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# THE

## House of Assembly Debates

### (OFFICIAL REPORT)

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SECOND SESSION 1981-86

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#### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Tuesday November 27, 1984.*

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

#### PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Speaker)  
His Honour R. E. Brathwaite, (Deputy Speaker)  
Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House)  
Hon. H. B. St. John, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry)  
Mr. L. E. Sandiford; M.A. (Econ.)  
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)  
Mr. B. M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.), M.A., LL.B. (Hons.)  
Hon. L. R. Tull, Q.C., M.A., (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs)  
Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social Security, Sport and Community Services)  
Mr. L. L. Sisnett, (Parliamentary Secretary)  
Hon. A. Truss

*Prayers were read by Fr. D. Stapleton.*

*Hon. H. deB. FORDE entered the Chamber and took his seat.*

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

#### MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, the 6th day of November, 1984.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of the 6th day of November, 1984 be taken as read.

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

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

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I am in receipt of Accounts and Statements for the month of September, 1984 prepared by the Accountant General.

I am also to announce that the Clerk of Parliament has received from the Cabinet Secretary a notice dated 26th November, 1984, and it reads as follows:

"I am to inform you that on 23rd November 1984 His Excellency the Governor-General received from the Returning Officer for the constituency of St. Peter the Writ which had been issued for a bye-election in that constituency, certifying the election, in the poll held on the 22nd of November 1984, of Mr. Owen Seymour Arthur to serve as a Member of the House of Assembly for the said constituency of St. Peter.

The oath of allegiance required by section 59 of the Constitution and section 62 of the Representation of the People Act, Cap. 12, was taken by Mr. Arthur on the 24th of November, 1984, before His Excellency the Governor-General and members of the Cabinet.

(SGD.) F. M. BLACKMAN  
Cabinet Secretary."

I am also to announce that Mr. Owen Seymour Arthur of 31 Oxnards in the parish of St. James in this

island did sign the Declaration of Qualification and did swear the Oath of Allegiance as is required for a Member to sit in this Honourable House. I now therefore invite Mr. Owen Seymour Arthur to take his seat in this Honourable Chamber.

*Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW and Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN entered the Chamber and took their seats.*

*Mr. OWEN ARTHUR, escorted by Hon. H. deB. FORDE and Hon. L. S. CRAIG, entered the Chamber and took his seat.*

Mr. SPEAKER. Owen Seymour Arthur, it is my duty and my pleasure to welcome you to this Honourable House of Assembly. I am sure that you have gained some experience from the Other Place, but in this Chamber there are lots of rules and lots of pitfalls. I hope you will take great care in learning the proceedings of this House, and I hope that you will contribute to the debates generally that take place in this Chamber. Thank you.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, I want first to thank you for your kind and encouraging remarks. As I speak today, I am very conscious of the long history and the fine traditions of this Chamber, and I pledge to you that I will endeavour to be faithful to those fine traditions.

Sir, I must let you know that I have the honour to represent a constituency which holds your office in the highest esteem, and I shall in my conduct do nothing whatsoever to discredit the esteem in which your office is held.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Cheers.*

#### PAPERS LAID

Hon. L. S. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay on behalf of the Acting Minister of Finance and Planning the following:

Statement of Return of output of Locally Produced Spirits during the quarter ending September, 1984.

Financial Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for 6 months ended 30th September, 1984.

The Consumption Tax (No. 2) Order, 1984.

Hon. L. R. TULL. Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay.

The Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year 1984.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay:

The Auditor's Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Board of Tourism for the year ended 31st March, 1984.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

A Resolution to approve of the lease of land at Grantley Adams International Airport, Christ Church to Jennifer Atkinson Ltd.

A Bill to amend the Defence (Amendment) Act 1984.

A Bill to make provision for Income Tax and other concessions to foreign sales Corporations established in Barbados.

#### FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

*On motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, the following Bills were read a first time:*

A Bill to amend the Defence (Amendment) Act, 1984.

A Bill to make provision for Income Tax and other concessions to foreign sales Corporations established in Barbados.

#### ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 5 asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael South is now ready.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

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

#### 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.

I can assure Members on the other side that I will make provision for Question Time.

There are some matters, if I may add at this time, which may be coming down to the House and I may be asking the House to deal with these matters in all their stages.

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

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

12.30 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Order No. 2 be the instant Order of the day. I have been advised by the Clerk that the appropriate papers have been circulated, and the appropriate notice was given, so I hope that Members on the other side would have the necessary papers to deal with this matter today.

*Order No. 2 was called – To move that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of this island.*

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a procedural point. The Order Paper does not include any Order No. 2, and I think before the item can become Order No. 2, there should be some statement that that be Order No. 2, or something to that effect.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have in my book a document headed "SUPPLEMENT TO ORDER PAPER, No. 27 – Tuesday, 27th November, 1984" with No. 2 and No. 3. No. 2 is one of the Resolutions which were circulated under the special Order Paper.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: We have not received that supplementary Order Paper. It is now being circulated, Sir.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: What you are worried about is that you do not have the Order Paper. You are now receiving the supplementary Order Paper, but you have already been circulated with the item. That is the important point. Do not mind the little procedural matter. You have the matter which we are going to deal with now. If you did not get that, I would be concerned.

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

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1984–85 No. 18 HEAD 42 – MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS

##### SUBHEAD 8 – TRANSPORT BOARD – ITEM 1 – SUBSIDIES

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON (St. Michael West Central): Mr. Chairman, the purpose of the Resolution before the House is to seek supplementary provision of \$5 million from the Consolidated Fund to supplement the subsidy to the Transport Board for the current financial year.

This financial year, a new system has been introduced where the Transport Board is getting an additional subsidy, of approximately \$4.8 million, from the Welfare Department, the Ministry of Education and the Police Force. Whereas in the past this sum of money was provided in the Estimates, the procedure employed in this financial year is to collect this amount of money from the agencies concerned at the time that the service is provided. So the Police Department, upon submission of claims from the Transport Board, will then pay into the Transport Board sums of money equating the number of passengers it carried on behalf of that department. This system, while in some measure more efficient, does not allow us to have access to the funds as we would need them, because there is always a delay between the time the submission is made and the time the actual draw-down occurs.

In addition to this, a number of factors have been militating against the Transport Board with respect to revenue. One of these is the fact that at the moment, we are in a competitive position with respect to the minibuses. We are operating 196 minibuses in various routes across the country, and whereas they used to operate at limited times, they are now far more aggressive and work far longer hours, including night hours. There is also the fact that a new category of public service vehicles, those that bear the designation BM and which are intended to operate as maxi-taxis, from fixed destinations, is now actively engaged in coaching, if that word can be used, and they are seen quite openly carrying destination signs, quite contrary to the new Regulations. This is proving to be an additional strain on the revenue of the Transport Board.

From the outset I would like to state that the transport service in Barbados, indeed the public transport service in any country, is intended to lead a significant economic function, which bears heavily upon the economic position of the Government at any given time, since it is charged with the responsibility of getting workers to and from their points of work. It is also charged with the responsibility of getting children to and from school, operating on a subsidized fare basis.

12.40 p.m.

If we are serious about our development objectives, we must recognise that the transport service is one of the mechanisms through which we can expect to achieve maximum economic development. I do not know if this point has been significantly taken in the past. Some people seem to feel that the Transport Board is just a nuisance organisation that ought to be in the hands of private concessionaires for the purpose of operating on a profit basis. The Barbados Labour Party has had to deal with that philosophy in the past. We came to the view that we can no longer expect the public transport service to be a free enterprise business in which the buses are operated strictly on a profit basis, because if that is allowed to go to its logical conclusion, then it would mean that the service which it provides will have to carry some substantial increase in so far as the fares are concerned, with the result that that will militate fairly severely against the kind of economic and social development to which I earlier referred. In the circumstances, therefore, the Barbados Labour Party Government feels that the transport service in Barbados needs to be a subsidised service, and in my mind the only points of debate or consideration is how much subsidy do we propose to give, and how much can be regarded as being reasonable in all the circumstances.

One of the problems that the Transport Board has always had to face, in my view, is that it has never been regarded as a professional service and those inputs that are essential to providing the competent and skilled management which is essential to the provision of an adequate transport service has not always been in place. The result is that we operate buses, and there is a very substantial capital outlay together with all the other ancillary components that go to make a transport service, but we have not always provided the management competent enough to deal with these assets. We have been making a concerted attempt in recent times to deal with this, and we have been recruiting the number of persons whom we feel will be able in all the circumstances to provide the management inputs that are essential.

I mentioned some time ago that we are beginning to recruit persons who have "O" Level certificates and "A" Level as well, and in the public forum some persons took that to mean that we were taking a backward turn. In their view, when it comes to a situation where persons with "A" level certificates would want to work in a transport service, that is a clear indication of society going backwards. I do not know if I should express pity or contempt for that kind of view, but it clearly is a benighted view, and it issues from minds that do not fully understand what transport services mean.

In developed countries, persons in the transport industry are persons who are trained to a very high level of transport management, and it is now possible to get Ph.D. degrees in transport management. When the

Grenada operation was in force down here, I met a young United States Army Captain, a lady 23 years old, and when I sought to find out through what device she was able to gain the rank of Captain at such a relatively tender age, she informed me that she was a transport expert with the military, and was in the process of earning her doctorate degree in transport management so that she could provide a higher level of service in the United States air movement business.

I believe that we have to professionalise the Transport Board in order for us to be able to realise the returns, economic and social, that are commensurate with the kinds of investments that we make both in terms of capital and in human resource. I, therefore, in all the circumstances, consider that the Transport Board will not answer to any short term measures, but what we need to do is to structure a sound long-term basis upon which we can bring the Transport Board into the realm of the 20th century. We have started on such a road by the provisions of new and improved fare collection mechanisms calculated to make the collection of fares a safer and a more efficient exercise. The fare boxes, the first component in the installation of a secure fare service, have been installed. The second major component has to do with the electronic fare-counting system which will shortly be in place. This second phase of the total secure fare system will make it unnecessary for the fare to be touched by human hands. What will happen is, the fare as collected by the fare boxes will be brought and will be processed through electronic coin-counting systems which will count, sort, pack and prepare revenue for deposit at the bank.

In addition to that service, we have to provide, and we have started in this direction as well, a system that will make our supply of parts, which is a major component in the transport business, a far more sophisticated system than it was before. We now have all of our parts on microfiche, we have a building provided for us with the help of the Mercedes people in Germany, and that gives us better management control over our parts, which used to be a drain on the transport revenues in the past.

We believe that the efficient handling of passengers will be a means of encouraging more passengers to ride the buses. As it now stands, the convenience of being able to catch a minibus at any point along a course has always been an attraction for some commuters, but I believe that by providing an efficient terminal programme where we have buses properly queuing and people not having to climb over each other to get to the bus, these features will go to improve the total service, because in my view the service provided by the Transport Board is not merely a ride, but it is a ride together with all the other facilities that go to make that ride something that people can look forward to. When the new Fairchild Street Bus Terminal is completed it will cost in excess of

\$3 million, and all this will go to the long term solution of the problems that we have been facing at the Transport Board.

12.50 p.m.

We believe that we have caught this problem. If you were to examine our performance, you will notice that we have been able to reduce the required subsidy from year to year, and as we go down the road, we can reasonably expect that, with more efficient programmes in place, the subsidy as is currently granted will be substantially reduced. But we will have to look realistically at the situation with regard to the Transport Board always having to attract a Government subsidy if it is going to continue to form a meaningful and integral part of the economic and social development of our nation. I can think of no developed country in the world where a transport service is provided without a Government subsidy, be it the Metropolitan Transit Service in New York, the MARTA Transport Service in Atlanta, Georgia, California, Japan or wherever. Long ago, persons who are serious about economic and social development came to realize that mass transport is a serious part of that development process, and that transport services have to be subsidized in order to keep them in an area where they can continue to perform the developmental function that they have to perform.

I believe that my introduction should give Members an idea as to why this subsidy is necessary. I will be in a position to answer any questions in my wind up speech and expand a bit more on the programme of the Transport Board so that Members would be fully aware of the programme which we have instituted and the purpose for which this programme has been put in place.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): We agreed with the Minister when he indicated that the Transport Board provides an essential service in this country because transport, by its very nature, is an economic service, and it is also a social service. It takes people to and from work and recreation, it takes children to and from school, and basically, it is a service without which no country, including a country such as Barbados, can do without. So that particular matter was not in question at all.

What we all wish to see, and we all hope for, is that the service can become progressively more efficient in order to take the commuting public from one point to their destination as efficiently as possible, and as cheaply as possible. When we look at the history of the Transport Board both before 1976 and after 1976, we must conclude that certain areas of the operations of that Board have

not conformed and do not conform to those criteria of efficiency, including transportation as cheaply as possible.

There are factors involved, and successive Governments have attempted to deal with the problems. But we cannot get away from the fact that, year after year, the Government is called upon to provide a substantial subsidy to this public corporation, and that this represents a drain on the resources of the country because if money is paid in that particular way, it is not available for other developmental projects in the country. And when, in addition to the subsidy that goes to the Transport Board, we take the other public corporations into account, we realize that other subsidies have to be put into those particular corporations, and this represents a further substantial drain on the resources of the public finances. It is a major concern that the Transport Board together with what is sometimes called the parastatal corporations constitute a major problem because of lack of efficiency, or lack of management, or lack of capitalization, whatever may be the contributing factors.

(Hon. L. R. TULL: Give us some specifics.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Do you want me to mention the Agricultural Development Corporation? I am steering clear of that one today.

I have not heard what the exact estimate is. I hope that somebody from the Government front bench will be able to say what is the total subsidy that is paid to all of these statutory corporations, including the Transport Board. My estimate is that it must cost the taxpayers in subsidies to these corporations about some \$25 million or \$30 million, including those which have a substantial commercial element attached to their operations. I think this is a matter of major concern.

We admit that in running a transport service there are going to be certain routes which may be uneconomic but which, on grounds of social consideration, must be provided for. It may be impossible, I do not know, having not gone into the economics of that particular matter at this stage, to avoid that. I intend to make a study of that, because I am very concerned about the problem of financing of our statutory corporations. When we take that into account, we have to ask, are we really getting full value for money in terms of the operation of our statutory corporations? Could the services be provided more efficiently by those statutory corporations, or is it necessary for us to take an alternative look at the provision of these services, either in terms of decentralization of some of the operations of the services, or in terms of a new arrangement with private enterprise, in order to deliver those services?

One thing is certain — we need the services. A second thing is certain that in our present economic climate, we have to provide services as efficiently as possible, taking into account all the factors which should be taken into account. When we examine these matters, I must confess that I have to raise some very serious questions as to whether we are getting full value for money. I believe this is a matter that requires some serious consideration.

In terms of the terminus for the buses, announcements have been made about some improvements in that area. We have been hearing about time schedules, I believe, from the late 1970s, and we are still hearing about the time schedules. We hear that there is need for more capitalisation, and I do not think that there is any doubt about that. We hear about the inadequacy of the fleet — all of these are problems. In the end, when we have examined all of those factors, we come right back to the fundamental question are we getting the best value for the funds that we put into our statutory corporations, or is there room for substantial improvement? Or do we have to take a radical, new approach to delivery of the services from those corporations?  
1.00 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Mr. Chairman, the answer to the question posed by the member for St. Michael South is, 'Yes!' We are getting full value for the services and full value for the money with which we are subsidising these agencies. Only since 1976 have we been getting full value, because one will recall a place known as the BMC which threw away millions and millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money every year. I would consider it one of the most scandalous places one could think of that any Government in the world could have ever introduced. The Minister for Transport was at that time Chairman of the BMC, and the banks in Bridgetown would not even give credit to the BMC in the light of the scandalous conduct they had during the regime of the Opposition party. So the answer to that is, 'Yes'.

Just out of a bye-election a couple days ago you were privileged to see buses passing through a place which the Leader of the Opposition called "behind God's back," where you were having public meetings, a place called Boscobel. You saw buses coming out of there at one and two o'clock in the morning, fully licensed and brand new. But during your time you could not get one after four o'clock in the evening. The last bus left for Boscobel, behind God's back, at 4 o'clock. There were never insured, they were not road worthy, and you were still subsidising the Transport Board with millions and millions of dollars.

