Minister of Agriculture, that we in this small, tiny island of ours, blessed 366 square miles were going to supply dairy products to the People's Republic of China, a vast continent with one thousand million people. If they ever had a census, it would probably be more like 1.5 billion people, but Barbados, where you cannot get enough milk for the tourists during the season, was going to export dairy products to the Republic of China. People will not take you seriously if you go around in that kind of way.

I think everyone in Barbados would like to see the cost of agricultural products come down like cabbage came down within the last eight weeks from $4.00 per kilogram to 77¢. That is what the man in the streets really wants to see. Carrots came down, cabbage came down, beans have gone up to $4.50. If you look at Basis at night, you will see that there are areas where we cannot produce. At one time we were selling onions and carrots to the rest of the CARICOM. We are not doing anything like that now. The onions that we are getting locally after all of these years are rottening in the center, because people, I believe, are cutting off the top for seasoning and not allowing the onions to

dry. To tackle this problem we had bought dryers and had them up at what was then Codrington Agricultural Station. We do not hear anything more about onion drying. We do not know what is being done about it. That machinery is probably rusting out somewhere.

The Minister has a big job on his hands. We wish him luck, but we are concerned about the cost of living, and we do not like eating out of tins. I try to avoid eating out of tins. I try to grow various vegetables in my garden. I have a surplus of egg plant right now, but I do not sell them; I try to give them away. The Minister can pass and get some, they are of excellent quality. It is really not worth my while to drive out my gasoline to sell ten pounds of egg plant.

Everybody in this island should try to do what the Israelis do and plant something, even if it is a pepper tree. If you have a pot, you can plant a pepper tree. I know a gentleman in the Grenadines who sells gear to fishermen. He has little pots made out of concrete and he grows iceberg lettuce and all kinds of things; all around his verranda he has his own kitchen garden. I think if the Minister has a thrust like that, to encourage people to plant every little piece of land, we will be a lot more self-reliant.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by contrasting the systems employed by the Taiwanese and those employed by the Chinese. I am advised that the Taiwanese agricultural system has a western cultural orientation. They use more agro-chemicals, chemicals for weed and disease control, and inorganic fertilizers. In addition, they emphasize small scale equipment, such as tractors and ploughs. The Chinese, on the other hand, emphasize natural systems; inter cropping, crop rotation, and the manual removal of weeds and pests.

I am in agreement with the Right Honourable Member for St. John, who just spoke, when he talked about what was happening in the Gibbons Boggs area. It is unfortunate, because about ten years ago, when Minister Morrison was Minister of Agriculture, he held out the hope then that that area of Gibbons Boggs, between Thornbury Hill and Searles Court, would be able, intensively cultivated, to supply all the vegetable needs of Barbados. The major limitation was that there was an absence of irrigation systems, and the Government spent in excess of $150 000 in trying to give the farmers in that area an irrigation system. The farmers were supposed to provide on their own a matching sum of about $60 000, and they were never able to do it. As of now, that area known as Gibbons Boggs is now only partially under cultivation. The Rural Development Project has identified that as an area that will be brought under their programme, and we are hoping that the technical problems from which they are suffering will shortly be corrected.

5.45 p.m.

The story that the honourable Member gave about the beans is an important one, because it provides an insight into the material with which we have to work, in some respects, at the Ministry. The Ministry is very much like the curate's head – good in part. We have, on the one hand, very professional and outstanding officers, and, on the other hand, we have some that fall far below that standard.

I am happy to report that the claims made by the honourable Member for St. Michael West with respect to the decline in agricultural production are not substantiated by the figures. Last year, we had an increase in the production of yams, cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage and of carrots. I have already alluded to the significant increase in fish catches.

A lot of the variables in agriculture are not really within the competence and the control of any Minister of Agriculture, or the Ministry itself. A few years ago, the Right Honourable Member for St. John made a statement in here to the effect that God was the best and perhaps the only Minister of Agriculture, and there was widespread laughter. I myself at that point insufficiently understood the extent to which you are at the mercy of the elements and other factors.

