
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION OF 1981-86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, December 10, 1985.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. o'clock on Tuesday, December 10, 1985.

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Speaker)

His Honour R. E. Brathwaite, (Deputy Speaker)

Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Information and Leader of the House)

Hon. H. B. St. John, Q.C., LL.B., (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning)

Hon. B. A. Miller, (Minister of Education and Culture)

Hon. L. B. Brathwaite, (Minister of Housing and Lands)

J. G. Odle, Esq., B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. V. L. Johnson, M. A., (Minister of Transport and Works)

Hon. L. R. Tull, Q.C., M.A., (Minister of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs)

Hon. A. Truss, (Minister of Tourism and the Environment)

O. S. Arthur, Esq., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, December 3, 1985.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to move that the Minutes for the meeting of the House of Assembly for Tuesday, December 3, 1985 be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I have received the following:

Accounts and Statements for the month of October 1985 as prepared by the Accountant-General.

A Report on the results of an examination of Accounts for the island for the year ended March 31, 1985 with two sets of relevant Statements and Accounts.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to lay the following documents:

The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order, 1985.

The Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1985.

The Travel Ticket Tax (Exemption) Order, 1985.

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 11) Order, 1985.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Sir, I am commanded to lay:

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Barbados Water Authority for the years 1981—82, 1982—1983 and 1983—1984.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

A Resolution to grant the sum of \$6 496 131 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1985—86, Part II — Capital as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1985—86, No. 16, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

A Resolution to approve the Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order, 1985.

A Resolution to approve the Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1985
and

A Bill to amend the Companies Act, 1982.

Mr. B. M. TAITT and Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW entered the Chamber and took their seats.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL, a Bill to amend the Companies Act, 1982 was read a first time.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I gave notice that there was Question No. 32, asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael South. I gave notice of it last Tuesday and said it was ready. I intended giving the reply but the Member was not in his place, and I held it over deliberately so that the reply would be here for him to ask the appropriate supplementary, which I know he is very capable of asking, Sir.

(Aside: Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You see how good we are! You see how decent we are!)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Aside: Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You see Sandy, you come in here, you feel good today!)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: And what about me?

(Aside: Mr. B. M. TAITT: We have not seen you.)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am decent, too. Because you put up a sign this morning: "E. L. Sandiford, Member for St. James South, DLP". Fifteen years and now know where your office is?

(Aside: Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes!)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Fifteen years to put a sign in Beckles Road for your office! They are soon going to take it down, though, when the Prime Minister calls election.

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 would like to give the assurance that I will deal with Question Time during the course of the sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, Order No. 5.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 5.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, this item relates to the Transport Board. I decided to bring this immediately because I know that members of the Opposition do not come back to Parliament after lunch, and I would like to have this debated rather than talking nonsense at the branch meeting they had in Independence Square last Sunday night....

Aside.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: A branch meeting. They had about 500 people so that they would not be able to talk about Sousie and a lot of nonsense. I am giving them enough opportunities, unlike them, who would really decide that Order No. 5 should wait until 8.00 o'clock tonight.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I know that they are not going to be back in here after lunch and, therefore, I decided to bring this Order now, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: As far as I can tell, Order No. 5 does not deal with any branch meeting.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I am going to tell you why I am going to bring Order No. 5. That is what the Leader of the House is telling you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can we please get on with Order No. 5?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: No, Sir, rather than bringing them chronologically — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, — I am saying why I am bringing 5 first. That is why I am here, Sir, explaining to you and the House, Mr. Speaker, the reason for bringing No. 5 first, lest it be questioned why I did not bring No. 1, so they can have an opportunity to air all they have to say rather than dealing with it in Independence Square.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can we.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is the purpose of bringing Order No. 5, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can we get on.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 5, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can we get on with Order No. 5?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 5 is now the instant Order of the day, Sir. I beg to move that Order No. 5 be now the instant Order of the day, Sir.

(Aside: Hon. B. A. MILLER: Drive it in them!)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, please, please, please. Would the Clerk please call Order No. 5 and let us get on.

**BORROWING BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
AND WORKS, ACTING FOR AND ON BEHALF
OF GOVERNMENT, OF CERTAIN SUMS
OF MONEY**

Order No. 5 was called — To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the borrowing by the Ministry of Transport and Works, acting for and on behalf of the Government, of certain sums to finance the costs of bus chassis, complete buses, spare parts for such buses, the fitting of the bus bodies and the shipment of the buses and chassis to Barbados.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think honourable Members would be familiar with the background of this matter. It has engaged the attention of the House on numerous occasions, and the previous Minister of Finance had given the House the assurance that after a detailed and

exhaustive examination by the Ministry of Finance and the legal officers, a consensus was reached that, notwithstanding the profound difference of opinion which exists among some lawyers as to the impact of the Special Loans Act in Barbados, the better opinion would be that parliamentary approval would have to be sought, notwithstanding the fact that the source of financing and repayment would be the Transport Levy funds.
12.25 p.m.

Accordingly, Sir, an undertaking was given, and I well recall the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central on many occasions asking the former Minister of Finance when he would be bringing the Resolution, and I well recall the reply. The reply was that a Resolution would be brought with all the amplitude of recycles, so that the whole of the history of the matter would be clear in the Resolution. Well, obviously, Sir, precision in legal drafting is something that takes time, and the reason why the Resolution has not been brought before is that we needed some time to have the Resolution drafted so that no one in the future could have any doubt at all that the Ministry of Finance and the Attorney General's Chambers, as constituted, regard the Special Loans Act as a general authorising statute, but that when you come to use it for specifics, the specifics themselves need parliamentary approval.

The situation, Sir, is that these loans are set out in very clear terms in the Resolution, and they arise out of a decision by Cabinet in 1982 to purchase vehicles for the upgrading of the Transport Board's fleet — 80 units in 1982 and 50 units in 1983. A variety of banks provided the finance for these vehicles. They were purchased by a combination of supplier credit agreements and they were governed by the terms of the agreements. Obviously, honourable Members will appreciate that the various banks would have various legal officers working for them, or various lawyers. The terms of the credit were all approved by Cabinet, and the legal documentation was a matter to be settled between the lawyers for the banks and the principal legal advisors of Government. I am not naming any individual legal advisor. It is well known that the legal advisors of Government reside in the Attorney General's Chambers. The then Minister of Transport and Works and the Permanent Secretary quite properly submitted the Cabinet note for approval to Cabinet, which was approved, and the documentation was provided originally by the lawyers on the part of the borrowers.

Now honourable Members on the other side who have engaged in transactions of this nature — and I know of at least one honourable member who has borrowed sums in excess of this — would be familiar that in circumstances of borrowing of this type, the lender usually insist that the document is drafted in the

fashion and form provided by the attorney-at-law for him. They do not allow the borrower's lawyer to draw the document. They insist that the document is dealt with by their attorney-at-law to ensure that they have what they regard as good security.

The legal opinions varied. A number of people felt that the party to the documents was to be the Government of Barbados — that is what one group of lawyers said — and other people felt that it was to be the Transport Board. Well, the final legal opinion that Cabinet accepted was that it had to be done by the Crown in right of the Government of Barbados acting therein by the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The Attorney General's Office dealt with that.

So that although there was some "to-ing and fro-ing" between the lawyers, we did insist that the Crown was the proper party to the transaction, notwithstanding the fact that one or two bank lawyers wanted otherwise. That was our insistence.

But having got that far and the legal parties being settled, a difference of opinion arose between the Ministries with respect to how it should be shown, notwithstanding the fact that the Transport Levy Funds were going to be used — and it was always agreed from the very outset — as the source of repayment. That was always the agreement. Indeed, one of the objects of creating the Transport Levy Fund was to finance the purchase of the buses.

Now here is where difficulties arose, because there was a conflict of opinion as to the impact of the Special Loans Act. It was finally ruled, by no less a person than the then Attorney General, that the Special Loans Act itself had to be supplemented by a specific Resolution in respect to each specific loan, although it came within the general authority of the law of the land called the Special Loans Act. So that honourable Members will see that the Resolution now seeks to set that out very clearly.

There are 7 loan agreements in various currencies and they are being repaid in bi-annual instalments. I have a statement of the position as of September 20, 1985, and the statement of the position is that the total amount, in Barbados dollars, including interest at that date, will be \$21 000 127 and the repayments of principal and interest that have taken place since that date is \$7 162 904. So \$7 million has already been repaid, in accordance with the terms of the loan agreements and the credit terms. The bankers involved are Barclays Bank (PLC), Citibank, and the Barbados National Bank. Those are the 3 bankers involved, and

the only other credit available would be a sum of £371 736, which will be granted by Leylands Vehicles Export. So the vast majority of money was lent by the banks.