Today Barbadians can look around proudly and boast of having the best transport fleet in the entire

Caribbean. I say that without fear of contradiction. I am even told that during those days the bus used to get there at 4 o'clock and the bus fare was 65 cents. That was until a man called King wrote a report called the King Report and in 1976 you brought down the bus fare to 25 cents. That is how you respect the electorate of this country — you believe you can fool them — that in an election year you reduced the bus fare from 65 cents to 25 cents — while carrying up the price of gasoline. That is how you respect the very people you gave free secondary education, which you boast about. That is why I will beat you all the time. You cannot respect them. That is the trouble with you.

I have not got to answer about the ADC because that is another scandalous place we have taken over. The answer is on the back bench. Look at that back bench — and the doctor is not even there! That is power behind there, powerful enough to take on the front bench. Look at you, a helpless, drunken, bad-looking Opposition, led by a bad-looking leader. Now you have the audacity to get up in here and ask if we are getting value for the money. We are getting the best value as far as the Transport Board is concerned.

All the ADC lands were allowed to run away in bush, there were hardly any crops. I recall seeing a truck dumping carrots on the road. The Government has now diversified to the point where we are self-sufficient in vegetables. That is the value we are getting for your money, so the answer to your question is, "Yes!"

I know the Member for St. Michael South will be a bit jittery because he heard of certain pronouncements coming from me. I do not say things unless I mean them. It is time for you to go out of here. I am telling you good-bye. I am putting my mouth on you this time. You are coming in here with a majority of 22 votes all the time. You have to come with a big majority now after 15 years.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Transport. Transport.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the cleaners at the Transport Board. That is what we are dealing with.

(Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: You will be gone before me).

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I will go out how and when I feel like going out, but I will make sure I put you out.

Sir, I wish to support this Resolution. I would like to laud the Minister for the outstanding work which he has been doing, and all the Ministers on this side during their tenure of office as Minister of Transport. I recall the now Minister of Housing grabbing the Transport Board by

the scruff of its neck, taking over all of Coward's old buses and all the Rocklyn buses, buses not insured, no third party on them, not road worthy, and you as a Government at that time, having in the Senate the person who had owned the Rocklyn buses. They never paid any insurance or road tax, and now you are here asking if we are getting value for money! I do not know why you put yourself in these things, but you know you said you must say something before 2 o'clock. You should not get into this debate about subsidies.

I hope the other Member's brain is as big as he is. I think he is the shadow Minister of Transport. I would advise him, however, that this team is in a fighting mood. It is still smelling blood, and he had better put his best foot forward as he addresses the Chamber.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Chairman, I want to get in my piece very early. I listened with a great amount of interest to the very conservative and reactionary speech made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South. As a matter of fact, I thought I was listening either to President Reagan or Mrs. Thatcher when he was holding forth as the question of a Government institution to bringing order to the system or going back to the private sector.

I think the Barbados Labour Party can be proud of the fact that it has had the courage in the first place to take over a section of the transportation system in this country, because they did that, and, secondly, to nationalise the whole transport system. I cannot say I am entirely proud, because my whole idea in conceptualising the transportation system of this country is that there would be a single concessionaire — the Government of Barbados. Although the concessions to the Rocklyn and Elite were brought to an end, there are still, as the General Secretary of the Workers' Union said, a large number of other concessionaires. But in my view the Government's ideas and its philosophy of taking over certain aspects of the social life in this country are extremely laudable.

We had the courage on coming into Government to take decisions that the Democratic Labour Party Government never had the courage to take. We have looked at the commanding heights of the economy in terms of our banking system and thought that we should set up our own institutions, and we have therefore brought into being these exercises, these experiments, if you want to call them that. There will be a period of trial and error. No matter what system you devise, unless you have men to put those systems into place and work them properly, you will have trouble.

1.10 p.m.

The Honourable Minister responsible for Transport and Works made some very pertinent points, and I had

thought that the other side would have listened. We have had endless problems in terms of management within the transport system of this country, but I had expected that when the honourable Minister made the motion for this Resolution, the honourable Members opposite would have you, Mr. Chairman, put the question, and said nothing, because their record in transportation in this country is shameful.

In 1976, when the Government took over the public transportation in this country, coming towards 1977, we did it because the people were unable to get from their homes to Bridgetown, and the children to school. No taxes were paid, nothing, not even National Insurance for the workers who were with the Rocklyn and Elite. You allowed a situation like that to exist because the people who operated the buses then were your friends.

The reason why the transportation system has the problems it has today is due to your ill-advised decision to bring in the Seddon buses in this country. We came in and found over 200 Seddon vehicles, and I cannot say it often enough in here. You should get out of this business of discussing transportation, because you had the units on which every three months you had to change their front tyres. Can you tell me that any company could exist in the world running a motor fleet that had to change its front tyres every three months? That would break any bank at all in the world. Successive Ministers in this Government have tried to phase those vehicles out, and even in doing that quite a number of problems were encountered.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South asked about the usefulness of statutory corporations and if Government is getting the value for its money. The Honourable Leader of the House answered emphatically, "Yes!" I want to support him on that — we are getting value for our money.

As far as the ADC is concerned, I know, and there are people who are greater authorities on this than myself, that they are responsible for a substantial part of the foreign exchange earnings which we get in this country as a result of growing sugar cane, and whether you want to see sugar cane grow in this country or not ...

*Asides.*

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I am answering in relation to the statutory corporations. The honourable Member has just run in, or came out of the roof — I do not know. The honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke about statutory corporations, and I am replying to him.

Whether you want to see cane blades or not, and your Leader is on record as saying that he does not want to see any – and you did not disassociate yourself from that statement; therefore, you agree – we will have to have canes for many years to come in this country. It is one of the few things that has continued to keep the soil together, and I would not like to see it go.

The Transport Board serves a very useful purpose. I represent a very rural constituency; and if the Government is not looking after servicing my districts, I do not know if a private concessionaire would be too willing to do it. We have had problems with the Rocklyn. We have had problems in part of that constituency with the Elite as well. They used to run in the Chalky Mount area and the people had the devil's job. You could not get from work after a certain hour. When I came in in 1976, nurses in Bridgetown, students at the University and at other evening institutions were writing me on a daily basis and calling on me to take over the service, because in those days you could not see a bus leaving Bridgetown after 4 or 5 o'clock in the evening for certain routes in Barbados.

The Honourable Leader of the House talked about the conditions of the buses. I could tell you more. In those days you had to use the umbrellas over your heads right in the very buses. Today, it is not so.

We are a proud people in this Government, and the country is proud of the businesslike manner in which we set out to run the institutions that we have taken over and created. We have nothing to be ashamed of. On the contrary, we have all to be proud about. The people in their recent verdict have said so and, and if they have said so, who are you to say otherwise, because they, in the final analysis, are the judges.

We have to subsidize the buses. If you want the buses to pay, you would have to charge the people \$2 per run, which is not possible in this country. Do you want them to do that? It would seem from the arguments of the honourable Member for St. Michael South that he is advocating that bus fares should be increased because the private concessionaire is not.....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. I would like to make it quite clear that in my address I did not raise the question of an increase in bus fares.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I wish to agree with the honourable Member that he did not directly say that. But by implication he meant that. If institutions are not doing their work, it might be a good idea – and these are his words – that you look at the private sector – and the private sector is not going to subsidize any fool. He did not go on to say that the private sector would not sub-

sidize, but, by implication, I constructed his argument to be that you will have a situation that whatever the cost of bus fares, the travelling public will have to carry it.

Mr. Chairman, for some reason or another, a reason which I do not entirely agree with, if at all I agree with it, the feeling abroad is that we will always have the poor with us. Since we will always have the poor, as is said, you must always make provision for them. Those people who do not have their own means of transportation must continue for many years to depend upon the public service. The minibuses in this country can choose the routes that they want to ply and ply them, but a Government has a different role to play. The Government cannot say it is going to only run our buses on the most fruitful routes in the country. I would not want to be part of that Government at all, because they have to go into Belleplaine, Chalky Mount, Hillaby and a number of places like those. There are a lot of places they have to go, and I want to be sure that we have a system in Barbados where, like water, electricity and roads, transportation must be available to all the people of the land, and the Government must involve itself at all levels in areas where people are not entirely able to satisfy their own requirements.

1.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, this is an important Resolution. In my view we should not even have to speak on it, it is so important. I feel they are matters on which you do not need to divide.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, it surprises me that the honourable Member for St. Andrew should feel that we need not debate transport in this Honourable Chamber. Transport has always been a problem. Transport has been a problem in our time and it remains a serious problem in their time. The transportation problems of today, honourable Members on the other side would want us to believe, have their genesis in the previous Government. I have always said this is eight years now since they have taken over the Government of this country, but they are still blaming the problems which they face today in every aspect of Government on what they concede to be the default of the Democratic Labour Party Administration. Are they telling us that after eight years in Government they still cannot come to grips with the problems of the transport system? What are they doing? Eight years is a long time by my reckoning, and if in eight years they cannot come to grips with the problems of transport in this country, that they are saying were so serious in our time, then something has to be wrong with them.

(Hon. L. R. TULL: We solved the problem.)

Mr. M. A. KING: You solved what problem? You have a good bus service, and yet the honourable Member for St. Andrew continues to talk about how they are

still trying to get rid of the Seddon buses, which you claim to be the root of the problem for all time.

Honourable Members on the other side would want us to believe that the Seddon buses have been the problems from way back. They want the country to believe that they have been responsible for the nationalisation of the transport system. I think we ought to be reminded that in the latter years of the Democratic Labour Party Administration, where there were three concessionaires in existence, the Transport Board, the Rocklyn and the Elite, there was the conscious and clear decision taken that the Transport Board would run all the transportation services in the country, that the transportation provided by the Rocklyn and the Elite bus companies would eventually be run by the one transportation authority. What happened was that there was a change in the Government in 1976, and what the present Government did was to complete the programme for nationalisation of the transport system which had already been set in train by the Democratic Labour Party Administration.

It ill befalls them to talk in terms of the problem which existed in relation to the Rocklyn and the Elite services in St. Andrew. We were aware of those problems, and we were coming to grips with them. That is why we had an investigation into the problems, and had a report done, and were in the process of working on carrying the terms of that report into effect. So what they, as they have done in so many areas of Government, have carried the policy which had been started by the Democratic Labour Party Administration in relation to the transportation system.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, on a point of order: I believe by now you must be tired of hearing of the decisions which they had taken, but that the implementation had always been a problem. I would hate to hear this rhetoric all the time. They had decided to build the cement plant, they had decided to do this and that, but they did not do it. We are doers; that is the difference between the two of us. You have always decided and you were about to do!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Mr. M. A. KING: That should be struck from the Record, it is no point of order.

Your side started by saying that we were responsible for the problem, so if I add to that a postscript, a postscript in the context of what you are saying, that that is not so, and that the policy which you follow is the one which we started, that is only putting the record straight. It is putting a record straight which, in my view, you did not complete and did not give the full context of.

#### *Asides.*

Mr. M. A. KING: You are always talking about the old buses. It is time you stopped talking about that and try and address the problems of transport in 1984 and beyond.

From the time you took over the Government of this country you began talking about elimination of subsidies in transport. Subsidies have not been eliminated. Every time you come to Parliament, you say that you are reducing the subsidy. In the Estimates you do not put in the full amount of the subsidy, but throughout the year you are coming back with supplementaries asking for a subsidy to be granted. What does it show? What are you trying to do? Someone might say that you were trying to fool us, but I would not accuse you of that. What you are demonstrating is clearly a lack of planning, shoddiness in your planning. Because if you are saying that you are trying to minimise the subsidy, and whenever the crunch comes you are going to come back for a subsidy, and by the time you add them up they probably come back to the same thing, where are you standing?

I was not here for the Minister's opening statement, but I understand that the Minister made reference to the fact that institutions like the Welfare, the Ministry of Education and the Police Force would pay as the service was provided for them, and that to some extent the fact that a subsidy is required, and the fact that there was a deficit, can be accounted for in that regard. The fact is that throughout the history of transport in Barbados, school children have always used the school buses and the Police and Welfare Department have always used the transport system. In fact, in our time the pensioners were able to use the system any time of the day; they did not have to wait for specific hours to make use of the transport system.

1.30 p.m.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: They had to pay.)

Mr. M. A. KING: They did not have to pay. Pay what? The fact is that there are no new dimensions in these areas spoken of by the Minister. The Ministry of Education, the Police, the Welfare Department, all of these were areas which ought to be addressed and paid attention to by the Minister in his planning. These cannot be any new issues which have arisen, which can underscore and provide the justification for the need for the Minister to come to Parliament for a subsidy at this time. If he is not aware of the critical problems which these areas can create, something has to be wrong with his planning. It shows shoddiness, a lack of understanding of what he is doing and a lack of commitment to the job which he has at hand.

Another aspect of the statements made by the Members on the other side which concern me is that you

do not know what policy they are pursuing in relation to transport. We have made this point from time to time. We hear them talk in one breath about the nationalization of the system, about the need for subsidizing it, and in the other breath you hear them talking about minibuses operations.

The Minister talks of the minibuses being more aggressive and thereby impinging on the revenues of the Transport Board. This, again, is not a new dimension. It is as old as they are, so years ago they would have known that the minibuses were in operation. The fact that the minibuses have become more aggressive, if they have become more aggressive, should also mean that the Transport Board should become more aggressive in its business. Are they going to sit back and say, "The minibuses are more aggressive and therefore we are going to throw our hands up and come to Parliament for subsidies and let Parliament do the rest for us." If you are talking about competition — and your policy has been to encourage the mini-buses, because you have provided loans for the minibus operators to buy buses and to improve their fleets — you must be paying regard to increasing the role of private enterprise in the transport system. This is why I am saying that you are bringing in an element of confusion in your policy. What are you saying? You have to tell us. Are you saying that your policy is one for nationalization of the transport services? Or, are you saying that you are gradually releasing the transport system into private enterprise? Is this the reason why you were saying in your earlier statement that you are going to reduce the subsidies because you conceive it to be your policy, as time goes on, to reduce the role of the Transport Board and gradually allow private enterprise to take over the whole transport system?

The point I am making is that whatever view you have of public transport, you have to make your position quite clear. You have to set out your policy guidelines clearly. You have to state what your own position is and then follow your policy, based on what decisions you have the courage to take, as you say you have, whether it is one of the nationalization of the transport services entirely or whether you feel that you want to release it into private enterprise. So let us not hear all the high and mighty phrases about what you have done. You are talking strongly about nationalization, but yet there is no nationalization. Where do you stand on that?

(Hon. L. R. TULL: We are talking of service. Deal with service.)

Mr. M. A. KING: Tell your honourable colleagues that, because the people of this country need a proper service to get to and from work. That is what they are not getting.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Would the honourable Member state if the service in 1984 is better than it was in 1975? If the bus service today.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. That is not a point of order. I cannot have two honourable Members on their feet.

Mr. M. A. KING: If Government and the progress of a country do not improve from year to year, something has to be seriously wrong. Have you improved since 1975?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, I have. I have improved my vote from year to year.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what does the honourable Member stand? Please. I cannot have this. Order, please.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, irrespective of what honourable Members on the other side say, the problems of management of the transport system have not been entirely dealt with; they have not entirely come to grips with the problems of management. Until recently, we have had the ridiculous situation where, whenever Ministers changed, you had a change in management. That has been one of the critical problems of the Transport Board. We were carrying the American system a little far. A Minister changes, so you rake up the whole administration and move it with the Minister!

What sort of progress in the transport administration can you have in a country like this which is not accustomed to that form of Government? If that is the new dimension which you want to introduce into your transport system, you are going to have problems. That has been at the root of the problems of the Transport Board, and unless you come to grips with those fundamental problems, you are going to find that you are going to have difficulties and be requiring subsidies. You are not going to know how your monies are properly spent and you are not going to know why you are in the difficulty in which you are in.

I am talking about administration. I am talking about buses in Boscobel until 1.00 and 2.00 o'clock. Was that a convenient arrangement for recent times? I do not know.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The answer to that is, "No. Sir."

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

Mr. M. A. KING: It must be only recently that the Transport Board buses were able to come out of

Boscobel, because recently you were importing buses which could not even climb the hills. They could only run on the straight roads from Bridgetown to St. Philip.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member is incorrect in saying that the buses could not come out of Boscobel. It was Mrs. Rock's buses that could not come out. You are getting mixed up. Mrs. Rock's old diesel buses, not the Vikings and the Mercedes Benz.