For example, we have no control over whether or not we get into the regional market with our agricultural produce, and that has been a significant factor in the decline of onion production in this country. There was a time, up to 1977, when for a period of about four months, we used to supply a considerable tonnage of onions to Trinidad, but, all of a sudden, they have deprived us out of that aspect. They prefer to get their onions out of Miami and from elsewhere. The result is that, in the absence of an export market, many farmers have decided not to go back into onion production.

The marketing problem aside, it is not true that we had never been able to grow onions for eight months of the year, or that we had ever licked the problems of blast on the one hand, or short shelf life on the other. We now believe that we are making significant headway with these two problems, and we are looking forward to having eight months of production very shortly in Barbados. Those two problems of short shelf life and blast have been with us for a long time past.

Trinidad is not only the principal regional market for manufactured goods, it is also the principal regional market for agricultural products, and notwithstanding the assurances which were given to me personally by the

Minister of Agriculture in Trinidad a year and a half or so ago, that he would have allowed us to have access for our cabbages, carrots, ground provisions and tomatoes, we have not, within the last year and a half, got in excess of T.T. $25 000 to T. T. $30 000 in produce into Trinidad. We have demonstrated that we can distribute and sell the same Barbadian tomatoes in Trinidad for something like T.T. $4.00, but notwithstanding that, they are determined to bring the tomatoes out of Florida and sell them in Trinidad for $9.00. So we are not only at the mercy of the elements, we have no control over access to other people's markets.

In relation to sugar and other crops that are sold on the external market, we have no control over the movement of currencies and the effective devaluation of the currencies with which we are paid.

I believe that the shadow Minister of Agriculture would like at this late stage to make his contribution, and I am prepared to give way for that.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT (St. Michael North East): I shall not be long, Mr. Chairman. I am a little disappointed in certain areas of fruit and vegetable production in Barbados, and I would like to know what the Ministry of Agriculture is doing, if indeed they have come up with the answers to the problems surrounding the disappearance of pawpaws. I spend almost every week in the market place looking for pawpaws, and, to my surprise, there are none whatsoever. Also, I think there is a great demand for this commodity within most of the hotels, since we are trying to satisfy some of the guests with local produce, and most of the hotels have to resort to tinned fruit.

The Ministry of Agriculture for some time has been experimenting in the St. Andrew area with some varieties of grapes. A few years ago, it seemed to have been going very well, and I would have thought that by now we would have been seeing a greater amount of grapes being used. Sometimes one sees a quantity of them, but then they are sold at exorbitant prices. I believe that the weather here in Barbados is conducive in producing these in larger numbers, and I would certainly like to know if there is any thrust being put into the production of grapes. Again, this would indeed satisfy some parts of the tourism market.

Sometime ago, I went to a Chinese shop, and I was very surprised to see the variety of tropical fruit which they have been able to successfully market in the United States. I made sure that I bought what was labelled "cane juice". On the label of the can was the sign of the cane with its full arrow and everything, and this came from the Philippines. I said to myself that if there was one thing Barbados could copy it would be canned cane juice, but having purchased the cane juice after deciding to sample it, I was disappointed in what I found to be the "juice." It was what one would call very bad sweet water, it was of very poor quality. Our cane juice, I believe is superior to that, but the idea to market it, is not a bad one – to find markets.

I think that where we are falling down is in the marketing of agricultural produce. This is not meant to be critical of the Minister, because we know that he has taken the Ministry of Agriculture by the scruff of its neck and he is trying to come to grips with the problems that have been confronting not only Barbados, but most Third World and developing countries, including the other islands of the Caribbean.
5.55 p.m.

I think that we in the Caribbean are producing enough fruit and vegetables that we could really feed people and find extra-regional markets. When you look at Grenada with all its spices, when you look at the surplus of bananas in the Caribbean, what are we doing with them? What better use can we find to utilise bananas than by sending them to Britain? Is there not some source of energy in it. There is a quantity of surplus bananas on the market.