Obviously, Sir, the Ministry of Finance is pleased that this matter has now been clarified, and I do not think that there will be any questioning in the future as to how the Special Loans Act operates in Barbados.

I beg to move, Sir, that the Resolution do now pass.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second that, Sir, and reserve my right to speak.

12.35 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS (St. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, since I have been to the Ministry of the Attorney General this matter has come for my personal attention and advice, and, as a result of great research into this matter, I have been pleased to advise the Government that it was necessary to bring a Resolution to Parliament in the terms here drafted.

It seemed to me, Sir, that, without reflection on the professional competence of any predecessor who may now be in an elevated position in another Caribbean country, there was an opinion that these sorts of matters did not require parliamentary approval, and we are dealing with an area which is subject to interpretation and construction of statutory provisions, and as such, it is entirely possible — those of us who are lawyers — to appreciate that most matters requiring legal opinions are susceptible of more than one interpretation. It may have been Mr. Moe's opinion that parliamentary approval was not necessary. On the contrary, I disagree that, under this Special Loans Act, parliamentary approval is unnecessary. I disagree with Moe. I am not saying that he is wrong. I might be wrong, but I think this is the better way of doing it. I think we must always go to the source, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS : What? You should see what was on the file!

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Moe had nothing to do with this specific thing, he was not in Barbados at the time. No, no, what I am saying is in relation to general advice about the operation of the Special Loans Act. If I did not make myself clear, Sir, I apologise to Members. Let me make it clear now. He had absolutely nothing to do with this, but there was an opinion dealing with the application of the Special Loans Act generally.

I think we need in these matters to look at the Act, Cap. 105. It says in Section 2:

"Notwithstanding any other enactment, the Government is hereby authorised from time to time to borrow from any bank, corporation, company or other institution sums of money not exceeding in the aggregate...."

it says here two hundred million dollars.....

".....on such terms as may be agreed upon between the Government and the lender of any such sum of money."

"3. Any money borrowed under the authority of this Act shall be appropriated and applied to such purposes as Parliament may approve by resolution, and such money and any interest payable thereon is hereby charged upon the general revenues and assets of Barbados.

"4. On obtaining any loan under this Act, the Minister responsible for Finance shall give to the lender thereof a certificate therefor in the form set out in the Schedule."

The agreements for the purchase of these bus bodies and various components were drawn in the name of the Ministry of Transport and Works acting for and on behalf of the Government of Barbados. In some way, a Ministry became an agent of the Government of Barbados. That is history, Sir. I am not prepared to say that it was illegal, because we might have a problem, except that we are now in Parliament. If it were in another situation, one would be met by the contention that we cannot ratify an illegal or *ultra vires* act, which was established since 1879 in the case of *Ashbury Carriage Company v. Riche*, but since Parliament can do anything, except make a man a woman and *vice versa* it is arguable that Parliament retrospectively can ratify what was an omission or error. But one has to be frank about this, Sir, and that is why in the Resolution itself, in the fourth recital — "AND WHEREAS no Parliamentary approval was obtained in respect of the sums borrowed"

Why the procedure was gone through with the Ministry of Transport and Works, I don't follow, Sir. It seemed to me that everybody overlooked the availability of the Transport Board Act itself. Chapter 297, section 17, authorises the Transport Board, with the approval of the Minister, to "borrow by way of loan, overdraft or otherwise such sums as the Board may require for meeting their obligations or discharging their functions under this Act or any other Act conferring duties, powers or functions on them."

Section 17(2): "The Government may, subject to the approval of Parliament, guarantee in such manner

and on such terms and conditions as it may think fit any sum which the Board may borrow under subsection (1)."

Subsection (3): "Where the Government agrees to guarantee any sum which the Board may borrow under subsection (1), any agreement entered into to effect such guarantee shall be made in the name of the Governor-General and under the Public Seal."

Those are the three subsections of section 17, so there was an alternative procedure available under the Transport Board Act for the Board itself, as a separate statutory body and a legal entity, to have been the other contracting party with the lenders, and then to have had the loan, first of all, approved by the Minister, and secondly, guaranteed by Parliament.

There does not appear, Sir, on the file any reason why the Ministry of Transport and Works as a Ministry was designated the other contracting party and deemed itself empowered to enter into a contract with the bank. But as I indicated at the beginning, there have been various opinions on the file taking one position and another, and I thought it was time that this matter be cleaned up once and for all, and to that extent, Sir, Parliament ought to guarantee, even retrospectively, loans made to the Transport Board over the years.

As the Honourable Prime Minister, I think, indicated, a number of these loans have been very far advanced in the repayment schedule — a lot of them are nearly finished — and all the terms and conditions of the loan agreements are being followed to the letter. I checked this very carefully last week. There is no problem with the actual mechanics of the loan.

What we are seeking is retrospective approval of Parliament for the loans that were made for the better execution of the transport system of Barbados. It appears that the Transport Board is going through some problems in terms of its organisation and the efficient delivery of services to the general public of Barbados.
12.45 p.m.

(Asides: Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: We have another Resolution dealing with that.)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I may only intend to speak once today, Sir, so I take my chance now.

Despite the criticisms which made the front page of the *Nation* yesterday, by someone not in the House of Assembly but someone in a position to exert direct influence over the operation of the Transport Board, I wish to say that, by and large, the system of public transport in Barbados worked well for the most part over the last 5 or 6 years. The system of public transport in Barbados can be compared favourably with any other in

the Caribbean, and, certainly, I would like to say that our system is better than any other Caribbean system of public transport of which I am aware, including the larger Caribbean, Jamaica, Trinidad and all of those places.

The public of Barbados cannot complain that there has not been an extension in the number of buses available since 1976; that the quality of bus has not improved one hundredfold over what existed when the buses were under the management and control of private concessionaires; that under the nationalised industry, routes which hitherto were not used, areas which hitherto were inaccessible, have now become accessible and are now supplied with bus services. And allied to this development in the public sector, this Government has given every encouragement to the private entrepreneurs to run a system of private transport, through the minibuses, alongside the public transport system to the benefit of the general public and, of course, to the benefit of the private entrepreneurs so that Government has had a direct interest in building up the private sector of transport in this country for the benefit of the broad masses of people and, of course, the operators who run the private system. But Barbadians, as I understand it, are persons who, in their own quiet ways, strive for excellence, and it is no good telling them that we have the best transport system in the Caribbean if they believe that that system, even though better than others, is not attaining the level required domestically to satisfy the desires and the legitimate expectations of the Barbadian public, and so an attempt has to be made consistently to improve the levels of efficiency in the transport system.

But the problems which exist in the Transport Board are not entirely the Board's fault. I do not believe they are the fault of the Government, but I am dealing with the Transport Board as a nationalised industry. It is well-known to me, and, Mr. Speaker, you have had the problem and the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands representing St. Andrew — the three of us know that the buses which report to the Haggatts depot have not been functioning with maximum efficiency over the last, I would say, five months. You know I would say we have the best system of transport generally in the Caribbean but, at the same time, I would say that there are elements within the Transport Board who are causing it unnecessarily to function inefficiently. I will go further and say that a senior member of the Transport Board staff admitted to me, when I complained about the bus service in St. Thomas, particularly the Sturges route, that they were under sabotage — this is a member of the management of the Transport Board.....

(*Aside:* Dr. R. C. HAYNES: By whom? By a Minister?)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: By whom? By what Minister. By some of the Dems, if you want to hear, that they have in there. And it is a situation with which we should not put up, because it is a system designed for the whole country, and it should not be left to persons, for partisan, political reasons, to sabotage a whole system.

I know when my political secretary has not been able to get from Welchman Hall to my Ministry on a Monday morning, or to the office in town before 10.30 a.m. I have had to transport people in my car from Welchman Hall to Bridgetown because of the inefficiencies of the system. When I have complained, that is what I have heard, that there was sabotage.

I want to say this. Do you know some of the sabotage? It has been identified to me that there are some people who will work a bus, put it down after the first trip and say something is wrong with it, and people are stranded early in the morning and cannot get to work. When it is checked out, it is found that nothing is wrong with the bus, and there is no procedure under the agreement with the union where that person should be dismissed. If you were operating in an ordinary private sector business, and you were found sabotaging your employer's business, it would be a breach of the duty of fidelity and you could be dismissed.