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, I am speaking quite clearly and positively about Mercedes Benz buses in 1983 which could not climb the hills in St. Andrew. Are you not familiar with what is going on in the Transport Board?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you saying that buses climb the hills now?

Mr. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, are you asking me questions? I am talking about buses which had to run on the level roads only.

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Come out of the sun. You are tired.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.  
1.40 p.m.

Mr. M. A. KING: Those buses could not move out of St. Michael and Christ Church. We all know that. I make this point to underscore the very essential point I am making, that if you have confusion, a lack of clarity in your administration, like the inability to get the right buses, like the moving of administrative staff whenever you change Ministers, you are having problems with the Transport Board, that if you do not get the fundamentals right you will continue to have problems, and you have to blame yourself and nobody else for the problems which exist.

*Mr. B. M. TAITT rose.*

*Hon. H. deB. FORDE rose.*

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Member is not fast on the draw on that side, Sir.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is a question of who caught my eye first.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have no doubt what is going to happen now, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member is obviously not fast on the draw, Sir. I think he is still suffering from the medicine that was dished out to him in the north.

Mr. Chairman, I have really listened with great care to the speeches made by the honourable Members for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) and Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King). I honestly cannot understand what is the contention of the Opposition in this debate. As I understand it, the Opposition is supporting the Resolution for a subsidy for the Transport Board. I take it that the Opposition considers the subsidy to be necessary, and considers the subsidy to be in order. In fact, I would be surprised if the Opposition contended otherwise, because the Transport Board has been consistently subsidized during the tenure of both Governments. The subsidy in the case of the Democratic Labour Party was given by way of a heavy capital grant during their tenure of office, and in fact an indirect subsidy given by way of assistance through school children's fares when the Transport Board came under the aegis of the Public Utilities Board. In short, despite the fact that the Public Utilities Board fixed a price for a journey on the bus, the Government of the day had to subsidise that price to the Transport Board, and to satisfy the private concessionaires it then paid block grants as a subsidy for the school children travelling. So the concept of a subsidy is a well recognised thing in the history of transport in this country.

The Minister is to be congratulated on the fact that during the last three years he has sought to reduce the subsidy, particularly in so far as the current expenditure of the Transport Board is concerned. The subsidy has now fallen from the high of \$15 million in 1981-82 to what will possibly be about \$10.2 million this year. So he has reduced the subsidy, or we hope that at the end of the year the figures will show that the Minister has reduced the direct subsidy given out of the Consolidated Fund by at least \$5 million, 30 per cent.

Despite the fact that we have had an increase of wages and an increase no doubt of some of the other concomitants that go into the transport system, whether it be an increase of tools, an increase of lubricants, I think that the Board is showing that it is being more efficiently run. No one can gainsay the fact that today there are less complaints from the consumers about the transport system than there were three or four years ago. No one, either from the rural areas or from the urban areas, can gainsay the fact that there are now more services available in the transport system than there were four years ago. In some respects we probably have a duplication of services or services that are probably too frequent. I will revert to this a little later in my speech. Obviously, therefore, the Government's planning must be succeeding. That is not to

gainsay that there are still some problems in the transport system. The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central is normally very fair in debate, but surely he cannot seriously urge on this House that the Government in eight years could correct all of the defects that existed in the transport system prior to 1976. There are some defects that are cumulative in effect and although they may have begun in a minor way, at the end of the day they would take a tremendously long period of time to correct.

The Government would have found it difficult, given the competing requirements of our community, to accord the capital cost of refinancing the Transport Board in capital stock and at the same time dealing with the plant necessary for an efficient transport system. Transport is not just the question of a bus, what is referred to as the rolling stock, and a few people driving it. The Government must be able to provide the other things that go along with the buses — proper headquarters, what we call transport bays, where the buses can be driven in and attended to without any problems; sufficient rolling stock so that if a bus breaks down in Mile and a Quarter it is possible to send a replacement engine, lift that engine out, have the bus back in service within 20 minutes without tying up needed capital, and have the defective engine attended to in the normal course of things.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Point made).

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member is talking to someone who has spent from his childhood in transport. There is only one member on the floor of the House who has ever helped run a transport system and it happens to be me.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: At age nine. Tell them!)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am not saying it by way of boasting. I will not tell the honourable Member that I helped at age nine, but at a sufficient age that I understand at least the economics of running the bus system in Barbados, and successfully too.

That type of defect could not be corrected within the period of eight years. The honourable Member knows that. If we look at the bus stands in this island, is the honourable Member going to say that that is not a problem in transport? But obviously the Government, because of the competing needs of the community, would not have been funded within itself, in the absence of massive borrowing, to have satisfied all of these needs, including a proper bus stand, in order to make it easier for people to operate at terminals, neither indeed to find a new headquarters building for the Transport Board, nor sub-headquarters.

We believe that the Government probably has to have a long term planning, which it is undertaking, on the Transport Board. Honourable Members in the Opposition have criticised the Transport Levy. They are mistaken in their approach to the question of the Transport Board. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is not in his place, so I do not want to engage an absent Member in debate, but it is proper that persons in the country who use the road system contribute towards the overall transportation case. People like me who may not travel on a transport bus should make an indirect subsidy in that way to the maintenance of a proper road system and the transport system. So there is no defect that I can see in the Government's long term planning, but I believe that some of the Government's plans will take time to have effect and to provide the maximum satisfaction possible.

1.50 p.m.

There is always room for improvement in managerial skills, not only in transport but in almost every aspect of both the private and public sector today. I am sure the Minister and the Board must be very conscious of this, and have been taking positive steps to improve the managerial systems of the Transport Board. The Minister has not spoken about the training programmes being undertaken on the Board, but I know of them, and I want to congratulate the Board and himself on this policy of improving the skills of the workers, whether it be the drivers, the conductors, the inspectors, the people who paint. There are several courses going on all towards improving the managerial and supervisory skills of the workers who form the backbone of the transport system. So it is not only the physical plant and the physical stock which are being improved, Government has also paid attention to the human resources.

The honourable Member spoke of Mercedes buses that could not climb the hills. The tort was not properly placed. Let me explain it to the honourable Member, he does not understand it. There was no basic defect in the Mercedes buses. It was that the gradient of Barbadian roads has been the highest experienced by bus companies in Europe, and that was corrected within a few months, at the cost of the company itself.

There is a difference between that problem, which occurred for a short while, and the problem which occurred with the Seddon buses. The Seddon buses were totally unsuitable for the climatic and other conditions in Barbados, and therefore when honourable Members on this side speak about the Seddon buses they speak about them in the context that the decision to import the Seddon buses was fundamentally an incorrect one. No one can say that about the Mercedes buses, which have been giving outstanding service, and which, as part of the

rolling stock, have a greater longevity and better satisfactory performance record than some of the other buses which have been in the transport fleet.

I want, however, to sound a few words of caution in this debate to the Government. Today I reckon that the minibus stock outside of the Government is now between 190 to 200. That is a tremendous amount of money tied up in rolling stock — the Minister will probably give the exact figure. In addition, the Transport Board has its own minibuses. I believe that the Transport Board was late in getting into the field of minibuses with a quick turnaround facility because it would have had to compete in this area. There is also an increasingly large number of maxi-taxis which have been on the road, and which, to some extent, are competing with the transport system.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two minutes.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I hope to wind up in two minutes.

I believe that one is going to have in the future to look at a concept of re-organization of the administrative structure for transport, and I wonder if the time is not ripe for some serious study of a type of joint venture between the Government and the private sector for the future management of the transport system.

*Asides.*

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: We have been able to convince the Democratic Labour Party that sometimes the private sector is much more efficient than them. The honourable Member for St. Michael South is holding his hands up as though he is saying something new. Where I disagree most violently with him is that he sought to make it appear that all of the Government's corporations have been costing the taxpayers tremendous money. Some of the commercial corporations, like CBC, have been performing better under this Government than they have performed under the Democratic Labour Party Government, and by their very nature, there are some corporations, like the National Housing Corporation and the Child Care Board, which will never be able to generate income to be commercial enterprises.

The progress being made in solving the problems of transport is self-evident for all but the blindest to see. The Government should be congratulated on the steps that it is taking in the right direction. It should not be afraid and it should not be wedded to doctrine. We must by new ventures, and I seriously suggest that one of those new ventures may be a realignment of the main participant in the transport system towards a joint venture, so that in the future we would be able to rationalise the whole transport system.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I see the Honourable Leader is looking at me but I would remind him that the Standing Orders have been suspended. I will not go beyond ten minutes.

I listened to the debate and sometimes I find it difficult to believe that we are capable of so much repetition over the same issues from time to time in this Honourable Chamber.

I am somewhat disappointed that the Honourable Minister on this occasion is not able to shed a little more light on the progress that is being made with regard to the minibuses in the transport system. I make bold to say that the minibuses in Barbados are the salvation of the transportation system in this country today. The minibus system has provided a level of service in areas that the Transport Board, neither under the Democratic Labour Party nor the Barbados Labour Party, has been able to supply. The minibus men have suffered considerably in the process, and it may not be well known that there are 190 licences issued to minibus men in this country and as of today, only 140 are on the road. This means that some 50 minibus licences are not being utilized and therefore those small businessmen, the proprietors of these minibuses, must be suffering, along with the other hundreds of small businessmen in this country, including the shopkeepers, under the economic malaise in this country.

There are certain myths and legends which have been perpetrated by the Barbados Labour Party, and which have been accepted by a number of people in this country, signed and sealed. Since you raised the shopkeepers as part of this small contingent of people, I can tell you that that falls within the myths and legends. There are 1 600 shopkeepers in this country and 400 of them have been said to have gone out of business during our regime. That is absolute poppy-cock!

2.00 p.m.

There is a study which is in the Ministry of the honourable Member for Christ Church East (Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham), and he can go and ask the Price Control Officer.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, the honourable Member claims that there are 400 small shopkeepers that we claim have gone out of business. We have said as a fact that 400 small shopkeepers went out of business under your Ministry, not only regime, and as you go along the road today you can see countless small mobile canteens.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: If that is the case, my contention is that the honourable Member will have to say how many went out.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member is making a speech.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I say that it is a categorical lie. I say that it has been perpetrated on the people of this country by self-serving persons. I say that there is a study in the Ministry of Trade which the honourable Member can go and pick up and read, and he will see that it is not true that any 400 shopkeepers went up. It is a lie.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order: The honourable Member is breathing righteous indignation, but the honourable Member is being irrelevant. This debate has nothing to do with 400 shopkeepers going out of business under the honourable Member's Ministry.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I will demonstrate that it is not irrelevant. I was discussing that the 50 minibus operators who are out of business are in the same state as a number of other people in this country who are suffering under the economic blows inflicted upon them by the circumstances which now exist in this country. Those 50 minibus operators fall within the category of a large number of businesses that have gone into receivership, gone out of business, so it is not irrelevant.

The subsidisation of transportation is not something that is peculiar to Barbados, and it really is trite economics for honourable Members to be getting up in this Chamber talking about subsidisation as if it is something manifested yesterday or day before. In the largest transportation system in the world per capita, in the United States, in New York City, public transportation is subsidized to a point that is in excess of anything which we have ever seen in Barbados, and that is how it should be. I do not believe that we should pretend in this Honourable Chamber that making bus fares reasonable for the people of a community of 250 000 people should be something that we should discuss in terms of which party did this and which party did not do this. It is the business of the Government of the day to supply efficient transportation for the people of this country at a cost that is reasonable to both taxpayers and to the users of the service. What we should be discussing, and what it is proper for us to discuss, is whether the service as it is being delivered is being, (a), efficiently delivered, and (b), being delivered at a cost that is reasonable in the context of our total economy.

I think it is proper that honourable Members on this side should raise questions when the Honourable Minister comes to get a subsidy. There are certain questions which the Minister ought to answer, and he should answer them in some detail, because since we are using taxpayers' money, it is in this Honourable Chamber that an accounting of the use of that money must be made.

The honourable member says he is asking for \$5 million and it was not clear to me whether he was saying that this \$5 million is a substitute for the amount that will be paid in of \$4 million by the three services, Welfare Department, Police and the Ministry of Education. I think he owes it to the House to make it clear, or whether he is saying that this is an additional \$5 million to the amounts that will be paid in by these three services.

What I am more concerned with, and what I think is of some long-term significance in the transportation debate, is whether the Government has been able to correct the obvious error that was made when the Ministry of Transport and Works some time ago borrowed \$5 million or \$18 million, I have forgotten the amount — I think it is \$5 million — from the Barbados National Bank to pursue certain requirements in that Ministry and, I believe, the Transport Board. I would like the Minister to confirm whether that obvious constitutional error in the arrangements of that Ministry under the Financial Administration and Audit Act has been corrected, and whether the Transport Board Levy has returned that money to the Barbados National Bank, or whether the Cabinet has *ex post facto* regularised the transaction.

I believe that at the time when it was raised in this Honourable House the Minister of Finance claimed ignorance of that particular transaction. This is the first time we have had a debate on transport since then, and I believe that the Minister has a responsibility to explain whether the matter has been corrected. For easy reference of Your Honour and this Honourable Chamber, I will remind the Minister that it is against the Financial Rules for a Ministry to borrow money from a bank, especially without the approval of Parliament, and that on that occasion the Minister.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to move that Your Honour 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. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 3 o'clock p.m.

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

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

2.10 p.m.

## ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Before we revert to Committee of Supply, Sir, I should like to draw to the attention of the House that I have two Resolutions which I should like to give notice of today. I regret doing this to my colleagues on the other side, but I would like to do them later today in all their stages. It is nothing to shout about, I will also take Question Time immediately after I give notice of them.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES

## SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984-85 NO. 19

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

A Resolution to grant the sum of one million, one hundred and twenty-two thousand, seven hundred and sixty-six dollars from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1984-85, Part I — Current as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1984-85, No. 19 which form the Schedule to this Resolution.

A Resolution to grant the sum of three hundred and thirty-six thousand, four hundred and fifty-two dollars from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1984-85, Part II — Capital as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1984-85 No. 20 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Sir, I indicated earlier today that although I would suspend some of the Standing Orders, I would make provision for Question Time. It is at this point, Sir, that I request you, Mr. Speaker, and the House to have Question Time.

I beg to move, Sir, that Question Time be now taken.

## QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. Question No. 5 standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Question No. 5.

To ask of the Minister of Education:

"In view of the fact that early childhood education can enhance the learning process for all children, particularly for those children of working class backgrounds, will the Minister consider the establishment of educational classes at the Bay Primary School, St. Paul's Primary School, the St. Matthias Primary Schools, and elsewhere for children who are between the ages of three and five years of age?"

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, the answer is as follows: Government currently provides educational classes wherever feasible for children of pre-primary age. Bay Primary School, St. Paul's Primary School and the St. Matthias Primary Schools are among the schools which carry a complement of children of pre-school age.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could indicate exactly what he means by pre-primary age. My question referred to education between the ages of three and five.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, as I understand, pre-primary is before — am I right? I am on a good wicket — age five and six. It means from three to five.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: A supplementary, Sir: Could the Minister explain the apparent dichotomy arising out of the answer given, bearing in mind that at the Westbury School, the pre-primary school has now been amalgamated into the primary school and no provision has been made for the pre-primary schoolers? Could the Minister in the light of the answer.....

Mr. SPEAKER: One question at a time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. Could the Minister in the light of.....

Mr. SPEAKER: That would be two. One question at a time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am seeking guidance from Your Honour.

Mr. SPEAKER: You started, "Could the Minister explain?"

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

Mr. SPEAKER: That is one question.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am going.....

Mr. SPEAKER: If you put another question, that would be two questions.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have not put what I wanted to explain, Sir. May I continue the question then, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot continue, "Can the Minister explain".

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will take that one question.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, this Minister finds it very difficult to give a reply to the question since I am unable to understand the fancy language used. I would be in a happier position if he would simplify it so that many Barbadians, who are not university trained, will be able to understand that language. Please simplify it before I give the answer.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will explain the language. I do not understand how you could say that you are having pre-school education when you just stopped pre-school education in Westbury Road. I want to know about that.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The school is being repaired.