I think that the time has come when we will have to look at the concept of gasohol. I say this only because my feeling is that the developed countries have no direct interest in sugar cane, and for this reason they do not have any great thrust put behind the cultivation of sugar in Europe, or in the United States, for the production of energy. I feel that if the Brazilians have made any success in the production in another energy source from alcohol, we, as a developing country, can utilise that technology to see if we can capture the secret of producing gasohol or any other form of energy from the sugar cane base. What is important is that we must consider that sugar cane is replenishable. It is unlike oil, and we could continue to cultivate sugar cane, if it is a useful source of energy *ad infinitum*. There would have to be a beginning at some time, and the Minister of Agriculture and, indeed, all Caribbean countries could seriously look at this.

Many years ago, not so long ago, back in the 1970s, I remember when certain plantations were ploughing onions back into the field because there was a scarcity of markets. I had a chance to go to Brazil and I saw things as sensible as onion juice; there was an export market for it. Also, there was a direct market for the use and utilisation of very small onions. These are industries which could be developed for a number of people on a small basis, so I would not really panic and say that there are no markets available. It is just a matter of seeing who are not doing what with their produce.

Grapes, pawpaws, even cashews are things which Barbados grew without any effort many years ago.

They have almost disappeared. I have a bottle of cashew juice which I brought from Rio. It is really good, and we can cultivate another industry out of that. We have to seriously look at other-ways of doing things. Why should breadfruit not be canned? There is no reason at all why it should not be canned. We have an industry in yams going, there is a market for it, and we need to get back into these things.

The Ministry of Agriculture has undertaken a massive job in trying to find outlets for the various products, but it really needs time. I would not want to criticize the Minister for any failure in any way, because I think that he has done a good job.

Flying fish come on stream and suddenly there is a scarcity of it. There is a marketing problem. It can be frozen. It can be canned or smoked, why not? Quite shortly, as I said earlier this week, there is going to be a new concept in the arriving of passengers and berthing of ships here and one of the things that they specifically told us they would be eating is fish. They need flying fish, dolphin, any kind of fish, any quantity of fish, and I would hope that the Ministry of Agriculture, in its marketing strategy, would try to find good sources for all those tourist liners that come to Barbados with a view to selling them good Barbados fish. That is an outlet for the surplus of fish.

I would like to see a few more sugar apples again in Barbados. Why should we be importing pineapples from Trinidad and Martinique? Why can they not be seriously cultivated here in Barbados. We heard of the 57 varieties of Devil grass and perhaps they could look at a way of marketing these, and there is a very good industry in bees. Rather than 3 000 bees attacking, I would like to see us attack the hives and produce some kind of honey from those 3 000 bees that ran the Member for St. John.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): I think that, periodically, we should come back to earth. One of the great problems that we have in this area, with whatever we produce, is the question as to whether we can compete in the markets where we will try to sell it. That is the fundamental problem. If we try and we look at our experience out of the LOME Convention where we have little hurdles to overcome and get access to the market, you will find that you are competing with Kenya, Senagal, Israel and a number of producers of what is called "winter vegetables."

I do not care what anybody says in here. Given the wage rates in Barbados, our present method of production and our yield of production, we are uncompetitive in relation to them. So, therefore, what we have to get at is a change in our method of production, or a change in the varieties to increase the volume in relation to our cost, and that is what research will do, if it is at all possible. It is very easy for us to say that we can produce, that the problem is marketing. Of course, the problem is marketing, but the point is at what price you can place the particular product in the particular market, bearing in mind the competition that you have to meet.

It is exactly the same thing with sugar, and it is exactly the same thing with gasohol. If the cost of production of gasohol in Barbados is such that at the present moment it cannot compete in relation to other competing products, what is the point of producing it? You only produce it if you do have a market for the alternative use of the same raw material, or if you have such a service.

6.05 p.m.