I have never seen any Transport Board bus broken down at night at 11 o'clock or 12 o'clock when the bus is going back to the garage to be put up so the men could get home. It does not break down when the bus is going home at night when they have one or two men on the bus. Why not? Why do all the break-downs come in the morning when people have to get to work? Tell me of any occasion you know when a bus has been stranded taking a man back to Mangrove to put down the bus, or Haggatts, or wherever, at 11 o'clock a night? That is evidence of sabotage, if you want it. And I do not have to rely on what they tell me in there, I have seen it.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Did you ever hear about drawing reasonable inferences leading to one logical conclusion? Well, on that you could be held guilty.

We know that when the agreement was being negotiated for an increase in wages for the Transport Board people, ever time it has happened, there has been evidence of going slow, not co-operating and so on. We have it well documented. In respect of the last three wage agreements, before the negotiations were finalized there was evidence of grumbings, especially in the workshop area, and evidence of an unwillingness to

co-operate. Those are industrial tactics, I will hear, which have an adverse effect on the general population. 12.55 p.m.

It is not fair to the general public to have these kinds of services when the things have not broken down. It is not to say that the negotiations have broken down. Negotiations are continuing, and yet you get this kind of surreptitious industrial action, almost like warfare, being waged against the general travelling public. Well, I hope that, now the negotiations are concluded, the climate will be more satisfactory and that there will be a better delivery of service to the general public.

We do a lot as Barbadians for the Transport Board. We subsidise them handsomely, we have kept the fares within manageable limits, all in the interest of the poor people in this country who have to rely on the buses of public transport to get about their daily business. I do not think that it is fair and responsible for other organisations, out of a sense of promoting their own interest, to take advantage of the general public by doing things which are after all only irritants, but hoping that by the use of irritants, inspired by members of the Opposition Party,.....

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You tell me don't say that? I know what I am saying. Trotman talked about it up to Sunday night. You forgot I called Brugger Tom's name in here already, and Evelyn Greaves got over there and agreed with me that he was one that was doing the same kind of foolishness leading up to the 1981 elections. Look in the debates and see. Everybody knows Brugger Tom, a well-known yardfowl of the Democratic Labour Party. If this was not a House of Assembly, I would adequately describe what he was doing in the Transport Board. You have more than him now who are in there as saboteurs. All I do is appeal to the members of the Opposition who have their friends in there and who have influence with persons. You know when it suits them they say that they are "Her Majesty's loyal Opposition," emphasis on the word "loyal".

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Not to me; they could not be loyal to me! I want you to be loyal to the public of Barbados, too, and use your influence. It is you who say that things like water, roads and light should be taken out of partisan politics, and I agree with that. Similarly, the transport system. Try and use your influence with people like Trotman to have better working relations, to make the workers at the Transport Board understand that they are providing a service for the public of Barbados. They have a duty to be loyal and efficient to their

employer, the Transport Board, and over and above that to the general public of Barbados, because all of us, through taxes, levies and all kinds of things, have to put in the pot to subsidise the Transport system. — Christmas is coming up and New Year; it wouldn't be asking too much, I am sure, to invite members of the Opposition to resolve for the new year to use their influence in the Transport Board to see that your yardfowls in there do not mess up the system.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to urge honourable Members to support this Resolution. As I indicated earlier — and honourable members of the Opposition agreed — that there can be two opinions about legal matters, it is my opinion that the proper way of dealing with this matter is by parliamentary Resolution. It has now been brought. I think it explains fully the history of this matter, and I urge honourable Members to support the matter so that the whole business could be regularised, and in future, if my opinion is right, everyone should know how to proceed in relation to the Special Loans Act hereafter.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Speaker, we have to go back to the whole history of the public ownership of the Transport Board, and without any interruption from the unlettered ignoramuses and unsung, I propose to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member has not had any interruptions, as far as I know.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I was anticipating.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, you were anticipating! I hope you are not anticipating that I will interrupt you.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I was not anticipating that you will ever allow any interruptions.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: When the honourable Member has finished his speech, I believe that you will permit me to continue, Sir.

In 1955, Sir, the Government of the day decided to, if I may import a term, nationalise a certain segment of the public transportation service of this island. In 1963, on March 12, the then Government appointed a Commission, which comprised persons like Mr. E. R. L. Ward, later Sir Erskine Ward; Mr. Henry Cuke, a qualified public accountant; Mr. J. M. Hewitt, well known for his public activities in this Island, to enquire into the public transport system. They delivered a report on January 22, 1964, and that report already is a document of the House.

I am not going to read the report *in extenso*, but I am going to quote from it, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to quote from debates of this House which took place at the time when the Transport Board Act was introduced — I was a Member of the House at that time — to show the developments which have taken place from that time up to this day, because unless we have the historical perspective, one would not understand the enormity of the acts which are being perpetrated against the taxpayers of this island.

In paragraph three it was stated that the transport services for the carriage of passengers are regulated by two Acts: the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act of 1937, as amended by sections 41 and 42 of the Department of Highways and Transport Act of 1945, and the Transport Board Act of 1955, as amended by two amending Acts passed in 1960 Cap. 3 and 1962 Cap. 50. 1.05 p.m.

In section 4, Sir:

"For a proper understanding of the conditions which now exist in the public transport system it is necessary to refer to the history of these services from the year 1955.

Prior to August 1955 transport services by omnibus were provided by a number of concessionaires operating under licenses granted by the Director of Highways and Transport in respect of specified routes. On January 31st 1955, as a result of representations by the concessionaires a committee was appointed to investigate the claims made by them for increased fares. The Committee reported on June 24th, 1955 and recommended an increase of fares by one half cent per stage, the first stage to be increased by one cent and the balance of the increase to be spread over the remaining stages. The Government did not accept the Committee's recommendations but entered into negotiations with the concessionaires. The negotiations broke down, and, faced with the threat of the concessionaires to discontinue the services, the Government assumed the responsibility for the provision of the transport services relinquished by some of the concessionaires."

In other words, if I may pause here, the taking over of some of the transport services by the Government of the day was not a deliberate act of policy formulated by the Government either in its programme put to the people in the General Election of 1951, of which I was a successful candidate, or at any other time.

Aside.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. R. TULL: You were an intransigent candidate!)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: It was something which was adventitious and, more or less, let us be charitable and say, forced upon the Government, by the action of the concessionaires in abandoning the services. The Government did not have any policy of nationalization of the transport services. The Government never made up its mind fully as to whether the transport services should be nationalised, or having being nationalised, what was to be done about them, neither did the Government have the competence within the ranks of the Public Service or elsewhere in order to make the first step in public ownership a viable operation.

I go on:

"On August 24th, 1955 an Act for establishing the Transport Board was assented to by the Acting Governor, and during August and September 1955 the Government took over one hundred and sixteen (116) omnibuses owned by eight (8) concessionaires and began to operate the routes previously serviced by them."

Step one.

Paragraph 5 — and there is a marginal note to paragraph 5 which says this, "Inadequate preparation," the point which I just made. Inadequate not because it was thought out, I am saying it was inadequate because they had no time to think out a policy or to formulate a strategy for the operation of a public transport service.

"Unfortunately the Government had prepared no plans for operating a transport service. As a result when the vehicles were taken over no provision was made for housing and servicing them. There was no Government officer with knowledge or experience of a transport service and no attempt was made to secure the services of such an officer. The provisions made for financing the operations of the Transport Board show that the Government failed to appreciate the financial structure or the essential commitments of such an undertaking. In fact the resolution for \$30 000 passed on August 15th, 1955 "to provide working capital for the running of certain bus concessions which would be relinquished on August 24th and which may not be taken over by other people" indicates quite clearly that the Government hoped that other persons would be found to take over some of the routes. This vacillating policy also explains the delay in vesting the property in the buses in the Transport Board until December 4th, 1957 and the transfer in September 1956 of thirty-three (33) buses which had been taken over at a cost of \$84 000 to six (6) concessionaires for \$51 900. As a result of this lack of a definite policy and inefficient control the

Transport Board suffered a considerable loss during the first six (6) months of operating the service."

What the Commissioners are saying there is that the Government took over some buses

(*Aside: Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Dead wood!*)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:....at a cost of \$84 000 and sold them back to the same people for \$51 900. I am not going into that. But the Government could not make up its mind at that time because they did not have the technical or mental equipment to deal with the problem of public transport.....

Laughter.

(*Aside: Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Was that 1963?*)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: as was evidenced by their willingness to let go back some of the buses at a loss of \$40 000.

(*Asides.*)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: "The Transport Board is a body corporate with power to acquire and dispose of property including land for the purposes of the functions of the Board. These functions are broadly defined in section 3 of the Transport Board Act 1955 as follows:

- (a) to carry goods and passengers by road within the island; and
- (b) to provide, maintain and operate passenger road transport services.