Mr. SPEAKER: Supplementary No. 2.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Supplementary No. 2. If you say that the honourable Member did not understand the first question because.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member must ask a question.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am asking the question, Sir. I am addressing you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot address me at this stage. In Question Time, you ask questions of the Minister.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Does the Minister agree that the Ministry's policy is confused in the circumstances, since there is one kind of policy for the schools in the Bay Land and another kind of policy for the schools in Westbury Road?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The Minister does not agree.

Mr. SPEAKER: Supplementary No. 2 from the Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: In view of the fact that the Minister has indicated that there is pre-primary education at the schools indicated in the question, would the Minister indicate how many students between the ages of three and four and four and five respectively are educated in the schools in the question?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not allow that. That is the type of question which would be a substantive question.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect I.....

Mr. SPEAKER: If the honourable Member really requires an answer to that question, that is the type of question that is a substantive question.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: But, Mr. Speaker,.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Go ahead.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Are there are any more questions, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe there is a question. Would you repeat the question.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: But no, Sir,.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Minister please take his seat. Please repeat the question, because I interrupted you.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes, Sir. The question is: In view of the fact that the Minister indicates that pre-primary education is taking place at the schools indicated, would the Minister state how many children between the ages of three and four and four and five respectively are educated in the schools indicated in the question?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The number of under fives attending — you represent up there and ask so many foolish questions — are as follows: Bay Primary thirty-five, St. Paul's Primary twenty-nine, St. Matthias Primary twenty-one. You really asked that question, and you were a Minister of Education!

Mr. SPEAKER: Supplementary No. 3.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Supplementary No. 3: Would the Minister agree that the numbers here indicated represent only a very small percentage of the number of children in those heavily built-up areas of Bayville, Britton's Hill and the St. Matthias area, and that therefore the facilities and opportunities available are in need of expansion?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: No, Sir, the Minister does not agree. But what the Minister would hope for is that during your tenure of office as Minister of Education, there should not have been thirty-five, twenty-nine or twenty-one, but one hundred per cent. That is a failure of you as Minister now asking questions when you represent that constituency.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker: Would the Minister indicate what proposals are being made for similar opportunities for three to five in St. Philip?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The Government is prepared to make available to all the schools, wherever it is possible, such facilities.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Supplementary.

Mr. SPEAKER: No. 3.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: How can the Minister indicate on the one hand that he is prepared to supply the facilities when, in fact, the Ministry is destroying the facilities wherever they exist?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is only the opinion of the Member for St. Michael West.

*Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig) were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. SPEAKER.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir; I wish some direction from Your Honour as to the position of Members at Question Time.

I believe, Sir, bearing in mind your ruling, that it is not proper for honourable Members who raise legitimate questions to be ridiculed by Ministers as a substitute for responses to those questions.  
3.15 p.m.

I must confess, Mr. Speaker, that I resent it very much when I propose in the course of asking a question what is factual information, to be deemed to be stupid by a Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: That aspect of it has been withdrawn and therefore I do not feel that you should comment on it. We have had this issue before. Matters that are withdrawn are deemed to be no longer before the Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Is Your Honour about to rule that it should be struck from the Record?

Mr. SPEAKER: I said it was unparliamentary.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no more supplementaries, that then brings us to the end of Question Time.

The House now reverts to the Committee of Supply.

## RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

*Mr. 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. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I was, when the Leader of the House took the opportunity to bring that session to an abrupt end, asking the Minister whether he was in a position to indicate whether Cabinet had taken steps to rectify an obvious error, an administrative and perhaps illegal procedure, where the Ministry of Transport and Works had borrowed money from the Barbados National Bank contrary to the Financial Administration and Audit Act, 1964. I would appreciate it if the Minister would indicate what steps have been taken, if any, to correct this obvious wrong in the administration of the transportation policy of this country. I wonder whether he would indicate how much money has been collected by the Transport Levy, and whether the Transport Levy is still being used contrary to the purposes adumbrated in the Resolution which brought into effect the Transport Levy, that is to say, whether it is being used to purchase equipment and/or other things for the Transport Board itself. While I do not consider that that aspect is illegal, I think that, in the context of efficiency of which the Minister speaks, he might wish to rectify that, because the Transport Levy was designed to do specific things, and I think that we should have some idea of how the Transport Levy is being administered.

I take note of the fact that statutory corporations, generally, were imported into the debate, and I feel bound to say that I feel very strongly that in a community of this size the need for statutory corporations has been established, and does not need any further debate at this time.

There are some statutory corporations which have been extremely efficient in the execution of their responsibility. I think of the Natural Gas Corporation, which has evolved into another corporation, I think of the Barbados Waterworks, which has become the Barbados Water Authority, to name only two, and I think that we ought not be caught in what I consider to be North American propaganda which seeks to delineate the private sector in a particular way. I do not believe that small communities like ours must necessarily grasp every single economic argument or economic philosophy that is trotted out by our neighbours to the north, merely because it has been trotted out, but that we should use those systems that are beneficial to us and we should examine from time to time, and we should evaluate those

systems to see whether they are performing in the way which we wish them to perform.

It is perfectly proper, if we have a public corporation such as the Barbados Marketing Corporation, or the National Housing Corporation, or the Transport Board, that is not functioning the way it should function, or the way it was envisaged that it should function, that we should criticise it and raise questions about it, but I think that the philosophy underpinning the establishment of statutory corporations is no longer open to serious question. While the United States itself is talking about the private sector as it applies to the developing countries, especially those in the western hemisphere, the United States itself is perpetuating its own statutory corporations to a large extent, and is indeed creating more statutory corporations.

I think that we in Barbados have reached the stage where we can manage our own affairs, and we in this Honourable Chamber should examine those affairs from time to time, but I do not myself feel that this phrase "private sector" should be misused and misunderstood. When we have established a statutory corporation in this Parliament, we have in fact consigned that particular activity into the sphere of the private sector, in the sense that we have given that corporation substance and body and we expect it to work in a way different from the Ministries themselves. Therefore, it does not fall well from our mouths to be delineating between public sector and private sector as if we are a large economy that is churning out billions of dollars with millions of deficits similar to what is occurring in the United States.

The Transport Board has demonstrated some pluses and some minuses during the eight years that the Barbados Labour Party has had responsibility for it. I share the view of my colleague that tinkering by the Prime Minister with the Transport Board has operated to the detriment of the Transport Board. I believe that the movement of personnel from the Transport Board in the manner in which such personnel were removed has not operated to the advantage of the system as a whole, and in that connection I should like the Minister to indicate to this Parliament, as had been promised by his predecessor, whether the inquiry which was to take place concerning certain infelicitities in the Transport Board has been completed, whether that inquiry demonstrated any malfeasance, or whether the inquiry demonstrated some of the charges which the previous Minister indicated were responsible for some of the wastage in the Transport Board.

I recall that the previous Minister had indicated that he was in the process of getting a number of school buses for North America. He indicated that after very serious consideration that those school buses had been demonstrated to be the most efficient and the most desirable for our system. I wonder if the Minister is able to tell us what progress, if any, has been made in that direction.

You will recall, Sir, that there had been trips to Martinique, trips to the United States, trips to Berlin, I think it was — but in any case West Germany — all in search of new and different approaches to transportation in Barbados.

3.25 p.m.

We were told that certain types of equipment were going to be purchased, and that, with the purchase of this equipment, the efficiency of the Board would improve. I think the Minister owes it to this Honourable House and to the public at large to indicate what progress, if any, has been made in that direction, or whether he has turned around the policy. I suspect that this Minister has dumped most of the policies of the previous Minister of Transport and Works, but I am not in a position to know, and I should like him to advance the information for us so that we can better evaluate the way in which the taxpayers money has been spent.

I should like him to indicate what is the level of the deficit in the Transport Board. If I remember correctly, when we last discussed transportation here a figure of \$17 million was advanced. I should like to know if the deficit is being reduced, as he had promised that it would be, or if it has increased, and if it has, why it has increased.

I should also like to ask him whether the decision to establish depots outside of the Bridgetown area is working satisfactorily, and whether his decision to reduce personnel — if I remember correctly again, there was a decision that the numbers at the Transport Board would be reduced and if my memory serves me correctly, it was the Minister himself who said that those numbers would be reduced — I think the words he used were "heads would roll."

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not know ....

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

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: On a point of order, Sir.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West is attributing words to me which I have never used in or outside of this Chamber. I do not know if he is advertently or inadvertently doing so, but I have never used the words that I just heard.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order. I do not know if you respect my request that you call the Clerk at the Table, but I am confident that the Member has been speaking for more than 15 minutes. Is it 15 minutes or half an hour?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have confidence in the honourable Member and I respect all the confidence you have in the Chairman of this Committee.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: And the Clerk at the Table. I feel that you should have asked the Clerk.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I cannot accede to the request of the Leader of the House. Take your seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I just draw it to your attention, though.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have two minutes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I withdraw the remark about "heads would roll" in relation to the Transport Board. I think when he said "heads would roll", it was in connection with another Corporation.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member is misleading the House. Never have I on any occasion used those words.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: He is putting words in your mouth?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Yes, Sir, and I am quite capable of speaking on my own. I do not want him to be attributing words to me which I did not use either inside or outside of this Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw the words, because I think it is a small point. I do not think he would deny that he indicated at some point during his tenure as Minister of Transport that the numbers at the Transport Board would be reduced sooner or later. Is that factual?

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He admits that that is factual.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute more.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. In that one minute what I am asking him is to give us an update on the progress that has been made in terms of either the reduction of numbers or the increase in numbers at the Transport Board.

I am going to take the next half minute to ask the Minister.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is a little less than that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ....if he would tell us too what is the present state of the fleet. There is a system for up-

dating information concerning the fleet, and I think I would be in a better position to make a further contribution if I could know what is the present state of the fleet.

I am grateful to Your Honour's indulgence in this matter and I regret very much the Leader of the House's intervention, which was unnecessary.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, the matter of transport is always very interesting to me for the simple reason that I represent a rural parish. We are not fortunate to have the use of minibuses, so we depend very heavily on Government transport for transportation to and from work, to and from school, to and from leisure.

I took the time out to check on some figures, and during the last four years, from 1980/81 to 1983/84, by way of direct subsidy the taxpayers of this country have put out some \$50 million in the transport system. This has nothing to do with capital works, which I have not had the time to look at, but I am certain that if you check capital works that would be somewhere in the vicinity of \$17 to \$18 million. So in total, it would mean that the taxpayers of this country over the last four years have subsidized the transport system of this country to the tune of \$68 million. And while I agree that the taxpayers of this country are right and are obligated in certain ways to subsidize the transport system, since it is a service offered to the poorer classes of this country, I also expect that for \$68 million over the last four years, we should by now have a service that is at least 90 per cent reliable and dependable.

I have made some enquiries on a number of occasions about the route service at Mangrove, and I have been informed that in order to service the St. Philip routes properly, you would need at least 60 to 65 buses on the road. I have also been informed that on no occasion within the last six or seven months were they able on any one occasion to put more than 45 buses to service those routes. It is very obvious that if 60 to 65 buses are what is adequate and you can only put 45 on the route, somewhere people in my parish and the routes served by Mangrove are not getting the best service, or a service commensurate with the subsidies subscribed to by all the people who paid taxes over the last four years.

It is a fact that on any Monday morning — and I know the Minister must know this, because he drives from St. Lucy — you can drive from home and see every bus stop loaded. I found it a very strange thing when I enquired what was happening — I do not know if it has changed — that in order to cut down the cost, the workshop did not operate over weekends, so any time a unit broke down on a Friday afternoon, it was towed in, but no work could be done on that unit until Monday

morning. I hope that this is not the present situation, because I cannot otherwise explain the pile up of people at bus stops on Monday mornings particularly.

Secondly, within recent times one of the services, transporting the people of St. Philip from Newton by a particular bus, was removed. People do not have the use of that bus, coming through Six Roads into Newton and then from Newton back into Six Roads, anymore. I sincerely hope that that will be put back into place because it now means that a lot of people had to go into Bridgetown, pay a second busfare and go to Newton and do the reverse on afternoons. I am asking the Minister to check and see if this is still a fact, and if it is, to seek to have it corrected.

I am certain that the Minister has been taking a continuous look at the integration of the minibuses into the service. The increased numbers of minibuses would have to be a direct result of the services that they are rendering to the public of Barbados, because they would in no way have proliferated as they did if the services were not needed, and the minibuses render a tremendous service to the people of Barbados and assist us in being able to say that public transport in Barbados is about the best in the Caribbean. But I think we have reached the stage now where the minibuses are going out of stock faster than they are being replaced.

3.35 p.m.

My enquiries lead me to be in continuous contact with the minibus operators, and they are complaining. I am certain the Minister must have heard about the licensing fee of \$5 000 a year which they are complaining about when compared with licensing of a Transport Board bus. With the new Act they now have to get their uniforms, to buy badges and to get their licenses every year, and you will find now that the rolling stock is getting down to a replacement period of three or four years, and that the maintenance is a lot higher than it was before. So the operational profit of a lot of these minibuses is now becoming very marginal, and they are only making an operational profit because some of them are working as long as 14 and 15 hours per day, from 6 o'clock in the morning working right through until 9 o'clock at night — extremely long hours.

We must look at this situation, because it is a fact that because the minibuses are on the road, they are saving the taxpayers of Barbados dollars. If you took the subsidy that we pay every year to the Transport Board and divide it by the rolling stock — I understand they are about 200, but if I am not correct the Minister can correct me — at one time it worked out that for every Transport Board bus on the road the taxpayers of Barbados were subsidising that by about \$60 000 a year. If you take the reverse and you took about two minibuses to compete with one Transport Board bus, you

will find that every minibus on the road in Barbados is actually saving the taxpayers of Barbados about \$30 000 a year, and it is not fair that, having rendered that type of service to the taxpayers, we should turn around and penalise them by putting a \$5 000 registration fee on them and all of the other things.

I do not know who is to blame for it, but there is a lot of support for the minibus men's contention that they are being harassed on the road. I have seen on many occasions from my office in Wilkey that almost every minibus coming down is stopped on mornings for overloading, and on the same road the Transport Board buses pass down, people can hardly move around in them, and not one single bus is stopped. I do not know if it is by chance or design, but the minibus operators have good reason to believe that they are being harassed on the road.

The next complaint that the minibus people have been putting forward, and quite rightly, is that those minibuses that have a similar capacity as the minibuses of the Transport Board are not allowed to carry standing passengers, while the Transport Board buses, the Leyland minibuses, are allowed to carry standing passengers. There has to be something wrong. There cannot be two rules, one for the Transport doing the same public service of transporting passengers and one for the minibuses with similar units. I am not talking about the small minibus units; I am talking about the units built by Butcher Acme, the Hinos that are the same size as the Leyland and that type of unit. There has to be something wrong that prevents them from carrying passengers standing while you allow the Transport Board, with a similar unit, a certain amount of passengers standing.

When you put all these things together, you must agree, and begin to sympathise with the minibus people, that the service that they are rendering to the people of Barbados is not appreciated by the Ministry and the authorities of this country. I know it is not the Minister of Transport's right, because this is a tax measure, but I invite him to examine this very closely. Some 190 licenses have been issued, and the last time I checked 140 of these units were on the road, so 50 of the licences were not being used. The Association told me that the rolling stock coming off the road is not being replaced with the same amount of new stock coming on to the road, so you are having a diminution of the minibuses, and if you continue to have a diminution of the minibuses, it means you are going to have to put more Transport Board units on the road; and unless there is a complete improvement in the management and functioning of the Transport Board, you will find that your subsidy will keep rising year after year, and that the taxpayers of this country will be digging their hands deeper and deeper into their pockets to provide for this service. I invite the Minister to examine this and to seriously decide in

THIS MINUS WHAT TOLD THE MINIBUS people are going to play in the transport system, acknowledge that their services are needed — and if they were not needed they would not have proliferated as they did — and to make sure that you do not reach the stage where you kill the goose that laid the egg, because if you keep on pushing at them, taxing them and putting on increased burdens, there will soon come a time that it would not make it worth their while to operate their units and they will withdraw them.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE (St. Lucy): Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Resolution. We could have got a little better comment from the Opposition side than we are getting. The honourable Member for St. Philip North in the speech that he has just made about the minibuses has put up a good case for the minibus men, but he does not seem to think about the Minister of Transport. He has not put up a case for him at all. He needs more money for the minibus men, but we do not need any more money for the Transport Board buses.