Now bananas. It is well known now that there is a case before the European Economic Community Court of Justice that it is possible to bring bananas in from South America into Europe at a much cheaper price than from the Windwards and Leewards. Compare the wage scales in the countries in South America with even the wage scales in the Windwards and Leewards, which are much lower than they are in Barbados, and you will see. So either we are going to select a small number of commodities in which we are reasonably competitive and concentrate our effort on them for the export market, or we would have to look for other uses and other areas to concentrate on.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Sweet peppers is one of these crops. How much a year can you get for hot peppers? Derby Hutchinson of Ecaf could not convince the Barbadian farmers to grow peppers for him, nor could Luther Miller – it is only now that they are getting a bit further. They cannot convince the Barbadian farmer because the Barbadian farmer wants a farm gate price of such a magnitude that the processor cannot make much money out of it, and a processor is not going to put in the capital investment if he cannot get a reasonable return. If there was all this money in peppers, the honourable Member would be growing them, because he likes money, and the honourable Member is not growing them.

It is the same thing when you come to the livestock industry. We definitely have made some advance in the pork industry. There is a reasonable level of protection that we can give to these products, but I believe that the farm gate price of milk in Barbados must be the highest in the entire world, the per litre price, and at that they say they are not making money. Some progress, however, is being made with a number of commodities, and it is no use the honourable Member for St. Michael West saying that no progress has been made, because, as the Minister said, if you look at the statistics, you can see that there has been an increase in the production of

a certain selected group of commodities, with which we have a reasonable possibility of being competitive.

There are two other points I should like to mention. One is that if Spain and Portugal become members of the European Economic Community, increasing pressure is going to be put upon our access to a market for certain vegetables. Peppers is one of the areas.

Secondly, there is some hope that, by continuous persuasion, the Caribbean Economic Community will get a rational system of protection *vis-a-vis* third country imports into the Caribbean, and thereby allow a modified system of free trade within the Community in respect of agricultural produce. Even Mr. Burnham, the President of Guyana, at the last Heads of Government meeting conceded that after twelve to fourteen years' experience both with CARIFTA and CARICOM, the state trading organisations were nothing but a bureaucratic hindrance to the movement of agricultural produce in the Caribbean. He, the arch state trader, accepted the fact that you should allow the development of non-state trading organisations in agricultural trade.

The method of third country protection is going along now, and we hope that at the next Trade Ministers meeting, in May, we will be able to make a specific recommendation in this area to the next Heads of Government Conference. The Agricultural Marketing Protocol is finished.

The last thing I am going to talk on is fish. Nobody has tried harder than the Minister of Agriculture and I to get a market for our flying fish. But when you do a cost analysis of the end product of our flying fish, you had to sell it virtually as exotica in some of the markets, because the problem is that three unboned flying fish weigh a pound, so when they are boned you need ten; and the price to bone them varies between eight cents and fifteen cents, so the boner gets in fact more than the boat owner and more than the fisherman. So even if you buy them at 15 cents a piece – three fifteens are forty-five – then you have to pay for boning – and if you pay 12 cents for boning, that is 36 cents – the end product is 50 cents. I know the people who are actually in the business of processing them, and I have gone through the whole exercise with them.

Mr. Chairman, between your buying price, your export price, and the processing cost – that is to gut them, head them, scale them, bone them – it costs 25 cents; so if you buy them at 8 cents and you have to pay 25 cents, it is 33 cents minimum. That is all right if when you degut them and so forth three weighed a pound, but it takes ten at that stage and when you come now to sell them by the kilogram, you have to look for 24. The loss between the original weight and the final product is exceptionally great, so to market them in the United States, the United Kingdom or Canada, if you have to pay freight, you end up having to ask Bds 40 cents to 45 cents per fish as a minimum price.

So when the Leader of the Opposition says that he pays in Oistins, or wherever he buys them, 50 cents a piece boned, he is correct; but to export them and you tell people that they must pay 45 cents for one of these, if ten weigh a pound, you are talking about $4.50 a pound. You can argue that it is pure protein, talk about the packaging and everything, but they will look at you and tell you that they can get boneless cod at $US1.80 a pound. They ask, why should they pay more for Barbadian flying fish than they pay for boneless cod? That is one of the problems we have, so we have to come right back and look at our costing again.