The financial structure...."

— this is a most illuminating report, Sir. It gives us the background as to why we are in this dilemma here today —

"...of the Board did not give it full responsibility and authority. Its borrowing powers could only be exercised with the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee. For programmes of re-organization and development it could act only on lines settled from time to time with the approval of the same body..."

—We did not have a Ministerial system at that time, Sir —

"...which also had authority to give directions of a general character as to the performance of its functions by the Board. Lacking full authority to run the Transport Service as a business enterprise

and receiving no guidance as to policy or finance from the Governor-in-Executive Committee the Board was left in a vacuum and struggled as best it could to keep the service in operation. No manager, secretary or accountant was appointed until March 1956."

As a matter of fact, as far as I remember, Sir, the Board was moribund — that is the gerundive of a Latin verb — and in order to consummate the state of being moribund, they appointed an undertaker as chairman.

Laughter.

1.15 p.m.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Conditions became so chaotic that on June 5th 1956 a committee was appointed to inquire into the general administration of the Transport Board. Its report was damnatory. It found that the first Board appointed was intended to be an interim body with purely executive functions. In the absence of experienced staff there was confusion, and lack of supervision and proper accounting."

A state of affairs which has prevailed up to this very day, Sir.

"It reported further that the Transport Board had no suitable premises, equipment or staff for the maintenance and servicing of vehicles, and that the operational staff lacked direction and control and fell far below the standard of servants in a public transport system. There was a serious loss occasioned by theft."

Sounds familiar!

"Finally, it found that the Governor-in-Executive Committee failed to exercise its powers under Section 10(1) of the Act to give general directions to the Board on policy or in respect of the performance of its functions; and this finding is substantiated by the Government files which have been shown to us.

"On August 17th, 1956 Mr. O. D. Gibbon was appointed to examine all phases of the public transport system. He reported that fares were too low by any modern standard of passenger transport and that it was impossible for the transport system to be operated without increased fares. He also made recommendations for modernising the equipment of the Board by the acquisition of new buses. Mr. Gibbon further expressed the opinion that it would be in the public interest to transfer the buses operated by the Transport Board to private ownership.

"On March 10th, 1960 Mr. G. W. Cadbury submitted a report an excerpt from which we incor-

porate here: "The Transport Board should be operated, as Government enterprises are operated elsewhere, on a commercial basis in which there is no concept of appointments being as secure as those in the Civil Service. There must be no dishonesty and no political interference with either appointments or dismissals." (Page 16).

"All the persons who conducted inquiries into the transport services reached identical conclusions on the inadequacy of passenger fares and recommended that these should be based on a realistic policy of providing adequate income for the maintenance of proper services, for the replacement of worn out equipment and for a reasonable return on capital investment with adequate protection for the rights of the travelling public. They further agree in the conclusion that no provision had been or was being made for either a short or long term policy of development, and that consequently conditions in the transport services were likely to deteriorate.

"Improvements in the organization of the Transport Board began in March 1956 when a Manager, a Secretary, an Accountant and other key personnel were appointed. On April 1st, 1958 a new fare structure, which is still in operation, was introduced, the basis of which was a five cent fare for a stage of three miles, with a maximum fare of 30 cents. In the succeeding years both the Transport Board and the private concessionaires have improved their services by the gradual addition of new units of improved design; but so far no attempt has been made to standardize the type of buses and no research has been undertaken with respect to the most economical and suitable type of bus for town and country routes."

Now we go to the financial structure.

"An examination of the accounts of the Transport Board and of the concessionaires operating routes not served by the Board reveals a perilous financial situation. According to the Auditor's report the Transport Board on September 30th, 1962 had an accumulated deficit of \$1 914 231 for the years 1956—1962, and from its inception to the same date the Government had provided funds to the extent of \$2 253 904. Its assets amounted to \$1 313 558 and its current liabilities to \$973 885. The accounts of the concessionaires also indicate quite clearly that they are operating on inadequate capital reserves and income. Their assets amount to \$581 001 and the current liabilities to \$517 233 leaving them with a book equity of only \$64 568. There is no margin between revenue and expenditure to provide adequately for replacements. It is

obvious that an efficient transport service cannot be provided on such a financial basis.

"Government policy has oscillated between a transport service run on purely commercial lines and a service partly subsidized from public funds. No clear policy has ever been adopted for fixing fares or for the organization of routes.

"The results of our investigations have shown that a new and more purposeful approach to the problem of public transport is essential. Government by its legislative acts has undertaken the responsibility for the provision and control of such a service, and in any modern society this duty is inescapable. The problem is how best this duty can be performed and in this part of our Report we propose to examine three (3) possible alternatives."

The first alternative suggested, Sir, to precis it, was to set up a statutory corporation and the Government being responsible for the total operation.

The second alternative was to leave the provision of services entirely to private enterprise operating by a public utility company, or companies under the control of the Public Utilities Board. Mr. Gibbon advocated the second.

The third alternative was continuing the existing system without modification, and the Commission said that that had no serious disadvantages. With a large number of concessionaires it will be difficult, if not impossible, to plan for an island-wide service which would provide the public with adequate travelling facilities, and they, therefore, advocated that since the Government was already in the field of public transport, the provision of all transport services by the Government or a Government-sponsored corporation appeared to be the most practical course.

Then, the Commissioners went into the cost of financing such an operation. They went into the fare structure and made recommendations at that time for a revised fare structure.
1.25 p.m.

They also made recommendations, Mr. Speaker, on the question of maintenance and repairs, and they conceded that the existing facilities were inadequate and should be improved. They also promulgated the construction of terminals, claiming that the Fairchild Street area was badly laid out and constituted an accident-prone area.

They also recommended at that time training of personnel, and then they arrived at the conclusion that

the co-operation of the general public was essential if safety was to be ensured, and if the goodwill of the general public and of the Police Force was to be secured.

Mr. Speaker, the report which, as you can see, is very instructive, ended with a summary of the recommendations. It is already a document of the House.

That report was published shortly after the Democratic Labour Party assumed office. There was some reorganisation undertaken. The fare structure was revised, and the last fare structure that we had in 1975—76 was one of a postalised fare of 25 cents throughout the island.

An examination of the amount of money that the taxpayers had to subscribe through the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure to the Transport Board disclosed that, between the year 1962 and the year 1975—76, less than \$4.5 million in those 14 years, starting with the Estimates in 1962 — we came into office December 5, 1961, our first Estimates was in 1962 — disclosed that we only drew from the taxpayers a total sum of approximately \$4.5 million in 14 years.

There was no political interference. We had, as far as I remember, in that total period two chairmen, both of them retired Comptrollers of Customs, officers of impeccable reputation, and a Commissioner of Police — three — none of them members of the Democratic Labour Party. They were Mr. Mitchie Clarke, former Captain of Spartan, Mr. Colin Weekes....oh, Girwood Springer, who I believe now is a member of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will advise honourable Members not to call names of persons in the debate because there is a Standing Order which says you must give notice.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I may have been technically wrong, but there were two former Comptrollers of Customs and one Commissioner of Police in 14 years. We did not change chairmen with Ministers. There was no principle of renting a chairman or a travelling chairman. Every Minister more recently has his own chairman, travels with his chairman, travels with his manager. You have chairmen who travel but not on the buses, only in their Mercedes.

I am showing that you cannot get any continuity of policy if every year or every six months the Board has to go through the proverbial eddoes, a new Chairman was appointed, a new administration is appointed. Chopping and changing does not make for proper planning. What has happened since 1976 is that the costs of running the Transport Board have escalated beyond all imagination. Immediately in 1976 the subsidy rose to \$1.38 million. It

only reached four figures in 1972—73 when a large number of new buses had been acquired, and it was in this year when it was \$1.2 million in actual subsidy.

If you read, Mr. Speaker, the Development Plan 1969—72, you will see that the new equipment for the Transport Board, stated very clearly in the Development Plan, which is already a document of this House, was to be underwritten out of the profits of the Board and loans raised by the Board. The Transport Board did raise loans itself, and what the Transport Board used to do was to borrow money from the Port Authority on terms much more favourable than those which the commercial banks in Bridgetown were willing to grant, but not so favourable that the Port Authority was making an unfavourable investment. The Port Authority, as far as I know, got back their money, and that was on a 25 cents bus fare. Now we are paying 75 cents, school children are paying more, and an increase is now threatened or subsumed by the very Addendum to this Resolution.