It sounds very sweet and rosy to have the minibus votes over there, but you have to look at the reasons for the Transport Board Service. When you compare that a Transport Board bus has to leave Bridgetown and go to Pie Corner, St. Lucy for 75 cents, while a minibus man leaves Bridgetown and go to Bush Hall for the same 75 cents, you will see that he can make about four trips in the same time that the Transport Board bus has to go all the way to St. Lucy or St. Philip. But the honourable Member for St. Philip North is telling you that we should take care of the minibus men and not the Transport Board.

I am a bit disgusted to know that a few years ago the same honourable Member got in here and started to parade and give impressions about how bad the people from Bayleys in St. Philip were treated in the bus stand, how they were suffering and could not get home. Now that we have a Minister that listens to our needs and is bringing more buses, some of the best buses in the world, not only in the West Indies, and with the cheapest bus fares we have anywhere in the world, 75 cents from Bridgetown to Pie Corner or from Bridgetown to St. Philip, we still get this criticism. In the United States, from where my wife just returned, she had to pay 90 cents for the bus service, so Barbados is still doing much better than that.

In 1976, under the last regime, the last bus left Bridgetown for St. Lucy at 6 p.m. Nowadays the last bus leaves town for St. Lucy at midnight. Do you not see the improvement that we have in the bus service? We have boys and girls who are working at the Industrial Parks in Christ Church, and there is no problem nowadays, because people know that they have a 12 o'clock bus leaving town. With such a good service,

I am sure we will agree that this money is money spent in the right direction.

I had the privilege of visiting Dominica some time last year and I had to pay \$5 for a trip, and you were driving on a truck with board seats. I believe that when a Resolution like this comes before Parliament, it would be better for the Opposition if the Members would commend the Minister and say he is doing a good job, because I believe that all the Members in here, even those on the other side, are very happy that our service is not like Dominica's.

The parish which I represent has had an improved bus service for the last eight years. We now have a bus service starting on mornings at 5.30 a.m., and finishing at 1 o'clock in the morning. That is a very good service. We also have an extension on the River Bay route where the people in that district now have the bus going up the hill, and we also have an extension to Mount Poyer via Harris' district, and I am now appealing to the honourable Member to have a new route from Archers Bay area, through Mile-and-a-Quarter, across Rock Dundo and straight to Wildey, for the boys and girls who work at the Industrial Park, and the bus could go on to town and then back through that way to Archers Bay. The Minister is listening to me and I am sure that by God's help, soon from now we will have such a service. It would not only be for the parish of St. Lucy, but it would also serve St. James, St. Thomas, St. Peter and parts of St. Michael.

3.45 p.m.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King) asked why mention the Seddons. We have to realize that the Seddons were bought with the money of the taxpayers of this country, and if we had 200 Seddons, those 200 Seddons would cost millions of dollars. Unless the Government decided to clean the slate in respect of Seddons, we would always have to mention the Seddons.

I think that it is time the Members of the Opposition join hands when they see something progressive which would help the working class people of this country. They should throw in their lots and not try to waste time on matters like these.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR (St. Peter): Mr. Chairman, I join this debate today to give support to the Resolution.

I must, first of all, say that I am surprised that the issue of a subsidy to the Transport Board has generated as much heat and as little life as it has today in this Chamber. The concept of a subsidy is a concept which is so familiar that I would not have imagined that a great deal of controversy would be aroused because of its granting to an essential service. Indeed, it has become common place that whenever society attaches a social value to a service, a social value which goes over and

beyond the financial cause of providing that service, then a subsidy must be called into place. It is for this reason that many countries of the world find it desirable and necessary to attach a subsidy to the production of food, purely because the social value that we attach to the production of food and the need for food cannot be measured in terms of the financial cause of providing the public with food itself.

It is within this broad framework that I really want to discuss the question of a subsidy to the Transport Board. What are we doing when we provide a subsidy for the Transport Board? We are not only making an input into a statutory corporation, but we are servicing our economic system, because it is the very Transport Board which is called upon to transport all the workers of this country from their home to their workplace and back. So we must not see a subsidy in the narrow sense of putting money into an organization, but providing an essential service for the economic system, a service without which, obviously, the economic system will collapse. By the same token, we must see this subsidy as an input to our educational system, and we must also see the subsidy as an input to making the lives of people of this country more comfortable and relaxed. In this broad framework, I do not believe that there can be any serious questions raised regarding the need for subsidy to a transport system.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) has already alluded to the fact that every transport system in the world that he is aware of, in countries both great and small, are indeed subsidized. We may indeed debate the question as to how large the subsidy is, but for those who would want to question the need for a subsidy, the question that I would pose to them in return is, "If you are going to do away with the subsidy to the Transport Board, tell us by how much we must raise the bus fare?" Or alternatively, "If you want to do away with the subsidy to the Transport Board, tell us by how much we must lay off workers from the transport system?"

Mr. Chairman, judged purely on economic terms, the existing bus fare, which has given rise to the need for a subsidy, is not an outrageous bus fare at all. When we compare that in 1976, it cost this country sixty-five cents in terms of bus fare to provide trips on the bus and in 1984 it only takes seventy-five cents, and when we also concentrate on the fact that in the interval the cost of production and the cost of other services at the Transport Board would have more than doubled, then, indeed, the sixty-five cents bus fare of 1975 would in real terms today be \$1.25. So the argument that we are having an outrageous bus fare system today cannot really stand up.

I sense that the Opposition Members want to push the view that a large number of the problems of the

transport system can be solved if only one were to put better management systems into that organization. My own perspective of the matter is that many of the problems of the transport system — and I recognize that there are problems — have to do with factors which perhaps lie outside the statutory organization which is responsible for its management.

I believe, for instance, that the proper staggering of hours, a proper relationship between the hours of office workers, school children and Government workers, is part and parcel of a solution to the transport system in this country, because what we have in this society is the curious situation where every evening you have to go about the business of evacuating Bridgetown. Everybody congregates in Bridgetown virtually at one point, and you have to plan the transport system to deal with the peaks which occur. Our peak is the 4.00 o'clock peak in Bridgetown, and hence there is that associated need for the transport system to have a volume of rolling stock to cope with the peak. Quite obviously, if you could space out the peak and provide a great difference between the hours of leaving of our school children and office workers, Government workers and industrial workers, the problems of providing an efficient service would, to that extent be relieved. But so long as we have to evacuate Bridgetown every evening and have to put in rolling stock of a level to deal with that evacuation exercise, we are never going to have in this country the kind of service that we need.

I also think that an improvement in the service can be found in the provision of ancillary services along the routes which the buses travel. Indeed, many people would not mind having to wait for a bus if there were comfortable surroundings that awaited them while they were waiting for the buses themselves. And for the parish of St. Peter particularly, I want to urge the Minister of Transport and Works that, at the earliest opportunity, he must ensure that there are bus shelters, so that when people have to wait for the buses, as they will have to wait for buses, they will be doing so in comfort.

I want to refer to a point that was raised by the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin). The honourable Member for St. Philip North is very fond of regaling this Chamber with comparisons — which sometimes are entirely false. We were once told about the amount of houses that could be built with the money that has gone into the building of the Central Bank. Today, we are being told that the minibuses each will save the taxpayers of this country \$30,000 per year. I am sure, of course, that that kind of statement will hit the headlines this evening with full blast.

This analogy could only be true if the Member for St. Philip North was comparing like to like, because.

quite obviously, the minibuses in this country do not have to operate on the basis of the same kind of schedules as the Transport Board. If they had to run up until 1.00 o'clock, as the Transport Board has to run, then there might be a need to subsidize them to the same extent that you now have to subsidize the Transport Board. The fact is that the minibuses, unlike the Transport Board, are in a position to operate only at the peak hours. As a result they will always find themselves in a position where their financial situation will obviously be greater than that of the Transport Board. If they had a social obligation to run up to one o'clock at night, irrespective of whether they were making money or not, then the false analogy we are being presented with by the honourable Member for St. Philip North would not arise, because he would then be having to compare like with like. To the extent that he is not comparing like with like, it is false to say that any minibus operator in this country is saving the Transport Board about \$30 000 a year. When the day comes that the minibuses are operating in accordance with the same schedules as the Transport Board buses, I will accept that thesis and those numbers, but for the time being we are not comparing like with like, and the analysis and the numbers absolutely do not make sense.

3.55 p.m.

I want to make a plea to the Minister of Transport and Works on behalf of my constituents. I hear great plans about the building of the Fairchild Street Bus Stand, and I am advised that there are supposed to be similar improvements at Cheapside, and I am aware that there have long been plans for the improvement of the Speightstown Bus Stand. I am asking the Minister of Transport and Works to put it on the front burner, because the people of Speightstown stand in need of improved facilities to the same extent, and perhaps even more so than the people of Bridgetown and the other persons who have to use the transport system.

My final plea to the Minister of Transport and Works should go straight to his heart, because he is a Boscobel man. There used to be a bus service in Boscobel which traversed the entire district, but for some reason under the chairmanship of a past Chairman of the Transport Board, who had a recent interest in St. Peter, a failed interest I might also add, that bus service has now been removed. I am asking the Minister of Transport and Works to see to the restoration of that service as a matter of urgency, because many residents of Boscobel do in point of fact as farmers have to cart heavy loads up a hill of perhaps a quarter of a mile on their heads in order to catch the bus, and they deserve better. I am sure the Minister of Transport and Works knows they deserve better, because he is a Boscobel man himself.

With those few remarks, Sir, I would urge the Assembly not to bring too much controversy to the granting of subsidies where essential services are

concerned. It might be true that we could find ways and means of reducing the extent of the subsidy to the Transport Board, but to the extent that we expect that transport service to service our educational system, our economic system and to service our need for leisure and comfort, we as the society in general will have to pay the price.

I want to close on one small point. We speak in terms of a \$15 million subsidy to the transport system. That works out at \$60 per person per year, \$12 per month, \$1.25 per person. I am sure that that is no more than some of us use for the purchase of Let's Go To The Races tickets.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

*Cheers.*

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. The point I was putting in my thesis is that because minibuses are on the road, it prevents the Transport Board from having to put in additional buses on which they were losing about \$60 000 per year per bus.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I believe I can ask the Honourable Minister to wind up this debate.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I am indebted to all honourable Members who have made important contributions to the debate for this grant of \$5 million in subsidy to the transport service, and in summary I would like to touch on a few points which were raised by honourable Members during the course of their speeches. Let me first of all refer to the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto on transportation matters, the last published manifesto of the Labour Party. In that document we promised that we would have an improved transportation authority. The name of the Transport Board remains unchanged for the moment, but I believe that it is beyond doubt that the corporate system through which the service is delivered has been substantially improved to the point where we are able to point to and manifest some substantial savings over the subsidies of the past.

We mentioned in that manifesto statement that we were going to improve the transport fleet, and we have done so to the tune of 152 new buses, mainly Mercedes and Leyland. That has made a significant impression on the total delivery of transportation to the people of Barbados. We pledged that we would build new bus terminals, and, Sir, it is now, I believe, a matter of common knowledge that the Fairchild Street bus terminal has started. I had the honour to break ground for that two Fridays ago, and within the next few months we will have a completely new refurbished and modernised trans-

portation depot out of which a modernised, improved and efficient transport service can be delivered to the people who operate out of the Fairchild Street terminal.

I should like to comfort the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. Arthur) with the pledge that the Speightstown depot will be going off in a matter of months. All he needs to do is ask me when, and I will be in a position to tell him that the Speightstown depot will start. We have already done the site surveys, the architects have done their drawings, and we should be able comfortably to start the Speightstown terminal some time early during the coming calendar year.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member will give way, Sir, I would like, since he is on the Speightstown terminal — and I think it is a good thing that we are having a new Speightstown terminal — to ask the Minister now that the matter is settled in St. Peter, if he would give serious re-examination to the siting of that terminal. I have serious reservations, but I may be wrong, about siting it within the vicinity of the by-pass road. On the face of it, it appears as if there will be no difficulty, but as I look at it, it does appear to me that the exit and access on to the road is going to be further burdened by siting it there. I think that you could probably find an alternate site away from the by-pass. I wonder if the Minister, without interfering with the schedule, would give that a thought.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I thank the honourable Member for St. Michael West for the concern. It is a perfectly legitimate question that he has raised. I have been assured by the architects that an internal circulation pattern has been worked out that will make sure that the buses will not interfere in any adverse way with the traffic on the by-pass road. We took it as an initial concern, so I have every reason to believe that it will not be posing a problem.

We mentioned in our Manifesto that we were going to build new and improved comfort facilities for the passengers, and if you look at the Lower Green, you would see a modern new structure in the Lower Green which represents the best in public comfort services. That is now in operation. It is a far cry from what used to obtain there where the old toilet used to be next to Mrs. Ram's place.  
4.05 p.m.

I believe that any reasonable person, no matter how ill-disposed he may be to this Government will have to say that a substantial improvement has been brought in the standard of the transport services in Barbados by the provision of new buses and by passenger comfort input, including bathroom facilities, at bus terminals. These things signal our commitment to improving the service in Barbados. We said we would do it, and carefully and

methodically we are going about the realisation of that dream, and I believe that by now and the end of next year Barbados will be firmly on the road to providing the very best in mass transport service that can be seen in any part of the world.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr W. O. Franklin) raised some points concerning the service in his constituency. I can promise him that the policy as it is practised now does not tolerate any discrimination as to the level of service provided throughout the island. We are committed to providing an efficient and reliable service throughout Barbados, and whenever material evidence can be brought forward to indicate that we are falling down in any particular area, we are grateful to receive that information to undertake the necessary steps to put the matter right. I, the honourable Member, I think, is already aware, have personally supervised the despatch of buses to his constituency when the officers of the Transport Board were under the misapprehension that only a certain class of buses should be plying in St. Philip, so he has as a commitment from me that those people will be served to the extent that our facilities allow.

The minibuses in Barbados are, as I have said so many times before, but I believe it is worth saying again, an adjunct of the public transport service. We have regularized the minibus operation in this island. We have given them regulations within which to operate. We have consulted with them on many occasions to see in what way we can improve their own condition. They have made requests which have gone into the Regulations. I do not know if it is generally known, but it was the Minibus Association that requested that we make it one of the regulations that the minibuses should stop only at the bus stops, and we have included that in the Regulations on the instigation of the Minibus Association.

They have also requested that all minibus drivers should be licensed as omnibus operators, and they are now licensed as omnibus operators. As a matter of fact, if you look at the minibus men, some of them are already sporting their new caps with their badges indicating that they, too, are taking a measure of pride of being an official part of the transport service in Barbados. This is the kind of initiative that we are prepared to look at coming from the Minibus Association. So long as it is calculated to bring order to the system, we are prepared to listen to them and take the necessary steps to have these programmes implemented.

The minibus situation in Barbados is not as bad as it would appear on the surface. In every system I believe there are pirates, and in the minibus service there are pirates. These pirates are persons who are not prepared to make the capital outlay to run a legitimate service, so they get any piece of rat trap that they can find,

they go out there and put these buses on the road, run them illegally, and put the lives and health of the passengers at risk, and it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Works to make sure that all the buses that operate under the aegis of the transport service in Barbados are all road worthy and are safe for the purpose for which they are being used.

With respect to standing passengers, when we considered this matter, we considered that even though there are some buses in Barbados now perfectly capable in terms of the specifications to carry a limited number of standing passengers, if we legitimize the carrying of standing passengers for the few buses, inevitably it would be construed by minibus operators that all of them can carry standing passengers and it would pose many problems for the Police Force of Barbados to police this matter. That may sound as if it is an irrational conclusion, but if you were to consider, for example, that the Z vans which now operate and are licensed to operate as maxi-taxis are carrying destination signs, going all over the island, and pulling passengers in competition with the minibuses and the Transport Board bus, it is reasonable to suppose that just as they operate illegally in that sphere, persons who are not legally entitled to carry standing passengers would put standing passengers in their buses to the detriment of the passengers.