As I said, the only way you can get it done is if you are going to sell it as exotica. The economics of it in the United Kingdom appears to be better, because in the United Kingdom they were accustomed to importing them with the heads and bones, and apparently the offer is that they would pay 35 cents for one of them. That is easy, but we still have to compete with Brazil and other countries, so we must not fool ourselves. This ought to be a good lesson for the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, because he believes that cost of labour has no effect at all on the economy. He believes that there is no such thing as wage pull and labour cost inflation.

I understand that the Germans have a machine that can do thousands of flying fish – they had it in Trinidad – but the problem here, as I understand it, is that it handles the flesh of the fish so roughly that you lose quite a bit of the fish quickly through deterioration. I do not know whether the modern refrigeration methods have improved since that has been dealt with, but we are working very hard on these things. It is easy to say people must buy Barbadian flying fish, but you have to get at the markets where you can sell.

6.15 p.m.

Progress has been made in ham, bacon, and progress has definitely been made in fish processing, particularly for ourselves. Progress has been made in sweet pepper production and a few other areas. But I hope that when we are discussing this matter, honourable Members will bear in mind that a lot of time and a lot of effort is going into trying to see how we can select that narrow group of field product that is suitable for our soil, and which is also competitive in relation to our competition abroad.

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

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member who just sat down wandered far and wide,

Senegal, Mauritius, all over the place. But apart from the last section of his speech on issues, I contend that he did not address the problems facing agriculture in Barbados.

The honourable Member for St. Michael North East (Mr. L. L. Sisnett) made a very good speech. Everyone in Barbados knows that the greatest problem in Barbados today in agriculture is marketing.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Why?)

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: You cannot have a good marketing system unless your extension system and your marketing system are working efficiently.

The honourable Member for Christ Church East Central talked about competition from Senegal and all over. At this present moment, I believe that the problem in Barbados is to feed our nation. After you have started to feed your nation, and after you have generated a surplus, then the problem of that sort of competition comes in.

Generating a surplus in agriculture is very, very important. But what incentive is a farmer going to have to generate a surplus, if the marketing system is no good? How is he going to get his product sold? Where is he going to get it sold? Where will he get a guaranteed price for what he is selling? Therefore, everything hinges on your market. In fact, recently, there have been many seminars in the Caribbean to see how they could generate a sort of Caribbean market for produce in this area.

But you have to start with your own local market, and I will give you an example. A couple weeks ago, I was on Bay Street, a chap passed me in a Suzuki van and he stopped and he told me that he was given concrete words by ATCO that they would buy his produce from him. He told me to look into the back of his van, that he had just come from ATCO with a van filled with okras and they did not take them.

I will tell you what the problem is, and this has to do with marketing. A farmer is not going to produce more unless he is convinced that the risk is less, and he is not going to produce more unless he is sure that he has a guaranteed market. It is okay to say that Senegal competes with Barbados, but we need a surplus in Barbados; we need to stop the importation of things that we can produce here.

On the question of the extension officers, the Right Honourable Member for St. John mentioned a case which he had with one of the extension officers. I personally do not know if it is because of the quality of the extension officers that the service that they give has fallen. But time was in Barbados, a couple years ago, when you would hear on the radio that there will be a meeting of such and such a body at St. Martin's School, or some school, to which farmers were invited. When last have you heard this? This is the complaint, because it is not happening. I do not know if it is because of the quality of the extension officers, but people are not going on to farms and demonstrating to farmers what and what not to do. These are the areas that you have to look at, extension services and your marketing.