The very magnitude of the loan which we are being asked to guarantee now at this late stage, it not having been done, whatever may have been the differences of opinion between various Attorneys General — and I notice that the incumbent in the office now was very tentative about his opinions — but the point is that the Act says that it should be done with the approval of Parliament. That is common ordinary language. If a former Attorney General said that, having once got global approval, you do not have to come for individual loans, lawyers are entitled to differ and that is why you have two sides in every case that goes before the courts. Lawyers do not agree on every single thing, and I am not going to commit any approbrium to either of the two distinguished gentlemen. I am thinking, of course, of distinguished in appearance, if nothing else.

(*Aside:* Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Do not put me and George Moe together.)

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Both of you are masters and are also scholastically distinguished.

The point is that we feel that when we are spending this kind of money, because you have a public inscribed loan Act which say you can borrow \$50 million, it does not mean that any number can play, that if you want \$49 million you just go and borrow it. You must come and say what you are borrowing it for, because that is how we are presently advised. It is difficult, particularly for me, as Chairman of the Committee of Public Accounts, to support any other contention. It is very, very difficult. I would find myself in a very invidious position to support an idea that you can spend money, especially statutory

boards which need a lot of watching, without the approval of Parliament.
1.35 p.m.

The amount of money involved is a massive amount of money. I frequently tell people that spending money on motor cars, spending money on buses, spending money on most of those products which industrialized countries produce and which we consume, always constitute a drain on the economy of Barbados. When an American bus company buys buses, there is a multiple multiplier effect on the economy of the United States, because, immediately, those of you who have been to Detroit will see that big "tote board", I call it, which tells you every second how many cars have been produced in the United States and I remember in February — it must have been this year or last year — it had passed the 3 million mark from January 1, and it was rolling over every second or every tenth of a second — the moral being that we adopt consumption patterns which do not create job opportunities for all people. I am not suggesting that we should go back to building donkey carts, but we have to be very careful when we are spending these large sums of money to watch We have to borrow foreign currency. We get in a foreign exchange bind. We get in a balance of payment situation where we are creating more and more jobs by this capital equipment which we import into the island, jobs for people outside of Barbados, and all we can do is to give employment to a few bus conductors and a few bus drivers. The whole Caribbean area, then, has to look at its strategy, its overall strategy of transport and everything else, whereby spending money like this should produce about \$50 million or \$60 million worth of jobs inside of the economy. But we cannot do anything about it at present, therefore the emphasis should not be on German marks, Japanese yens and United States dollars and saying we can borrow this and we can borrow that, because we are creating employment for people outside of Barbados. We have to be very circumspect and economic in our approach to these items of public expenditure.

I do not agree that now we have a cement plant, we should be constructing buildings of pre-fabricated steel. We should be buying the rods and the bars from our sister territory, Trinidad and Tobago, and using more reinforced concrete, because, at least, we would generate some purchasing power in Trinidad and we also do not have to give away the cement, as I read this morning, but in these Government contracts, the producers would be able to buy cement locally and keep our plant operating. The plant is there. We cannot sell it, because nobody can carry it away, so let us try and make the plant viable and economic.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is this to do with the buses? How we get from buses to cement?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Yes, Sir, because I am saying the purchasing of plants generates income and employment for people outside.

Mr. SPEAKER: With all due respect to the honourable Member, let us stick to the buses. Do not let us get down to St. Lucy and cement plants now. We are dealing with buses.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I am speaking about localising our purchases. Anyhow I would not continue that "aside." I give you that assurance.

Mr. SPEAKER: Get back to the buses.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: If it makes you unhappy, Sir, I.....

Mr. SPEAKER: It does not make me unhappy. It makes a good debate that we stick to the substance of the Resolution before Parliament.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I agree, Sir.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: We got cement boats. Maybe, we will get cement buses. I do not know.

Sir, I turn to another aspect. Over \$45 million, plus or minus a million or two, has been collected in the form of a new system of taxation called a levy, a transport levy. In spite of the transport levy, we are still borrowing money externally to purchase equipment, to purchase buses and to repair roads, something we never did before in the history of Barbados.

Asides

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: We never borrowed money outside to repair roads. I can say that categorically. All the necessary, let me say, "ingredients," using a loose expression, that you need to repair roads could be found right here in Barbados. But we are borrowing money, for balance of payments purposes, from people outside, helping the other people but not helping ourselves.

We have a transport levy. We need proper invigilation of the expenditure. When the Minister of Finance could come in here and tell us in this House that he saw work taking place on the Bridge Road and he did not know where they were getting the money from and when he made an enquiry, he found out that the Minister had authorized payment from the transport levy, rightly or wrongly, but did not even notify the Minister of Finance, how much respect, therefore, would they have for Parliament? How much respect would they have for

the Committee of Public Accounts, of which Your Honour happened, to be a member for some time, of which the Honourable Attorney General was a very distinguished member until he elected to retire, or withdraw, or resign, or whatsoever you call it?

But all of us here, our main duty as Members of Parliament, after all, what do you do? You come in here to allocate resources that we take out of people's pockets by way of taxation, and those resources ought to be reallocated on the basis of the maximum social advantage to this society and if we do not care — it is only another \$17 million and we do not care where it comes from or where it goes — I suggest that we are abdicating our responsibility, our primary duty as parliamentarians, and we must be very, very careful. How do we know that we need this number of buses? How do we know? What assurance do we have, Mr. Speaker, that the services are being run efficiently at this moment, in the sense that the load capacity and the frequency of the utilisation in certain areas have been put on a computer and that the buses are not lying idle at important times of the day when people desire the services and matters of that type.

It is all very well to go in for the cosmetics of a bus terminal in Fairchild Street when across the river people from St. Joseph and other rural parishes on that side of the island are getting wet day after day standing up in 15 inches of water until 7 and 8 o'clock at night, when they left work at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. You see, the average person driving across what we used to call the new bridge or old bridge, or going up River Road is not conscious of what is happening to a lot of people from the rural areas, from your constituency particularly, because I gave a drop to a lady whom you well know — a lady of maturity, not a young girl — from Sugar Hill, and I was absolutely horrified that at 8.30 in the evening there were bunches, not queues, of rural travellers standing up in water and the bus drivers were liming in some nearby premises. The buses were full of passengers who were standing up, and those buses should have moved out and they should have been back in town to take up the people who were there. So what I am saying is this: the answer to an inadequacy of service may not be more buses, it may be better utilisation of the equipment which you have there already.

1.45 p.m.

What assurance can the Minister give us that they have computerised this service? One of the first things that I envisaged when the 1309, which is a second generation IBM computer, was brought into this island at my behest was not only that wage bills at the end of the month should be computerised, but particularly the transport service should be put on a rational basis by the use of the computer. Today I am not satisfied that

anybody has done a system service of the utilisation of the equipment which we have. There is evidence and admissions by the several Ministers themselves from time to time that the state of disrepair is something which is regrettable and which can be remedied.

Again, if you have a lot of buses which are lying down, whether on the side or on the four wheels we do not know from day to day, but if they are inoperative through lack of proper servicing, buying new buses will only temporarily remedy a situation which will revert to the previous chaotic stage when those buses begin to break down themselves. Sometimes, apart from Saturday afternoons and Sundays, at certain times of the year there are more buses lined up in Roebuck Street than there are in the road, and that is literally a fact. I will take pictures and prove it to you. Sometimes, when the pressure builds up, they have to put buses on the road which have not passed inspection. That is a fact. And the police have reported such buses. Therefore, by putting buses on the road which have not passed inspection, you are not only breaking the law, you are endangering the lives of the travelling public which is worse. Breaking the law is a technicality to some people. Some people break the law everyday — I do not want to go into that — but when you endanger the lives of the travelling public where the Government ought to set an example, that is a very serious state of affairs, and I take it that the management of the Transport Board is pressured into a position of putting vehicles on the road which have not passed inspection because of the pressure that they have to give way to, to provide the service, but it should never reach that stage.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are faced today with this situation. I am not going to be personal against anybody in this matter. This is Parliament. I will bring the full weight of everything else in the appropriate places. Changing Ministers, changing boards, changing managers and changing chairmen is not solving any problems at the Transport Board, because, if that were so, we would have the most efficient transport system in the whole world. We have had so many changes. You have changed chairmen more often than I change my socks, which is every day, or twice a day. It has got to that stage with the Transport Board.