When people want to get home, they do not always put the factor of safety paramount on their list, and it falls to the Minister responsible for Transport to make sure that as he accepts responsibility for the safety of passengers riding in the mass transport vehicles, they are carried safely. We considered this matter very carefully, and for a very long period of time, and then we concluded that in all of the circumstances, the interest of safety would be served better if we did not at this stage accede to the requests of the few minibuses to be permitted to carry standing passengers.

I think the honourable Member for St. Michael West made this point that we have 40 people out there who are out of business. That is not technically correct. We have licensed 196 buses. I believe 189 of those were taken up. A number of them, about 17, became invalid over a period of time. Thirty-one have not yet been renewed, but I am prepared to wager that they are still on the road, and if you take out that 31, legally entitled to operate on the roads of Barbados at this point in time are 148 vehicles.

Within the last couple of weeks, during the course of a routine investigation that we were carrying out in the Licensing Authority, we discovered that some trucks are running around the island without current registration. In one case one truck was operating with a motor-cycle registration on it. These are things that we have to deal

with in the Licensing Authority. The police are not always able to deal with these matters effectively, and therefore, we have to keep our eyes out and maintain a posture of vigilance in order to make sure that we do not endanger the lives of the public because of persons who are unscrupulous in the operation of motor vehicles.

I would like to draw to the attention of honourable Members that the Transport Board's gross operating loss so far this year is running at \$1 million below the similar period last year. The direct subsidy to date for this year is \$2,320,000 as against \$4 million for the same period last year, and, if you look at all the indicators, there is a general downward trend in respect of the expense account of the Transport Board. This tells me that the management that has been set in place is beginning to cope....  
4.15 p.m.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: If the honourable Member would give way, I wish to enquire from the Minister if it is a fact that under the new Act — I was to check it — if you have a motor car that you have licensed already and you sold it and bought a new one, you have to pay a new licence again. In other words, you can find yourself paying two licenses in the same year as the owner for one number. If so, is the Minister satisfied that this is working in the best interest of owners who have to change their cars? It was not the practice before, because you were able to carry on your licence if you changed your car until the end of the licensed year, and it is really beginning to reek a lot of hardship on people. I have heard a lot of complaints about that particular section of the Act, and I would like to draw it to the Minister's attention for his inspection.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I thank the honourable Member. We are already aware of the question that the honourable Member raised. A number of representations have come to the Ministry with respect to this particular matter. Inasmuch as it is a matter for the Ministry of Finance, we have passed on all the enquiries to the Minister of Finance and we will await their ruling. So far we have not had any feedback from them as to whether or not it is intended to change the system, but you are perfectly right. If you sell your car the registration lapses and then you have to go and pay for a new car, because the registration is in respect of the motor vehicle as opposed to the owner. But as you suggest, we have had representations made about it and we are examining it.

Mr. Chairman, when all is said and done, one has to recognise that we are doing our very best at the Transport Board to make certain that the subsidies which we seek are subsidies in respect of the service, and are not indicative of squandering on the part of the Board. We have taken every deliberate action to make sure that new audit systems are in place. As you are aware, we have a

new financial controller, who is taking his job very seriously, and he is able to feed us with information which in the past we did not have access to. We have all of our various expense areas under monitor and we are able to detect losses well before they become problematic.

I believe it is the honourable Member for St. Michael West who raised the question about the Transport Levy. The Transport Levy collected from the inception as at the 31st October, 1984 was \$28 585 855. To date this year the total is \$7 026 275, and the funds are still being used for the purpose for which the fund was set up initially. The fund was set up for the single purpose of improving transport services and roads. All of our major projects that have been funded by the Transport Levy are high profile projects. The Bridge Road bridge is a classic example — \$3 million. Much of the inner Bridgetown resurfacing work, the bus terminal at Fairchild Street, the acquisition of new Transport Board buses, the construction of some tenantry roads, footpath work that is to start very shortly that will make walking on our roads infinitely safer — all of these are areas which the funds from the Transport Levy go to service, and we are very, very careful to make certain that the funds are only used for the purpose they were set up to service.

With respect to the specific question he raised about what he described as the borrowing of funds outside the Financial Rules, when the first number of buses were purchased, in 1981, the mechanism employed was the raising of a loan locally through the Barbados National Bank. The procedure was brought to the attention of the Cabinet, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and it was on that basis that the Transport Board went ahead and raised the loan. The impression ought not to be left that somebody did something irregular or it was some underhand dealing. It was a dealing that was done with the total approval of the Ministry of Finance and after consultation with the Cabinet.

The only thing that remains to be done perhaps, which would make the honourable Member for St. Michael West happy, is that that matter should finally get the blessing of Parliament, but I should like.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member would give way for a moment; I take the point that the Minister is making now, and I accept the information that it was done with the acquiescence of Cabinet, but my distinct recollection, when I revealed the information here in this Honourable House, is that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance indicated that he knew absolutely nothing about it. That is what is mystifying and confusing, because my recollection is that the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, knowing that it was contrary to the Rules under the Financial Administration and Audit Act, sought and obtained permission in writing by the

Minister — and it was not the Transport Board that borrowed the money, it was the Ministry itself, and that is irregular. The Minister said it was nothing irregular, it is illegal according to the Financial Administration and Audit Act, but the Minister of Finance was in his chair, and when we produced the information he said he knew nothing about it, or he behaved as if he knew nothing about it. So it is mystifying if the Minister says that the Cabinet was consulted.

I am not trying to make a big thing of it now. I am just saying that we need to get some clarification if for no other reason that it must not be done again, because if we have the Financial Administration and Audit Act itself to govern and regulate the way in which public finances ought to be operated within the structure, and the Minister indicated that he knew nothing about it, I am a little mystified.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and Works did precisely what he should have done under the Financial Administration and Audit Act Rules, and I still maintain it was nothing illegal. Perhaps you may say it was irregular, but I would not use the word "illegal", because I do not think it can be regarded as having been illegal. It may have been irregular and it will be regularised.

We assure everyone concerned that these matters are not done illegally. We wanted to purchase buses and the fastest way to do that was to raise a loan. Somebody may have overlooked the necessity to go through every detail, but the point is that the entire Transport Levy Fund is subject to the scrutiny of Parliament, and we have to lay our Audited Accounts in this Chamber, which we have done, and therefore there can be no question at all in anybody's mind but that the funds have always been used in the way prescribed. Even though it may be possible from time to time to say that you slipped here or slipped there, the point is that that slip is not of a nature that would constitute any illegal action. Certainly, it is not something that would represent carelessness or dereliction of duty on the part of any of the officials concerned.

4.25 p.m.

I am grateful to the honourable Member for St. Peter for lucidly putting the case for the need for subsidies. I believe the honourable Member for St. Michael West will agree that subsidies are essential, particularly since during his administration the subsidy reached \$5 million, seventy-five per cent going to the private concessionaires and twenty-five per cent going to the Transport Board. All that happens now is that it is costing twice as much as it used to cost in 1976, which still shows a fair measure of control over the expenditure at the Transport Board.

*The question that Head 42 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I believe we will have to report progress. There are two other Resolutions that we will have to come back to.

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, earlier in the day I indicated to Members on the other side that I had a couple of items which were brought down today in the form of money Resolutions. I propose to deal with them at this time. Notice of them has been given and they have been circulated.

Sir, if there is no objection, I beg to move that you do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply on these Resolutions.

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.*

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984-85 No. 20  
— \$336 452

#### HEAD 78 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Sir, that Head 78 do now stand part.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984-85 No. 19  
— \$1 122 766

#### HEAD 17 – DEFENCE AND SECURITY

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Sir, that Head 17 do now stand part.

Hon. A. TRUSS: I beg to second that.

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

#### HEAD 41 – CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM DIVISION

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Sir, that Head 41 do now stand part.

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

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

*On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of two money Resolutions in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

*On the separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. A. TRUSS, the Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.*  
4.35 p.m.

#### CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1984

Hon. A. TRUSS (St. Michael Central): Mr. Speaker, this Bill is quite straightforward. The governing body of CARDI, that is, the Ministers responsible for agriculture in the region, in May of 1983 considered and approved a Resolution proposing that the three voting seats now held by the University of the West Indies be reduced to one, and the two remaining seats released to be re-allocated in the following manner: one voting seat will go to the Leeward Islands, with Belize retaining the seat previously shared by the Leeward Islands, and the second seat will be converted to a non-voting seat and allocated to the Caribbean Food Corporation. The re-allocation of the seats became necessary after Belize became an independent nation and could no longer be grouped with the Leeward Islands. In addition to that, the Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC) became a major regional institution and should have greater involvement, it was felt at the time.

I would briefly like to outline for honourable Members of this House the functions of CARDI, because I think it is important. CARDI has a set of rules and objectives, and these are observed in three major directives: to improve the productivity of the agricultural sector to minimise the dependence of the region on foreign imports; to seek additional sources of funding from external donor agencies; and to decentralise its operations.

The work of CARDI has become well acknowledged, not only by the Governments but also by the small farmers, in Barbados and the whole Caribbean. CARDI has made significant progress in improving the productivity of the agricultural sector.

*Aside.*

Hon. A. TRUSS: Because the honourable Member for St. Michael West does not know anything about agriculture is no real reason why we should not go into dealing with the functions of CARDI. He is still in St. Peter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir! Without reference to St. Peter, I draw to Your Honour's attention that there is on the Order Paper a period for Statements by Ministers. If the honourable Member has a statement to read, he should do it during that time. If he wishes to enlighten us about CARDI, I think that would be an appropriate time. But in the introduction of a Resolution I think it might be appropriate, not that Your Honour would allow it, but I am just drawing it to your attention just in case the honourable Member is reading his statement, that he would have missed the point where he should have read the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not observed anything.

Hon. A. TRUSS: Thank you, Sir. Like I said, he is still in St. Peter. He has not brought his mind to bear on the functions of the House of Assembly as yet. He is totally unaware of what is happening in CARDI, he is not interested, because instead of going to Christ Church he will be going to St. Peter this afternoon, and he is in a hurry to leave, but we have the Government's business to do.

I would like to know where the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) is. The Opposition called for people's Parliament and Parliament is meeting today, but where is the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central? Can he not take the blows?

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not dealing with the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. We are dealing with a Bill dealing with CARDI.

Hon. A. TRUSS: I am saying I am sorry the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is not present today, because I know that he has more knowledge about CARDI than the honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Agricultural research in the area has to be rationalised, and CARDI's role in the area, more particularly in Barbados, is to do just that. There are too many organisations, all competing for very limited resources, and some sort of rationalisation of policy will have to be looked at, and is presently being looked at by the Ministry of Agriculture. CARDI was established to meet the needs of agriculture in general in the Caribbean and it serves a dual role. It is fully supportive of the national effort and

what can be integrated into the overall regional effort, which is important.

We recognise only too well that the food imports from our sister territories have declined since 1976. As a matter of fact, Barbados for the first time through the Ministry of Agriculture is exporting food, and CARDI has played a great role in assisting us to achieve this.

*Aside.*

Hon. A. TRUSS: The facts are the facts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can I have order, please?

Hon. A. TRUSS: We have never, prior to 1976 when the Barbados Labour Party came into power, exported or produced more than the Barbadian consumption. I did not want to deal with this matter, but since the honourable Member for St. Michael West is being so difficult, let me give him some figures.

In 1976 his Government produced 2 900 tonnes of sweet potatoes. Last year we produced 4 300 tonnes. In 1976 they produced 247 000 kilograms of beets and last year we produced 509 000 kilograms. Under the DLP they produced 617 400 kilograms of cabbage. We produced last year 1 699 000 kilograms. They produced one million kilograms of carrots. Last year we produced 2.647 million kilograms. Cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, pumpkin, tomatoes – production in all of these areas has improved, so what is he talking about? When I make the statement categorically in the House of Assembly that for the first time Barbados is exporting agricultural produce, for the first time we are self-sufficient in lettuce, pumpkin, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, cabbage, beets, I say so based on fact!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: Is it possible for a Minister to mislead the House? If a Minister says that for the first time the country is exporting agricultural produce, that would have to be taken as a fact. Since I know it is not a fact, I have to say that the honourable Member is misleading this House, and that is improper under the Rules of the House.

Hon. A. TRUSS: Mr. Speaker, if I am misleading the House, I challenge the honourable Member for St. Michael West to produce the figures. This is the Barbados Agro-Review for 1983.

4.45 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Since he has challenged me, I state categorically that when I was Minister of Trade and when Your Honour was Minister of Agriculture, onions were exported from Barbados to Trinidad. I say no more.

You have challenged me, and I have accepted the challenge. I say that he is misleading the House by stating things that are not facts.

*(Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. CRAIG), were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER).*

Hon. A. TRUSS: In 1976, under the Democratic Labour Party they produced 681 000 kilos of onions. Last year we produced 764 000 kilos. He cannot beat me when it comes to facts and figures. These are reports. They were published in 1975 and 1976 under the Democratic Labour Party and they are published now under the Barbados Labour Party in 1983.

I would like the honourable Member for St. Michael West to come with facts and figures. I have made a statement and I stand by that statement. He could not heckle me in St. Peter and he cannot heckle me in here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Nobody is heckling anybody in here. I would not allow it.

Hon. A. TRUSS: That was not for your ears, Sir. I know that you would not allow it.

Mr. SPEAKER: As long as an honourable Member speaks while he is on his feet, it is for the ears of the Speaker.

Hon. A. TRUSS: I apologise, Sir, and I know that you would not permit such bad behaviour from the honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Sir, when we examine these issues, we must look at what CARDI has done for Barbados, because there is a direct relationship between what they have done for us and what we would have to do for them in relation to funding money. I hope that if we should have to come to this House for a subvention or an allocation of funds for CARDI, honourable Members on that side, based on the statistical data which I have just given, would support it.

In crop research, we benefit from the fact that CARDI's work in crop research relates to pigeon pea production studies, peanut variety trials, the preliminary work on onion blast, the garlic development studies and food research.

He mentioned yams. There was a virus in our yams. When a yam was cut, the underside was black, and we had to do a serious study. CARDI was able to find out from their technicians that the actual knife that they were using — if the honourable Member for St. Michael West does not know, to plant a yam, you take a yam,

cut it in quarter pound pieces and plant them — transmitted the disease. They were able to assist us in that area.

CARDI also helps with the onion production studies and in entomology. When we talk about biological control of the sugar cane pests and integrated pest control in vegetables, all of these are areas in which CARDI has helped us in.

I do not want to prolong the debate. I will be very happy to answer any questions which the Opposition may raise, although on this occasion I do not feel that they are capable or willing to raise any.

I beg to move that this Bill do now pass.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I rise to support this Bill. We are going to support the Bill because it is a technical Bill which merely asks for the change of the composition of the Board of CARDI.

CARDI is an institution that was set up during the time when the Caribbean Community was being put together. It formed a part of the structure for advancing agriculture in the region, and every honourable Member in here, except the honourable Member who introduced it, knows that. Every honourable Member in here knows that CARDI is not a controversial issue. Every honourable Member in here, except the honourable Member who introduced it, knows that CARDI forms a technical part of the Caribbean Community. It is not a matter that requires any statistics or for the honourable Member to come and tell us how to plant yams.

Mr. SPEAKER: An honourable Member cannot tell another honourable Member how to do his work.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is true, Sir, but one can tell him to do it, because the honourable Member read out statistics about how many yams to produce and how to plant yams. That has nothing to do with CARDI.

I really regret that the honourable Member who is holding on as Minister of Agriculture found it necessary to import such things as St. Peter into CARDI. His colleagues ought to explain to the Acting Minister that there are some matters on which you merely get up, explain the details of the change that is being made, and proceed with the change.

We on this side are going to support the change. If the honourable Member wants to discuss agriculture in this country, we would not discuss it with the honourable Member, because we know that he knows nothing about agriculture in this country. If he wishes

to discuss production in this country, we would not discuss it with the honourable Member, because it would be a waste of time discussing production in agriculture with the honourable Member.

Sir, we appreciate that in certain circumstances certain honourable Members would have to be asked to form part of the executive and to hold on for a couple of days in a particular Ministry, but the honourable Member should present the case and let us call it 'wally', and not come in here and decide to give....

Mr. SPEAKER: But will you stick on the Bill?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am speaking on the Bill, Sir....