The Barbados Labour Party made a song and dance about the Democratic Labour Party taking lands out of agriculture. My information is that the present Barbados Labour Party Government is planning to take Wildey, Coverley and Fairy Valley, these three plantations, and hand them over to the National Housing Corporation. I should like to know what is the total acreage of these three plantations that are being given over to the National Housing Corporation. In fact, my information is that Fairy Valley is being given over to horse racing. I believe that at a time like this, when you need your maximum amount of agricultural land to produce for your local population so that you could stop importing, to give away good agricultural land is defeating the whole purpose for which you have been put there.

I believe that this Government has recognized the need for seed, fertilizer and so forth, but I would like to see credit to small farmers made more easily available. This has been a complaint for quite some time. Farmers are saying that they are having difficulties with getting credit. They are also saying that they believe that the cost of fertilizer should be reduced. I do not believe that the Government has much leeway in reducing the cost of fertilizer, but I believe that the Government has some sort of leeway in making the availability of credit to the small farmer more easily available.

I have stated in here on many occasions that agriculture is a special field, and, therefore, it demands special attention. Economists say that agriculture suffers from a price cost squeeze, which means that you have to give the price that is given to you. And after you have produced, you have to sell it at the price that the people give you for it; otherwise, you will have to throw it away or it will perish. As such, I believe there is a case for treating agriculture specially.

As I have said in here before, I have never heard about a sale on fertilizer or manure. You have to take whatever price is given to you. When you produce the tomatoes and the yams and so forth, if you do not take the price that the demanders give you, you have to throw away the cabbages and the tomatoes, as has been done in Barbados before, where one plantation owner discharged a lorry load of carrots in the middle of the road. So I believe that a plea has to be made to treat agriculture as a special

project. Make credit available to the small farmer, and see if you can do something about the cost of fertilizer.
6.25 p.m.

People are complaining about the price of the fruit trees. They are saying that fruit trees have gone up from about $1.00 up to $7.00 and, therefore, they cannot buy them. These are the sorts of complaints I am getting, and I believe the honourable Minister of Agriculture needs to look into these areas.

I go further – the extension officers.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have one and a half minutes.

Mr. H. BLACKMAN: I have not covered quite a few areas, but I believe the honourable Minister of Agriculture has listened to what I have said. I will say that I know that there has been an increase in the production of agriculture this year as compared with 1981, when there had been a reduction in agricultural production of 21 per cent.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Minister will have exactly six minutes to wind up after which I will have to put the question.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we were glad to hear the shadow spokesman on agriculture – I think it was perhaps the first time during the course of debate this week – but I am sure that he is not particularly helpful. He told us that marketing is the key problem in agriculture, with which we fully agree, but he proceeded to say that you cannot have a good marketing system unless your system is working properly. In so saying, I think that he only succeeded in restating the problem, and, unfortunately, he did not offer us any solutions.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Mr. L. L. Sisnett) raised the question of the pawpaws. As honourable Members are aware, it is now three years since the pawpaw in Barbados, and indeed in several countries in the region, was suffering from a virus disease. We made a heroic effort to identify the virus that the pawpaw was suffering from; we could not get any help from the plant pathologists in the region, and as a result, we sent samples of the disease pawpaw to West Germany for identification of the virus. The virus and the virus-like agents have now been identified. We know that they are fade motle, distortion ring spot, mild pawpaw mosaic virus, and bunchy top.

There are basically two techniques for the control of the virus. We could either control the vector, that is the carrier of the virus from one plant to another, or we could set about breeding virus resistant varieties. The Ministry has, for the most part, opted for the second technique, and we have been importing virus resistant varieties from Santo Domingo. We have some two and a half acres already planted at the Ministry of Agriculture, Graeme Hall, and we have a half acre of virus resistant varieties in Haggatts, St. Andrew. We are very hopeful that very shortly we would have successfully licked the problem which has befallen pawpaws in recent years, and that we are going to have pawpaws on our table once again.

With respect to grapes, the Grape Production Project was really a project executed by a private company out of Venezuela with Italian origin. The Ministry of Agriculture was only lending support to the company by multiplying the plants, testing growth, and also identifying suitable varieties. In recent times, the company has been showing a dimenished interest in the project, and insofar as we have grapes now, they are being used by a few households who seem to be interested in the grape vines, but we are not pursuing the grape cultivation on any commercial basis.