There are some people who believe, Mr. Speaker, as a former Minister of Finance, my successor in office, has said, there are some people who are Members of this House who believe that spending money is the solution to everything, and I agreed with him in the observations that he made about those Members at that time. But it is an observation that I would tend to make about the present Government at this time. Spending the taxpayers' money is not going to solve any problems. We want a rational, studied approach not only to the problems of transport in this island, but to all the

problems which beset the people who are not fortunate enough to provide services for themselves in this island. This is the prime duty of a Government, and unless the Government is prepared to make a calculated effort, in an unbiased and in an impartial way — in a scientific way — to study the problems and to provide solutions, then I say they ought not to remain in a position where they can only do damage to the public welfare.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES rose.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, before the honourable Member rises, it is now 1.55 p.m.

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

Both honourable Members sat.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I reckon the honourable Member is going to speak for a relatively long time on this item, and I would rather suspend the sitting for lunch at this time.

I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 3.00 p.m. today.

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

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

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, earlier I indicated that I would like to deal with the question which I gave notice of last Tuesday. The Member for St. Michael South was not in his place and I deliberately held it over for this Tuesday. I saw him going through the gate not too long ago, Sir. He is not in his place again, and I really cannot hold the question any longer. I will have to.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member proposing that we take Question Time?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, Sir. I am leading up to that, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now question Time.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, we all have our own style.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): On a point of order, Sir. I draw to Your Honour's attention that the Standing Orders have been suspended, and if the honourable Member is proposing that Question Time be taken now, I believe that it would be proper for an indication to be made that Question Time be taken now. I am not sure of the procedure — I am raising it for what it is worth — but the Standing Orders, as I understand it, were suspended this morning.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is customary that when the Standing Orders are suspended and there are questions to be answered, the Leader of the House usually gives the House an assurance that Question Time would be taken some time during the period of the day. As I understand it, the Leader of the House indicated that it is now Question Time, and that is why I called Question Time, based on the understanding given at the beginning of the session.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I therefore propose to go back to Question Time. Under the appropriate Order of the Day, I would like to deal with at this time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 32, asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael South, who is not now in his place. Therefore, the answer to that question should be laid.

(Aside: Mr. B. M. TAITT: Cannot say a word!)

(Aside: Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Cannot say a word!)

(Aside: Mr. B. M. TAITT: Not word one!)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I so now lay the answer to Question No. 32.

Mr. SPEAKER: The answer is laid.

(Aside: Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Cannot win!)

(Aside: Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Cannot say a word!)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: We now revert to Government Business.

When the Suspension was taken, the honourable Member for St. Michael North West was about to speak. If he so desires, he may now continue.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member who spoke before me gave a historical background to the Transport Board, and having spoken so well, he has probably given us an opportunity to look

in more detail at some of the problems that do confront the Board.

Clearly, the Resolution before us state the purposes of the loan and, therefore, Sir, when one thinks of the yearly subsidies and the resultant losses from time to time, it is obvious that the running of this system must be of some great concern to the majority of us. The first thing I would like to have clear in my mind, and I suppose the Minister will declare such statements, is, would the Minister, when he replies, as a matter of policy state whether the Government's position on the Transport Board is one of treating it like a social service, probably as the health service or any other service, or a private enterprise where there is an expectancy of a profit making enterprise? Sir, without that kind of pronouncement at this moment, it is almost very difficult for one to make a definite point as to which of the policies the Government intends to take is the correct stand. But I know this, that the Transport Board must fall in some area as a community service. It must fall in that area in view of the fact, Sir, that most of the workers depend on a good, efficient, healthy service to maintain their livelihood, and all the problems that have been voiced so far in this community have been voiced by those commuters who have been using the service.

This Transport Board is an interesting board, in that one ought not to be found in the difficult situation of meeting the demands of the people who use it. It ought not to be a financial problem, because it has the ability to borrow, as it is doing today. It also has a yearly subsidy and the fares it collects. Therefore, the financial aspect ought not to be that difficult, neither should there be a difficult problem in finding people to use the service, because as a result of that poor service, Sir, the minibuses have thrived. As a matter of fact, Sir, in 1979 there were approximately 309 minibuses operating, which in itself suggests that the deficiency in the Board lies more in being able to service the routes.

I could go back five years from now. As the Honourable Attorney-General pointed out, in the last five year period, you would have noticed that the board has already had something like \$50 million in a subsidy. But it was also stated five years ago that the main problem was that the Board was unable — and this is the Transport Board Annual Report 1981: .

"The unsatisfactory fleet performance during this period also reflects the poor workshop facilities available which must result in inadequate maintenance programmes and an unreasonable deterioration of the fleet."

Now the Board knew this problem years ago, almost five years ago they had this problem, and one wonders what had really been done to relieve that problem, because the Board relies on serviceable fleets to be able to collect the

fares that makes it a viable entity. In 1985, five years later, we are now hearing the same problem, and it is very unfortunate, Sir, that whenever the Transport Board problem surfaces, it tends to suggest that the workers are the ones to blame.

I heard the Attorney-General this morning suggesting as if the real problem with the Board lies with sabotage — he used that word — as if all the workers employed by the Board are members of one party.

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: Not one of them!)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: I would say this, that the main problem with the Board seems to lie not with the workers themselves, but with the approach and the attitude that permeates that Board.

Sir, I would like to explain this one. We have allowed the political advantage to dominate our thinking, and I would expect that, as we draw nearer to the end of this year, we would expect certain things to be done. But the Board has created 'a monster, and I will say the monster in this respect and I am going to give specific instances. I have drawn it to the Minister already that you cannot expect to have a Board of workers whose recruitment is based on party affiliation.

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yardfowlism!)

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: All of them are Dems!)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: And I am going to say this, because I drew it to the Minister's attention that workers applying at the Transport Board for work have been requested to get some kind of recommendation. What has come out of that exercise is, Sir, that workers are given the impression that they can only be employed with the Board if someone from the Government side gives them a letter. That is a serious thing to create because, Sir.....

Aside.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: I am not complaining about that. What I am complaining about is when you sow that, you are going to get the problem that you complained of, that the workers, having accepted a job or acquired a job on that basis, would probably react in the same way as in 1955 when the buses were taken over. The attitude was it was "we buses," and the commitment to work was more or less based on the party or political association rather than on the ability to do the job. This has been the problem with the Board, and I do not think you should blame the workers when they are recruited in that way. Nobody knows when a worker is genuinely one

side or the other, but he will do it, and I have told people.....

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Ask Branford Taitt! You can't get one of them to sell an ounce of salt!)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES:.....that I can only give recommendations when I am justified that the person is capable of doing the job. So that the idea that the workers are now being blamed ought not to be their fault. It reflects on the administration and the recruitment of those in the service.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the complaints will continue for a very long time, until we understand what is Government's position in servicing this Board. It is very well to get money every year and people have to be constantly in fear that they are not getting the kind of service that they expect after paying this kind of subsidy. It is also interesting, Sir, that many of the routes on which the workers complain are also routes which are well serviced by the minibus operation, and the minibuses have only thrived primarily because we have not seriously approached the problem of the public transport as a means for people to derive their own existence. We seem to see it as a means of which you have another service and probably anything will do.

I am sure that the Minister himself would want to reflect on some of the statements he made. Whenever the Board had a financial problem some years ago, the blame was cast on the workers, and I remember that fare boxes were brought in. There is no more difficulty with the worker in respect of the collection of fares. But now that you have another problem, you are now asking the blame to be carried by those people who are least responsible. Why is it that you had a consultant to advise you on time structures and so on? You had a consultant!

Aside.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Well, if you chase them away everyday, it is obvious that you eventually would not get people willing to do the job as efficiently as you would want them to do it. You would not get them. So who do you give that to? Unless you have the kind of people who are capable and proficient in these areas, again you will have another problem. The workers have everything to gain by keeping their jobs. To lose a job in this day is almost a disaster. They cannot play with their jobs. So my view is that the workers ought not to be the ones on which you lay heavily. It is most likely that those who are administering the whole service are the ones developing the problems for you. As long as your administration is faulty, it is certain that it will reflect in your end product.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, very often if you listen to "Gutterperk," I think this is one of the areas we tend to get the day-to-day complaints about this Board. And one would think that, with all of the advantages available today, better roads I understand that they say better roads.....

Aside.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: I know that, but the position is that the complaints are genuine. It is genuine from the point of view that if you set up.....

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will you stop shouting across the Chamber. The Hansard Reporters complain that it disrupts their concentration. Please carry on.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Yes, Sir.

If you listen to the complaints, you could see that the complaints are deeper than what is just being reported to be said. Workshop problems will always occur. But, Sir, if the Minister intends to use the private sector in respect of this area, I would like to suggest to him that experience has shown that work given out to the private sector may not necessarily solve the problems. There may very well be an increase. Some years ago, I had the opportunity to be sitting on a Board where the vehicles were given out, and you would be surprised that the cost of one set of repairs almost came to the extent that you could have almost bought a new vehicle. That was on record. And the monitoring of the whole exercise may very well prove much more difficult than to upgrade your workshop area. See that some person who has been versed or is well *au fait* with this kind of operation could advise you in respect of that approach.