Mr. SPEAKER: You are speaking about the honourable Member.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are absolutely right, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want you to speak about the Bill.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I apologise for wasting time talking about the honourable Member, Sir. I accept your admonition that talking about the honourable Member is a complete waste of time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I never said that. I never said that you are wasting time either. What I entreat you to do is to speak on the Bill.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There is nothing to the Bill, Sir. I am going to agree....

Mr. SPEAKER: Good. Sit down.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am going to agree that the change in the structure of the Board is not worthy of a debate, Sir, and I will just let it be known, for the Record, that we on this side support the change of the structure.

I wish that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture was here because he had a point of view as to how CARDI could be better utilised in the advancement of agriculture in the region. It would not be worthwhile for me to spend time to debate this while the honourable Member is holding papers for it, because it might be lost on him, so I will wait until the Minister proper is back. I will get another opportunity to discuss that particular matter, but this side has no quarrel with an institution which we spearheaded, galvanised, put clothes on, housed and provided relief for, proper relief.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Speaker, this Bill has as its objective, the amendment of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development

Institute Act, Cap. 14A to give effect in Barbados to the change in the composition of the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute. It is important to recognise that we not only support the changes here, but that this distinguished and loyal Opposition, loyal to Her Majesty, would take this opportunity from the Floor of this House to advance where we think these changes should move to and the direction in which the work of CARDI should be slanted, in view of the critical influence of technological developments in the area on agriculture and their serious impact on the possibilities of development of this sector within Third World countries, of which Barbados is one.

4.55 p.m.

For some time I have advanced the view that there should be a permanent Select Committee of this Parliament on Science and Technology. Many people would not appreciate that a simple amendment like this underlies a fundamental matter that could make all the difference to the economy of this country by the year 2000. If you were to look very carefully at the activities of CARDI, you would find that it is the only well-equipped laboratory within the Caribbean which is capable of dealing with the very critical area of tissue culture and, consequential on that, serious alterations in the ribonucleic acid molecule which forms the foundation of what is known as biogenetic engineering.

In Barbados we have had a situation where CARDI has been able to identify a particular virus disease in yams as one of its major contributions through tissue culture work, our outstanding contribution where those black spots in yams, which occurred in the Seventies, were actually removed simply by tissue culture and restructuring of the basic molecular structure of the yam, resulting in a completely different strain. My understanding is that at the moment there are some 700 acres being farmed by selective farmers in Barbados with this new strain of yam.

There is a lot more to do. Many people do not realise that whereas we consume yams to enhance our carbohydrate intake, yams form the basic structure for the development of steroids. By steroids, what do I mean? If we had a Select Committee on Science and Technology a paper could be circulated on this if we had it in writing.

Mr. SPEAKER: But we are not going into these fancy avenues.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, Sir, I am talking about CARDI. I am talking about tissue culture and CARDI.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are dealing with CARDI in a specific way.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am saying that the restructuring of the Board of CARDI must be directed towards particular events, and I am listing one as tissue culture and consequential bio-genetic engineering, and I am saying that, through the process started at CARDI, it is possible for yams in Barbados to form the basis of an extremely lucrative chemical industry.....

Mr. SPEAKER: But we are not now going to develop yams and yam products.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not doing that. I am saying what CARDI can do. I am not going into the details of how it can be done. I am saying what CARDI can do, and I would be very grateful, Sir, if I am permitted to speak in what I consider to be well within the four walls of the Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: What I consider within the four walls of the Resolution will be debated.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is why I am expressing my gratitude.

There are other areas which I think CARDI should get involved in, and whereas I would not wish to go into these things in detail, I believe that we have a duty to point out to the restructured CARDI what we as parliamentarians feel should be a legitimate direction of research.

I believe that the economics of sugar, consequential on new techniques spearheaded by immobilised enzyme methods, dictate that it is necessary to diversify the end product of sugar in Barbados, as I have said again and again.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not going to allow the honourable Member to create a debate which is not before the Chamber.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not doing that, Sir. I am saying what CARDI should be doing, and CARDI is the subject of discussion before the House. This is a serious problem, because if you are going to tell me that you can only debate inside here who is on the Board of CARDI, it does not make any sense getting up and talking at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: If that is the way the honourable Member feels, so let it be. The honourable Member must learn to obey the Rules.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am living within the walls of the debate. I am saying what CARDI should be doing and what I think we can support this Bill for. I am saying that it is reasonable to call on the restructured CARDI to get into the area of immobilised enzyme techniques

because of the serious and beneficial impact that that can have in relation to the end products of a major industry in this country, and CARDI is quite capable and quite equipped in so doing. I do not wish to go into the scientific details of how it can be done. I will just use the words "immobilised enzyme techniques".

I believe that CARDI also has the capacity to enhance the process of fermentation beyond what existed in Barbados traditionally, like wines and beers, and to get into other areas that stem from the traditional and higher alcohols. The base is also here in Barbados whereby single cell protein can be produced consequential on their own research, which could drastically enhance the protein value of whatever is used as feed stock in Barbados for mixed agriculture. CARDI also has the infrastructure to increase the biomass yield of legumes in Barbados, which is also critical to an enhancement of the protein content of livestock in Barbados. CARDI, through its tissue culture and other areas of research, also has the capacity to create an environment whereby the genetic molecule of several traditional crops in Barbados can be altered in such a way as to reduce substantially the multiplicity of problems that we have in relation to agro-industrial development in Barbados.  
5.05 p.m.

I believe that for a grant somewhere in the region of \$350 000 — I have the figures somewhere here.....

*Hon. A. TRUSS rose.*

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

Hon. A. TRUSS: On a point of order, Sir. I should like to draw to your attention the fact that all the comments made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central are totally irrelevant to CARDI. The function of CARDI is nothing to do with all that he is talking about. You are absolutely correct that he is not pertinent to the facts.

The role of CARDI, if I may enlighten the honourable gentleman, ....

Mr. SPEAKER: That is enough of a point of order. You will have sufficient time to wind up the debate.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That remark is the essence of the tragedy, Sir. Any research organization that targets to the fundamental change in the molecular structure of tissues on which strains of products are built, and for any honourable Member to get up and say that it is irrelevant, .....

*Certain remarks made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. SPEAKER.*

Hon. A. TRUSS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order: I cannot let it go down in the Record of the House of Assembly that I said that what he was saying was not important. I said it was not relevant to the Bill which we are presently doing.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a point of explanation.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point I am making is that the process of tissue culture is at the guts of the work at CARDI, where it has made its mark in the Caribbean, and where, as a result of a grant of US\$350 000, it has been able to influence decisively the development of the banana industry in Jamaica. They have been able to redo the work done in Barbados with yams and recreate the banana industry in Jamaica. But when you are dealing with people who do not understand what you are talking, it is a waste of time. When you are talking at this kind of level, there are certain people who would understand me and there are others who just would not.

We need to put a lot more resources behind CARDI. With a grant of US\$350 000 they have been able to make a fundamental contribution to vital change in agricultural development in Barbados and the Caribbean, and might well be a major factor in assisting in the turn around in the economy as far afield as Jamaica, from recent reports. It is very interesting. They have just got the money for a new banana terminal.

When you look at the difference in technology between the developed countries and the developing countries, when you look to the area of transfer in technology, you recognize that the work of CARDI is bridging that gap — and that gap that is so absolutely critical. The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister must know what I am talking about because everything we are doing in agriculture today might very well be irrelevant in ten years' time. But CARDI presents us with a magnificent opportunity for us not only to address ourselves to current agricultural problems but also to future development, taking into account the employment needs of this community not only at field level but to accommodate those many people with 'A' Levels and 'O' Levels who can readily be adapted to going into other forms of agriculture. Unless that gap is bridged, make no mistake about it, in the technology between the north and south, we are dead agriculturalists. Get that straight. All you are talking about negotiating this price and that price for sugar, as we have it set up now, in twenty years' time all that is going to be irrelevant.

Therefore, this Bill is of fundamental importance to the development of this country, and it is a Bill that should be properly explored on the floor of the House so that employees of CARDI and other associates within the various other organizations would be fully aware that

there are people in the Parliament of Barbados who recognize the value of the work and the very pivotal role that it has to play in the future development of Barbados. I am absolutely shocked when a Minister of Government, through the total lack of acquaintance with this whole area of development, which every single knowledgeable person knows is absolutely critical to the development of this country, gets up and says that CARDI has nothing to do with this. What is CARDI about? If you had said so three years ago, I would have agreed. But with the tremendous breakthroughs and with the equipment that they have in place there now, they are the only laboratory in the Caribbean that can serve this country and the area.

The work done on yams by CARDI is not enough to sustain that laboratory over the years. That is why it is important that the laboratory should serve as wide an area as possible. That is why I welcome the changes in this Bill, because in every area of research, it is essential that you be working on new problems and be moving further and further forward into the field.

I would not bother to waste my time with the honourable Member. There are about six or seven recent publications, whether by the CARICOM Secretariat or the Technical Committees of the United Nations, a mass of new literature showing how vital it is for developing countries to support organizations such as CARDI at national and regional levels. The studies show that the only area of salvation for the developing countries is if they get into the area of development consequential on the results of tissue culture and biogenetic engineering. It is sad that someone who sits in a decision-making position in this country should be so totally ignorant of everything that is going on around him that he can get up and make such a silly statement on the floor of this House.

I agree with the honourable Member for St. Andrew who has pointed out again and again that while debates in this House should be conducted in English, easily understood by everybody, it is the responsibility of those people who advance technical arguments to try and simplify it in such a way that everybody can understand. I have tried my best. There is a lot more I can do. Every point I have mentioned is just a point on the surface. I am absolutely shocked. No wonder the country would continue in the mess that it is in when that kind of arrogance and that kind of stupidity is evinced on the Floor of this House.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You had to curse today. You had to be true to your nature.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES! No, no! I was on my way earlier and I discovered that I did not have a visa, and I

am leaving the country either tonight or tomorrow night, I am not quite sure yet, and I had to go out and get a visa. That is the only reason.

(Hon. A. TRUSS: You were afraid of the blows.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Afraid of what blows? When I came in, I heard such applause I could not understand what was going on. I thought there were Dems out there. I was taken by surprise.

I believe that CARDI has also identified the role of the Aceto Bacter Bacillus. What I am saying is that CARDI can further refine its techniques and find a method of using that bacillus with slight alteration in its enzyme structure, a very similar type to the lacto bacillus that can be used in an earlier process of what I am talking about, the one that was developed for the conversion of molasses, I think, into sugar. The Aceto Bacter Bacillus is quite capable of converting alcohol into vinegar and also....

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is the old thing.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is not the old thing. It is a different thing, because that process can go on to acetone for industrial purposes. It is a slight sidestepping, based on tissue culture work. It is a question of restructuring the tissue culture work of CARDI.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not want to hear that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I believe that I have made my point. I am grateful to you for allowing me to make the point, because I honestly believe that this is so critical to Barbados in future years as I see what is happening in agriculture around the world, that I would like to give my fullest support to CARDI and I would like to draw its attention to these particular important areas.

I would like to see more money placed behind CARDI. I would like to see CARDI continue to bridge that gap. We need not be afraid of the technological gap, because we can bridge it here. We know that through the new technology spearheaded by CARDI's research we can virtually restructure the totality of our agriculture in Barbados to meet the challenges of the next century. But that can only be done if the decision makers are aware first of all of the problems of the gap between developing and developed countries, aware that what they are doing now in agriculture is purely a stop-gap method, and aware of the possibilities consequential on the expansion of the scientific work of CARDI with an increased depth of research and the provision of enough funds behind it.  
5.15 p.m.

Sir, I do not want to make this a document of the House. I will not even refer to it, because I am not quite

sure if the document has been properly released as yet. I believe it will be released, but it is very interesting. In fact, I will lend it to the honourable member. I will take off the front page and lend it to him.

(Hon. A. TRUSS: Who wrote it for you? )

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is mandatory reading for you. I did not write it, but I will lend it to you so you can read it. Then you would be able to make a more sensible contribution.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the House seeks to make certain adjustments to the directorate of CARDI. CARDI is a regional institute for research and development in the field of agriculture. Certainly all of us appreciate that agriculture is continuing to play a pivotal role in the development of the countries in this region.

What we have heard from the honourable Member who just sat down is an arrogant display of recently acquired knowledge on genetic engineering. All of us have in our offices a number of United Nations documents, and for any debate before this Parliament like the one we just heard, all one needs is to only lean over backwards and pick out the relevant study done by the United Nations agency. I think that at heart the honourable Member is making a good point, and it is a pity that his arrogance and egotism have marred the nature of his presentation.

All of us understand that if we are to continue to accord to agriculture the important role that it must continue to have in our national economic plans, there must be substantial research done in many areas of crop rearing and diseases, and that this type of research must require a considerable amount of resources. Unfortunately, the Ministers of the Standing Committee of Agriculture of CARICOM have made a number of recommendations to their Heads of Governments, and what emerged was a loss of credibility in CARDI and its allied agency, the Caribbean Food Corporation, for delivery of the objects of the Association.

I was present when a substantial part of the leadership of the Caribbean Community decided to starve the Caribbean Food Corporation of funds and thereby slowly put it to death, and also expressed some very strong reservations about the work that CARDI had done and was doing. It is not that CARDI has not been set up to do the type of work that is required for the development of agriculture in this region. It is that there is a feeling by the leadership of the Caribbean that it has not been delivering to the extent to which one was expecting of the institute.

CARDI's main problem at the moment is lack of cash flow. They do not have any money. I understand that they are over a million dollars in arrears, so they cannot pay their bills, and the money is not coming from constituent members of the institute to keep it going. We have to make up our minds whether the food situation in the Caribbean has not reached the critical stage in which there should be a greater concentration of resources of the region to combat that crisis. Only yesterday I was hearing the Secretary General of CARICOM lamenting the fact that the Caribbean was now importing U.S. \$700 million in food per year, and this at a time when there is massive under utilisation of agricultural land throughout the region. We in Barbados are no exception.

The honourable Members on the other side do not take kindly to the fact that we have to correct a number of wrongs that we inherited, and they feel that perhaps eight years is a long time. We have some ills in this society that for 300 years we have not been able to cure, and one of the ills we are seeking to cure was the destruction of the agricultural community in Barbados as a viable force in the economic state of things in this country. I do not particularly like to harp back to the ills to which I referred, but when the large acreage of good arable land was taken out of cultivation, particularly in the last half of the administration of the Democratic Labour Party, and when good land was used for house building rather than for the growing of crops, and when peasant farmers — and I see large numbers in my own constituency who raise these points with me over and over again — suffered a decline in the extension services by Government, the Ministry of Agriculture, during the final years of the Democratic Labour Party's regime — and we have had not only to change a practical situation, we had to deal with a philosophical basis of a continuing agricultural industry in this country — these things die hard. You cannot turn off a whole generation of people from agriculture and expect in a few short years to turn them back on. It does not work that way.

We regret that at a time when certain constraints in the Caribbean, constraints that bear on the severe foreign exchange difficulties that we are experiencing, this region and indeed this country should not by now have been making agriculture a greater contributor to the Gross Domestic Product of these Caribbean territories. The answer will not lie in a lot of sarcastic and arrogant rhetoric. I represent an agricultural constituency, and I witnessed the havoc that has been played on agriculture over a period of many years. It is time that institutions such as CARDI be given the resources, not only financial resources, but the kind of moral support by leadership in the Caribbean to carry out the important job it has in doing its research in a number of crops, and indeed in plant diseases.

5.25 p.m.

Like the honourable Member, I have before me a very full analysis, but not on generic engineering, which is old hat. Everybody is talking about generic engineering. If the honourable Member wants to hand out things, I could hand him the last three or four FAO Reports which he could read from now until tomorrow evening on generic engineering. There is no point his coming in here and showing off, because all it means is that he read it more recently than the rest of us. He used the opportunity when he was evading the heat down in the yard today to read something on it so that he could come in here this afternoon and show off.

I have in my hand a study of the Caribbean Secretariat on the efforts in food production and the whole question of policy issues relating thereto, and indeed on the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, (CARDI), with a number of recommendations, and as an addendum all the projects that have been completed in the last year or are currently under implementation. I do not have to come in here, take somebody else's work and get on as if it is my own original thinking.