I do not think that the ecological conditions here in Barbados are particularly well suited for grape production, and it raises an important question which has been touched on by the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, that is, that it makes no sense with small land space pursuing everything that can grow in a technical sense in Barbados. What we have got to do is to identify a few groups that are particularly suited to our conditions and where we have some comparative advantage. It seems to me that it was totally misconceived and a scatter-brain proposal to grow grapes in Barbados on any large scale. That is not a matter which will be pursued by the Ministry of Agriculture.

I just want to say, in conclusion, that we have had some successful trials of pineapples, and we are hoping this year to put in some ten acres of pineapples, and both in respect of sweet peppers and hot peppers we have been having a modest export market over the last two years.

The question that Head 74, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 10 – GOVERNOR GENERAL – $268 104

The question that Head 10, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 11 – JUDICIARY – $36 173

The question that Head 11 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 12 – PARLIAMENT – $1 128 668

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

HEAD 13 – SERVICES COMMISSIONS DEPARTMENT –$300 525

The question that Head 13 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 14 – ESTABLISHMENTS – $4 713 482

The question that Head 14 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 15 – CABINET OFFICE – $1 681 092

The question that Head 15 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 16 – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – $342 403

The question that Head 16 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 71 – CAPITAL – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – $350 000

The question that Head 71 – Capital – stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
6.35 p.m.

HEAD 18 – AUDIT – $257 614

The question that Head 18 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 19 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING – AS AMENDED – $5 866 734

The question that Head 19, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 20 – REVENUE COLLECTION – $3 421 876

The question that Head 20 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 21 – STATISTICS – AS AMENDED – $218 714

The question that Head 21, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 23 – LOANS AND ADVANCES – $2 020 587

The question that Head 23 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 24 – PENSIONS – $10 100 000

The question that Head 24 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 73 – CAPITAL – MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING – AS AMENDED – $62 956 750

The question that Head 73, Capital, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 25 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS – AS AMENDED – $11 109 933

The question that Head 25, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 26 – CO–OPERATIVES – $99 720

The question that Head 26 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 27 – METEOROLOGY – $1 289 578

The question that Head 27 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 55 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS – $9 317 630

The question that Head 55 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 77 – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE– MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS – $1 795 000

The question that Head 77 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 36 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH – AS AMENDED – $53 642 672

The question that Head 36 as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 78 – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – MINISTRY OF HEALTH – $9 571 772

The question that Head 78 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 38 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE – $4 772 089

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

HEAD 80 – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE – AS AMENDED $6 850 947

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

HEAD 39 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL SECURITY AND SPORT – AS AMENDED – $16 856 310

The question that Head 39, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 81 – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL SECURITY AND SPORT – $2 850 000

The question that Head 81 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 40 – MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY $5 500 786

The question that Head 40 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 82 – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY $9 700 000

The question that Head 82 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 41 – MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM – AS AMENDED – $19 371 821

The question that Head 41, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 83 – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM $4 324 745

The question that Head 83 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 50 – ANNEXED ESTIMATES – POST OFFICE – AS AMENDED – $3 771 916

The question that Head 50 as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SCHEDULE – AS AMENDED – $486 325 770

The question that the Schedule, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 as amended was called and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendments, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

6.45 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, this brings us to the end of this item. We normally take a break at 7 o'clock before we adjourn. There are only two items on the Order Paper and I would like to do as much as we can and free ourselves of them. I discussed this with my colleague today.

There is the Cable and Wireless (Amendment) Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the Income Tax (Amendment) Act, which came down from the Senate and with which my colleagues are familiar. I would rather do the one that came down from the Senate if there is no objection.

I beg to move that this House do now agree to the amendments made in the Senate.