We must also think in terms of the Transport Board not only as a means of providing a service, but it is also essential in a day like this to provide a necessary source of employment as well. I believe, Sir, that the more efficiently run the Board, it will provide the kind of opportunity for many of the aspirants to do a better job. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the quality of personnel at the lower end of the Transport Board are people who, normally, would not have gone there. I think the Minister himself has indicated that he wanted to make the Board so attractive that people who would have gone into other areas would go there. But at the lower level, you have attracted a kind of employee who needs an opportunity to develop and make the Transport Board a place where he feels he has an opportunity to improve his way of life. So that when you criticise the workers in this way, you actually break the morale of the workers and, as a result, it is bound to result in some of the problems which you have raised.

It seems to me that even though you may increase your fleet, the answer may still not be the correct solution you are looking for. I would feel, Sir, that it would be better if the whole idea of the transport system in Barbados is looked at generally, and to satisfy oneself that the place which the Board takes in the transport system may be one which will satisfy the needs not only of the pleasure seekers, but those who use it for gainful and productive life.

I hope, Sir, that the Minister will be ready and willing to use all that is at his disposal to improve the status of the transport system in Barbados, and not only boast that it is the best in the Caribbean. We have a tendency of saying in the Caribbean that we are the best and that sort of thing. Put it this way. We never used to compare ourselves with the people in the Caribbean. We were the trendsetters, the other people always used to look at us, but we have a tendency nowadays to look back. If we are going to do something, we are saying, 'Dominica is less'. We never remember that Dominica was a place in which we wanted to do anything. That is a way of trying to make yourself feel complacent, but that does not remove the problem you have. The point is that the Board has been losing money, and it has been saturating a lot of the taxpayers' money, as I said, within the last five years to the tune of \$55 million in subsidy, and what have we to show? We changed buses, it is true, but where are we?

3.20 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. L.A. WEEKES: Well, whether it is not paid for, the point is that the taxpayers have been called upon to subsidise it, and all I am saying is this, that telling me it is the best in the Caribbean does not answer the question. What answers the question is that we must be able to provide a service that the people in Barbados are satisfied with, and that is what we are asking. If we give you the opportunity to borrow the money, the people are out there, then your only task is not to ridicule the workers but to encourage the workers to do their best, avoid as much as you can the method of selection and allow those people who show the ability and the natural desire to be good workers within the system to be there. I think this is what all of us require. I think you can overcome some of the problems if you start to look at how you recruit your people and give the service an opportunity to function well.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You had a good system and we followed it.)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: The Leader, who spoke before me, said that within 14 years we spent \$4 million. I am saying that within the last five years you spent \$55 million. When you compare the two.....

Aside.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: You had new ones and the system is worse. People still cannot get home on time; people are still waiting to get home. People are using all kinds of services. As a matter of fact, so problematic is the situation that we in here tried to pass all kinds of restrictions on the minibus service, and in this report it is stated clearly that the minibus operation took up the slack. There ought not to be any slack if you are spending that kind of money.

In my view, Sir, I would suggest that we stop licking the people at the bottom. Seek the areas where the problems are. If the problem is in the middle, deal with the problem in the middle. I personally think that the workers very often are made to feel that they are not the kind of people who should be there. I have driven on the buses, I have seen some of them, and I am satisfied that they are quite willing to do their best and that any attempt to pass the blame of the failures at the Transport Board to those workers, in my view, is not fair to them, the very people who keep the service going.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have my contribution in respect of the Transport Board. I did not want to be unduly harsh in any way, but I wanted to air a few concerns which I thought the Minister should know. Mainly, is the Minister going to treat the Transport Board as a social service in which there is no possibility of making any profit, or is he going to treat it as a private enterprise where there are going to be some profits from time to time?

Thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, this Resolution which comes before the House is one in which I believe it would be fair to say that some honourable Members on this side of the House are being vindicated in the positions they have taken with regard to the necessity to do things in the Government sector in a particular way. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that on a previous occasion when the question of unauthorised loans made by the Ministry of Transport and Works was discussed in this House, the then Prime Minister and Minister of Finance not only disagreed with the views which were being expressed from this side, but took the opportunity to cast aspersions on the quality, scholarship and ability of the persons who dared to raise the question.

Mr. Speaker, I well recall pointing out, I believe in a Budget Debate, that no Ministry in Barbados, according to the laws of Barbados, had any authority to borrow any money, and, as a matter of fact, the very law, the Special Loans Act itself, Cap. 105, is characteristically specific in its attempt to control the expenditure of Government

funds. Section 4 of that Act says, if I may quote from the Laws of Barbados, Cap. 105:

"On obtaining any loan under this Act, the Minister responsible for Finance shall give to the lender thereof a certificate therefor in the form set out in the Schedule."

Of course, the form is set out. I have waited until — well I can say this day — to see whether the Ministry of Transport could indicate that it has in its possession, or that it passed on to any of the banks or bankers listed in this current Resolution, the appropriate certificate from the Minister of Finance of the sovereign state of Barbados.

As a matter of fact, Sir, according to law, we do not have to pay one cent of the money which is alleged to have been borrowed, effectively, because if this law says, "shall", the same law under which we are now approaching Parliament, says that the Minister "shall" prepare such certificate, then, Sir, that is mandatory. If it has not been done, as the Government has discovered in other areas, then it is not necessarily valid. I am not going to advocate from the floor of this House that monies borrowed should not be paid back, but I think it is necessary to make the point that there is a proper way in which things must be done under the rule of law, and whenever these things are not done, as we have seen, the Courts will say that what has been done is not valid.

We come here today, Sir, and we are being asked to validate — what the Attorney General was not able to say I am able to say — to validate illegal acts. I am satisfied that the acts which were performed were contrary to law, that they were illegal, and I would like in passing to offer, not a view — I do not wish to say correction — far be it from me to attempt to offer correction to anyone as illustrious as an Attorney General of Barbados — but I think he will take the point that this Parliament of Barbados is not able to ratify or to pass upon any act that was performed contrary to law, and I think that when the honourable Member for St. Thomas, the learned Attorney General, was making his contribution today, he inadvertently gave the impression that this Parliament was capable of doing such. I think that he was referring to the authority which is vested in the United Kingdom Parliament and not the Parliament of Barbados. The Parliament of Barbados is a colonial Parliament and it is now accepted law that colonial Parliaments do not have the same power as the British Parliament, which, itself, is a court of law. Colonial Parliaments derive their authority, therefore, from Statute, and in the case of Barbados, in a rule of a distinguished Speaker of this House — in fact, he was Acting Speaker — the then Deputy Speaker, Mr. Ezra Alleyne — he ruled and put it in writing on another matter in this Chamber, quoting from the highest

authority, that in 1639, when this Parliament was established, it did not acquire the same powers as the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It might have been...

3.30 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: And what does that mean?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What does it mean, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not have enough time to explain it, Sir. What it means is that His Honour ruled that this Parliament, in fact, did not have the authority which Members of this Parliament sought, according to that ruling, to vest in this Parliament....

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you saying that this Parliament has not got the authority to overrule itself?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I do not know how you are able to get that out of what I have said.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, as far as I know, this Parliament has supreme powers.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, with the greatest respect...

Mr. SPEAKER: With the greatest respect to any ruling.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not dealing with any ruling. I am dealing with what he ruled based on the law as he perceived it....

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh! I am happy that you have put it that way.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not have to put it that way for a Speaker. If a Speaker ruled, he has ruled. I could not cast aspersions on the ruling of a Speaker from the floor of this House, whatever I thought of the ruling. The point is that when Mr. Speaker has ruled, it forms part of the rules of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Until it is ruled upon again.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If you are saying you look forward to the day when you would have the opportunity to rule and correct any misrulings that have been made, that would be another matter. But I wish to get on.

The point I am making is that in that ruling the Speaker of the day correctly ruled that this Parliament does not have the authority of the United Kingdom Parliament. The authority which is vested in this Parliament can be found in the Constitution of

Barbados, which is the supreme law of Barbados, and, as the courts of Barbados have demonstrated, whenever this Parliament makes an error, whenever this Parliament passes a law that conflicts with the Constitution, the courts will exercise their authority and state that the law purported to have been passed by this Parliament is contrary to the law in the Constitution and, therefore, it is *ultra vires*. My friend, the honourable Member for St. Thomas, when discussing this matter, may have given the wrong impression, and I think he will take the point.