There cannot be any quarrel with anyone who suggests that it is critical at this stage of the development that more resources and more efforts be poured into research institutes. I hold no special brief for CARDI — I understand that CARDI has not been properly administered. There have been problems with the staff and with management for a long time — but I am making a case for research in agriculture. There is at the University of St. Augustine a Faculty of Agriculture — I know many of the people who teach in that Faculty — and I believe that greater regional effort should be made to get the Faculty of Agriculture at St. Augustine in Trinidad to deliver to a greater extent than it has been in areas of research and recommendations to Government in relation to policy so that we could feel that for the large sums of money we are spending — I think the Government of Barbados is spending nearly \$30 million a year at the University — we should be getting a little bit more out of it than we are getting. But I think we would all encourage regional research institutions, whether it is the university or this proliferation of corporations and institutes that we are seeing all over the region. I think that we deserve a little better.

One of the things about these institutes and organisations is that civil servants — international civil servants, regional civil servants, local civil servants — have a way of throwing new corporations, new parastatal organisations to answer every need. Every time you have a new problem, you do not apply your existing resources in your brains towards a solution of those problems — you create another institution. I think that in the Caribbean our resources are being stretched too thin in trying to handle the type of work that is necessary in handling agriculture and other areas of Government needs.

This Bill seeks to take away from the Leeward Islands one of its Directors and to give it to Belize. Originally, according to my recollection, Belize was grouped with the Leeward Islands with respect to the directorate, but since the independence of Belize, no arrangement had been made to allow it as an independent state in CARICOM to have a full directorship. I think this is seeking to correct that. On the other hand, I am a little bit disappointed that it had to be done by taking away from the University of the West Indies two of the Directors on the Board of CARDI, and that is consistent with the point I made earlier of the importance of the University in the context of regional research and development. A greater university presence in a research institute such as this cannot be such a bad thing.

I also wonder whether the policy of appointing the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Ministers of Agriculture in CARICOM as the Chairman of CARDI is a good thing. Some people do not appreciate, but many do, the tremendous responsibility of Ministers of Government in their respective territories and the lack of time they have to devote to external matters, and it might have been useful for the Ministers of Agriculture in their recommendations to have looked at possibly someone even in the university, who could give the kind of commitment to the day-to-day work of this institution, to be Chairman.

I have the pleasure of representing a constituency that produces more food per constituency in this country than any other, and there are several areas of concern that perhaps on another occasion I would like to ventilate. Whatever may be the developments over the years, a falling off of the labour force, a falling off of the interest in agriculture, the loss of productivity, the decline in sugar as a crucial economic factor in this country, the difficulties because of soil conditions and the need to diversify our agriculture to the extent to which we would like to do so, all these are considerations that would warrant full-time debates on another occasion but things are getting late.

We are getting into the final stage of our term in office, and it is quite in order, I believe, for me to learn from other people who are able to move heaven and earth to get significant work done in their own constituencies, to cater to sectoral interest in their own constituency, for me to start to do that. I suffer from the weakness of trying to deal with matters globally and nationally, but I am learning a few things of late, and I shall be raising my voice for the rest of this term towards a re-ordering of priorities of agriculture in this community.

I support the Bill before the House.

Hon. A. TRUSS: I am at a loss, Mr. Speaker. The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M.

Taitt) said I was wasting my time briefing the House, which is my duty, on the functions of CARDI. I considered it to be important, and I took the time out to do the necessary research to inform the Honourable House of the work of CARDI. The honourable Member for St. Michael West said I was wasting my time, that they supported the Bill and I could get on with the business of the House. As soon as he sat down the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central talked for twenty minutes about the importance of CARDI. I wonder if there are two Oppositions over there. There is obviously a DLP power struggle between the honourable Member for St. Michael West and the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, because the only reason, in my view, that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke is because the honourable Member for St. Michael West said that we should not speak.

5.35 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order: I believe, Sir, that the statement just made by the honourable Member falls well within the province of an improper imputation of motives for the speech of another honourable Member, and I would suggest that you consider whether it is not out of order; and if you so consider, ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member may continue.

Hon. A. TRUSS: He is appealing for light. The point is that for twenty minutes the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke and said nothing, and I say this to the honourable Member for St. Michael West, come over into Macedonia; there is no room over there for him.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made one valid point, in my view, and that is that he called for more money to be spent in CARDI. I support that entirely as an individual, as the Acting Minister of Agriculture and as a Member of this Honourable Chamber. I think it is important, because the work of CARDI is extremely important, and therefore the Governments of the Caribbean must give CARDI more money.

He mentioned CARDI's research and development. In my view he had nothing to say about what we are really dealing with in this Bill today, because CARDI is a unique research and development institute, and it operates internationally, regionally and locally.

He called for more professionals. There are at present in CARDI's cadre 52 professionals representing twenty different disciplines, and they have been supervising postgraduate students at the University of the West Indies. CARDI must continue to perform this

function, and this is why I am satisfied with what he said in calling for more money.

He did not deal with anything to do with CARDI. He dealt with agro-medical terminology. He is a doctor, I am not one, but he cannot fool me. He talked about some immobilised enzyme technique. That means nothing. He talked about the process of fermentation and about altering genetic molecules. That is agro-medical terminology, nothing at all to do with what we are discussing. I just want him to know that we on this side know the nonsense when he talks it. He got up and called some big words and medical terminology and it has no bearing at all on the Bill that we are debating today.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order: the Standing Orders of this House state that debates should be conducted in English. I do not know of any word called "agro-medical".

Hon. A. TRUSS: Because he does not know the meaning of the phrase 'agro-medical terminology', it does not mean it does not exist. He just further enlightens the House of his ignorance. Check Webster's Dictionary and you will find 'agro-medical terminology'. All of this immobilised enzyme techniques, process of fermentation and all this genetic molecules have absolutely nothing at all to do with agriculture; perhaps everything to do with agro-medical terms.

This type of agro-medical research, if I am to give him the credit for calling some terminologies that are correct but using them in the wrong context, is not within the framework of CARDI, and that is the point I was trying to make earlier. I tried to interrupt him, but he figured that I was wasting my time. He came late, he tried to get away from the crowd outside, did not know what was going on, jumped to his feet, his mouth opened and words came out, and he did not have a clue what he was talking about.

The medical researchers would say, first of all, that they would have to become involved if there is any agro-medical involvement. The university will have to be involved, not CARDI, because they have a medical faculty, and they can deal with the terminology that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central used, because they are better able to deal with agro-medical research.

When I introduced this Bill, I pointed out, and I will point out again, that the *raison d'être* of CARDI is to tackle the immediate pressing problems in agriculture, as outlined by the individual representatives who are members of CARDI. The university is a teaching institution and they have said; not only to the Barbados Government but to Governments all over the world, that they are a teaching institution, you cannot tell them what to do. The Government, on the other hand, has certain priorities to deal with in agriculture. Since they

cannot dictate to the university in terms of where they would like to have their research done, they can dictate to CARDI. That is why CARDI was established. He does not even know that, talking about the university. The university is for longterm planning; CARDI is for immediate and pressing problems that the Government is faced with, and CARDI has to deal with them. So when he comes and talks to me about immobilised enzymes, the process of fermentation and altering genetic molecules, it is absolute rubbish. CARDI does not deal with that, never did, and never will. That is the university's function. I do not have to take him; he is ignorant, and I say "ignorant" in the sense that he does not know better, not in a defamatory manner. He does not know any better!

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: If the honourable Member would give way.

Hon. A. TRUSS: I am not giving way unless it is a point of order.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I just want to point out to you that the very Act says that CARDI does long term research.

Hon. A. TRUSS: He was Minister of Education for eight years and does not know any better, nudging his partner on the left, trying to keep his mouth shut, and the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central does not even know any better than not to keep his mouth shut. I repeat that the functions of CARDI as outlined by the Barbados Government are to identify the short term and immediate problems of the country in relation to agriculture. When we have long term problems, we let the university deal with that.

Is he aware of the fact that in Barbados there are five particular problems we face that CARDI is addressing its mind to, in case he does not know about these? The honourable Member for St. Michael West made a speech and ran away because he did not want a debate, because he knew nothing about it, and I must congratulate the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for at least saying something, even though he is ignorant of what is going on.

We have a difficulty in Barbados with peanuts, onions, garlic, vegetables and pigeon peas, and the Ministry of Agriculture has told CARDI that these are the immediate and pressing problems of this Government and we want to see some solutions. We are not concerned about long term at present, because of resources. We cannot talk about what is going to happen tomorrow when we are confronted with a problem today. We have to first solve the problem that we are faced with today before we can address the problem of tomorrow, and that is why we won St. Peter.

I have identified five areas. I did not want to get into all of this, but they have brought it out and I am

going to educate the Opposition this afternoon. They know nothing, and I intend to teach them something today about CARDI.  
5.45 p.m.

There is a peanut variety on trial. Small samples of a number of varieties of peanuts were brought in from Jamaica. They are introduced in bulk seed form and planted in plots in eleven locations in Barbados. I am very pleased to say that under CARDI, early observations indicate excellent germination in early growth. A peanut sheller has been imported from Belize, assembled and successfully put into operation to shell seeds for planting. All of that is under CARDI.

(Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Peanut research has been going on for a long time.)

Hon. A. TRUSS: You do not know anything about this. Let me talk to you about onion blasting now, in case you do not know. Work on onions was seriously hampered by a shortage of suitable support staff to carry out proper investigations into onion blast and the use of herbicides and fertilizers. We did something about it. Spore tracks have been built for field studies, and plans are being made to record data in order that it can be used to sort out the disorder. That is an immediate problem with onions. We are sorting it out.

With a receipt of the grant from CIDA — and in case you do not know CIDA stands for the Canadian International Development Agency — work in CARDI can now be intensified. The funds have been used in two basic areas: one, to collect a wide range of cultivars for screening in Barbados, and to identify a package of agronomic packages suitable for commercial cultivation of the crop and to encourage the production of the crop by farmers, not only in Barbados but in St. Vincent and Antigua as well. Planting material was selected from Jamaica. Plots have been established on four farms, in Barbados, and we are well on the way to sorting out the garlic production studies done by CARDI.

In the area of vegetables, let me point out, a number of varieties of green vegetables have been selected, and it is proposed that work on these should proceed in two groups. I want the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to listen to this, because the vegetables in Barbados — the honourable Member for St. Michael South is there with his mouth opened. He was Minister of Education for eight years — can be identified in two areas, traditional and exotic. I challenge him to mention which are traditional and which are exotic. I will tell him. The traditional ones are the cabbages, tomatoes, carrots and the cauliflower. The exotic ones are broccoli and celery.

As far as cabbages are concerned, the cabbages which currently grow in Barbados are originally from Japan, the S R Summer Fifty series, the K K Cross series and the O S Cross series. The tomatoes came from the United States of America originally. They are called the Calypso, which CARDI developed, and the Duke tomatoes. That is what we eat in Barbados. CARDI has helped us find a strain of cabbage and strains of tomatoes from Japan and the United States of America that can grow well in Barbados.

Carrots, again from the USA are more popularly known in Barbados as the Donvers Half Longers. Have you ever heard about them? You buy them in the supermarket and you do not even know what they stand for. The cauliflower is the Early Patner. So when you want to talk to me about agro-medical terminology, I cannot deal with that, because the Bill does not provide for that sort of research. The University of the West Indies or any other university in countries of the Caribbean or around the world will deal with that.

The last area that affects the poor farmers in this country is that of pigeon peas. CARDI is doing, under the direction of the Barbados Government, this party, is doing a study in the production of pigeon peas. The objectives is to determine whether or not this crop can be grown economically on a large scale, on estates where sugar cane profits are marginal or in fact, negative. Seeds of a number of dwarf pigeon peas have been collected. In Barbados, the traditional tree is a very big tree. What we have now introduced is a dwarf tree or shrub, if you wish to call it that, that produces a great deal more yield of pigeon peas than before. Plots of other varieties have been established in order to assess whether or not these varieties are best suited for mechanical harvesting in Barbados.

I do not want to start on animal production research, but all of this is part and parcel of CARDI's research in Barbados and directed by the Barbados Government, the Barbados Labour Party in power. The honourable Members on that side got up and spoke absolute nonsense about something which they know nothing about. I am happy to see the Shadow Minister of Agriculture here, the honourable Member for St. Philip South. I would have liked to hear what he has to say, because I can talk him around the corner on animal production, vegetable production and the other areas. But he cannot talk. He came too late. He ran from the crowd. As I understand the Standing Orders, I am winding up the debate, so he would not have an opportunity to speak. He did not want to have an opportunity to speak, so he did not come.

CARDI, under the direction of the Barbados Labour Party Government, is doing what we want them to do in

the areas that we want them to do it, because we know that the small farmers out there are suffering in certain areas and we have directed them — because we cannot direct the university, and we have given them money to go ahead and do the research so that we can help the small farmers in this country.

(Hon. L. R. TULL: There is no doubt where the ignorance lies now.)

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

*On the motion of Hon. A. TRUSS, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL, Mr. 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.

*Clause 1 was called and passed.*

*Clause 2 was called.*

Hon. A. TRUSS: I beg to move that Clause 2 do now stand part, Sir.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second that, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, Clause 2 deals with the substantive amendment to the Act as it now stands. If the honourable Minister of State, Acting Minister of Agriculture, Member for St. Michael Central, himself a manifestation of the chance effects of mutant changes in the genetic process.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is nothing at all to do with this.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will complete it, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You are clean off.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am referring to another schedule of the substantive Bill with which this might be in conflict, if he is correct. This would be in conflict with Article III.  
5.55 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am dealing with Clause 2 of the Bill in the printed document before me.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If you give me a chance to set up the background to what I am going to say, I will make the point in relation to the law. They are either

being lawful or lawless. I am trying to direct your attention to lawful activity. The law states, under Article III, that the purpose is to provide and extend the application of new technologies in production, processing, storage and distribution of agricultural products of member States, and to pursue the specified periods of long term research.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You should have brought all of this in in the Second Reading speech, and I will not entertain it in Committee.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Will you please let me make my submission, Sir? I understand the name of the game. I understand the straight jacket, Sir. That is no problem. I can function in a straight jacket. I want to bring a substantive part of the Act which this Bill seeks to amend, and to question whether Section 2 of this Bill is not in violation of that Act. Please let me establish my basis.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are here in Committee dealing with Clause 2, and I will entertain any detail on this. I will not allow any matter which I believe you should have raised in your second reading speech. I am ruling that you should have brought that in your Second Reading speech.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am agreeing with you. That is very proper, Mr. Chairman, and as a proper St. George man you will rule fairly. You will always do that.

The point I am making is very simple, that the Honourable Minister has made the point that the functions of CARDI do not include what is specified in Article III of the Laws of Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am not in the least bit concerned with that in Committee at this stage, and I am not entertaining it. All of this would have been beautiful and well done had you done it when you made your Second Reading speech.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Now, Sir, if that is the line we are taking in that straight jacket, this wicket will be difficult to bat on. When I saw you down in Speightstown the other afternoon with your pocket very full, you were a different person. Now you are a completely different person, and I do not understand that.

The Government of Barbados should have greater representation. That is the point I am making in the context of Section 2. I will say that there should probably be two members.....

*Hon. A. TRUSS rose.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what does the honourable member rise?

Hon. A. TRUSS: On a point of order, Sir. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is totally irrelevant. He is not dealing with what is before us. Clause 2 is before us and I wish he would stick to that. I am just drawing it to your attention, Sir, because if he is allowed to make a Second Reading speech, I will have to be allowed to rebut it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I understand your anxiety, and I take note of your submission.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I think I have made my point — that we should not have speeches by Ministers of Government that are in conflict with the laws of the country.

*The question that Clause 2 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

*On the motion of Hon. A. TRUSS, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

*On the separate motions of Hon. A. TRUSS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, the Bill was read a third time and passed.*

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 3, Sir.

## COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT PASSAGE ROAD ST. MICHAEL

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Sir, the object of this Resolution is to acquire a piece of land which is contiguous to that lovely development called Kensington Court. It is felt that the acquisition of this land would help to further enhance the area. At the present moment the land is occupied by a derelict building and no one is living there. Therefore, it is felt that Kensington Court housing development would have more desirable surroundings and a more orderly layout if this land is acquired.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second that.

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

## ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, December 4, 1984 at 12 o'clock noon.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second that.

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

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