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

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

CABLE AND WIRELESS (WEST INDIES) LIMITED (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1984

Order No. 10 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Cable & Wireless (West Indies) Ltd. Act, Cap. 275.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I do not think that this need any discussion at all. It is for $3.6 million, which my colleague is well aware of, which has been moved in.

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

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

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

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

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive were called and passed.

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

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

RESOLUTION RE 3.6 MILLION FOR 10% OF SHARES IN THE BARBADOS EXTERNAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD.

Order No. 11 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the borrowing of the sum of $3.6 million from the Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Ltd. for financing the purchase of 10% of the shares in the Barbados External Telecommunications Ltd.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: This Resolution is for $3.6 million. I have discussed this with my colleague and I see no problem with this Resolution.

I beg to move that this Resolution be now approved.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, in moving that this House do now stand adjourned, I do not propose to say anything that I think would be contentious, so we should not have any debate on the adjournment.

It has been a debate where both sides worked towards the interest of the country. No doubt, there has been a number of political points being scored. I told my colleague on the other side that he would be out-gunned and out-foxed. He said he did not think he was out-foxed, but he admitted being out-gunned.

I would like to pay tribute especially to my colleagues on the back bench who have done a remarkable job and have made my task much easier. I have not got to say very much for my colleagues on the front bench because their work on the front bench over the past seven years is well known.
6.55 p.m.

I, however, could not leave until I said a special word, and I know this probably seldom goes from a Member on one side to the other side, in respect of the honourable Member for St. Philip North, because of all the speeches which came from that side, I must say that his speech on housing was one which had quite a bit of depth and content, and I thought he set the tone on that day, which made the debate a very interesting one, although he was matched with the fire and fury and the good thoughts of the honourable Member for St. Andrew, the Minister of Housing. That does not detract from the contributions of other honourable Members, but I do think that the honourable member for St. Philip North made a very worthwhile contribution in respect of housing.

To the Hansard Reporters, the Clerks, the staff, the police, all honourable Members and the civil servants, we thank them all for seeing us through the Estimates.

We have heard the Budget reply already, though it has not been introduced, and we look forward to the Budgetary Proposals and, no doubt, the hustings.

I would like to thank my colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for all the co-operation which he has given me from that side of the House, and also the Chairman of Committees, whom I have already spoken to, and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With those few remarks, I beg to move that this House do now stand adjourned until Tuesday, April 3, 1984, at 12 o'clock noon.

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

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few brief words. I should like to join with the Leader of the House in the words that he has said, of course not those words which reflect unfavourably on the Opposition in any way or upon myself. I should like to say that I believe that co-operation is part of the function of this Honourable Chamber and we will co-operate with the Government in those areas where co-operation is in the national interest. But, of course, we can co-operate, because we realise, as indeed we have demonstrated during these debates, that while we co-operate, we can always out-debate the Government, as we have done during these Estimates.

I should like to join with him, however, in thanking the staff and all of those involved in these debates. I would hope that by next year we might have in place a particular procedure for dealing with the Estimates whereby we can have at least two Committees going and different sets of Estimates may be referred to different Committees so that we can get an even greater amount of work done. I believe this can be to the greater efficiency in our task of scrutinising the Estimates of revenue and expenditure.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Just one brief word, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not wish to prolong the Honourable House, but I could not let the House adjourn without taking note of the very gracious comment made by the Leader of the House about one of my colleagues on this side. I share the view which he expressed, that the speech was one of the highlights of these Estimates, and my only profound regret is that not a single word of that speech has so far appeared in any section of the written press of this country. It is most unfortunate, but such are the vicissitudes of this business we are in.

The question that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 3, 1984, at 12 o'clock noon, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

7.00 p.m.

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BOLDEN, His Honour C. L. (St. Joseph)
BRADSHAW, Hon. DeL. O. (St. Michael South East)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. L. B. (St. Andrew)
BRATHWAITE, R. E. (St. Lucy)
CHELTENHAM, Hon. Dr. R. L. (Christ Church East)
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HAYNES, Dr. R. C. (St. Michael South Central)
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