I say that to go on to make this point, that I do not believe that this Parliament has the authority to ratify illegal acts, and when one looks at the Schedule to this Resolution, one can only conclude, as I stated many months ago — and the Prime Minister was gracious enough to acknowledge it in his presentation — and the then Prime Minister said that he would seek legal advice since I was being arrogant, cocky and ignorant — those were his exact words — and today, Sir, I heard the Attorney General saying that he is of the view that these matters have to be regularised and so we come to Parliament.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the second point I wish to take on this Resolution has to do with yet another position we have taken from this side. This Resolution says that we are called upon to ratify a decision to import finished buses into Barbados. Recently there has been a great brouhaha about some chairs that are superior to the chairs we sit in in here, and there was also some discussion about \$2 million in foreign goods — furniture — brought to Barbados, which have not yet been found. I am not getting involved in that, we have 20 buses that have been imported finished.

Mr. Speaker, at that time when the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) was the Minister of Transport and Works, I pointed out that it was not in the interest of this country for us to be importing finished buses into Barbados while the manufacturing sector in Barbados was suffering the beginnings of a deep depression. In fact, they were already in depression at the time, and again, the then Minister of Finance, rising to the highest level of his colossal arrogance, said that anyone who knew that there was some one in Barbados who could manufacture buses and who did not vouchsafe that information was an economic saboteur, and was the kind of person who ought to be hanged on the gallows.

I well remember the kind of rhetoric which used to flow from the arrogant front bench. In those days, Sir, as today, they cared not about how things were done, so long as they decreed that they should be done. The attempts to point out to them that the niceties of

procedure, set out by those who had gone before, after experience, formed part of the system which we had, always fell on deaf ears because they came, they conquered, they knew all, they did all. Now, Sir, today, we are being called upon to ratify these loans so-called. Mr. Speaker, I am unable to agree now, as I was unable to agree then, that we should pay for 20, or 40, or 50 finished buses for the Transport Board.

I have in my hand here, Sir, House of Assembly Debate of Tuesday, February 22, 1977. The honourable Member for St. Andrew and the honourable Member for St. Thomas — he was in the House at that time — would remember that we had a discussion in which they felt that I was being a little unfair when I made reference to Lord Stokes, and I do not propose to do that in this debate. Mr. Speaker, the then Minister said, and I am quoting from page 557 of Hansard:

"We have no choice and this was a painful decision which the Government had to take. We have, therefore, made arrangements, subject to Parliament's approval, that we will bring in 40 completed units in addition to 20 chassis to be built on here by the local manufacturers."

3.40 p.m.

He went on, and, Sir, in that same debate, when I spoke on page 558, I said, and I am quoting from page 558;

"This Addendum, Mr. Chairman," — we were in Committee — "speaks of a United Kingdom firm that has indicated it will be able to supply a number of completed buses. The Minister in introducing this Head did not give us any indication as to how the provisions of the Financial and Audit Act of 1964 were applied in terms of determining and finding out this United Kingdom firm. While trying to suggest that there was some hanky-panky, etc..."

I do not wish to repeat that part of it. And then I went on further on, after some interruptions:

"But we come to the question, Mr. Chairman," — I am now on page 559 — "of employment in this country. The Minister stated we had no choice, it was a painful decision and yet he had made the decision and the Government comes for us to agree that 40 new buses should be imported into this country at a time when the unemployment situation in this country is reaching unprecedented heights. He wants to tell me that there is some magic in the month of June that he must import 40 completed buses into this country, because he was told that the local people who produce buses can only produce 20 in the allotted time, the allotted time being between now and when he takes over the buses."

And I finished my contribution, Sir, on page 560, in which I said

"....but we could never agree with the decision made by the Government to import 40 finished buses into Barbados when we have people in this country capable of producing bus bodies."

Mr. Speaker, there is more to the debate that went on on that occasion but my time does not permit me to go into details of that part of the debate. What I am saying is that that was 1977. By 1982, we are now being asked *ex post facto* to agree to the importation of 20 finished buses. I do not know if these are the same 20, but I remember the Honourable Minister saying then that they were Leylands he was going to bring in, for technical reasons. This speaks of another kind of bus, so they cannot be the same. So it means, Sir, that not only did we accommodate the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works in 1977 to bring finished buses, but up to 1982 we are still bringing finished buses into Barbados.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker,.....

Mr. SPEAKER: There are two honourable Members on their feet. On what does the honourable Member rise?

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: On a point of order: The honourable Member is referring to me as the Minister of Transport and Works. I never was.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Communications and Works, Sir. I apologise for calling him Minister of Transport and Works. I humbly apologise to the House for calling him Minister of Transport and Works. He was Minister of Communications and Works. Good Lord!

I agree with him. I understand the subtle difference he is making. He is saying he was the last Minister of Communications and Works, that the rest of them have been Ministers of Transport and Works and that the Medes have no dealings with the Persians. He was a Mede and they are Persians. I agree with him, because what has happened in the Ministry of Transport and Works, he would not have condoned in the Ministry of Communications and Works.

But my point is valid, because both Communications and Works and Transport and Works were responsible for the Transport Board, both of them were Ministers in the same Government, and I am saying that by 1982, if they are the same buses from 1977, it means that we could have allowed them to be built in Barbados, because three years have passed. If they were not the same buses that came in in 1977 when he applied for 40 finished buses, then by 1982 we were still perpetrating what I consider to be a wrong-headedness in

the administration over there in allowing finished buses to come in.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In 1985 there is no policy at all! I have not got to 1985, I am up to 1982.

The point I am making, Sir, is that the Ministry of Transport and Works in 1982 had possibilities because it had begun to get some kind of direction. It had a transport manager at that time who had some quality, in 1982 they had a transport chairman who had a good relationship with the public, and they had begun to give the people the impression that the transport levy was a useful contrivance for solving the problems of transportation and related matters in this country. As soon as the people started settling down in that particular viewpoint and the then Minister came into this House and said there was corruption in the Transport Board, he was moved. He came in here and said there was corruption in the Transport Board, and lo, and behold, he was moved.

We have had nothing but problems with the Transport Board for as long as we have had a Transport Board, but those problems can be said to fall within the purview and the ambit of regular administrative problems. We in the political parties battle and fight about them, and — yes, I agree with the Attorney General — I have said that roads should be taken out of the political arena, and I am prepared to say that transportation needs to be taken out of the political arena as well, but not the politicians. How can we take the politicians out of the political arena? The politicians continue to descend into the Transport Board. So when the then Minister of Transport was transferred, he had to carry his group with him or they were sent with him. So we lost the competence of a good Chief Labour Officer as he moved to provide a higher competence at the Transport Board, and then we lost the competence of a good Manager of the Transport Board as he moved on to satisfy the whims and fancies of a strange Administration. I say no more on that. And then we had the Minister of Transport and Works, the present Minister, who has given us three speeches in this House, each of which tells us the same thing. It says as follows, Sir: 'what we need to do is to bring management systems to the operation; I am taking steps, I have given directions, I have given instructions and it is only a matter of time now before these things fructify, these things will come to fruition. He said when he came for the subsidy two years ago that he saw no reason why he should have to come back the following year for a larger subsidy. He said the following year that he saw no reason why he would have to come back, as he came for \$14 million. And then as they sought a way to get around having to come to Parliament, they started dipping their hands —

I means those hands not literally, I mean them in the figurative sense — they started dipping their hands into the transport levy to do all manner of things, and it is a fact that the money from the transport levy did not only buy buses, did not only buy parts for buses, but got involved in repairs of the transportation infrastructure itself. And I say that that is contrary to the Act.
3.50 p.m.

In the last two years, I am saying, whether with advice or without advice, that they have been misusing the transportation levy as it was put to us in this Parliament when it was passed. I am saying that it helps to by-pass Parliament in order to avoid the criticisms that may have rained down on the head of the Minister and the Government when they decided that they would operate between the Transport Levy Board — made up, impeccably, of people of high repute — and the Transport Board itself. The level of incompetence in the Transport Board has been reported on before and will be reported on again. I am not competent to say whether it is true or false. I am not even competent enough to say if the analysis is valid. What I can say, however, is that a lot of people of high repute have said that there is complete confusion in the Transport Board. They have talked of interference of one kind or another. They have talked of.....

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Talk of interference! You are an American-type politician. He fired a man one time without cause.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Has the honourable Member concluded his speech?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I am giving the Prime Minister a chance to get his *sotto voce* remarks completed.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It is a woman, I heard.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is a woman now. He says it is a woman.

The point is, Sir, that the confusion which exists in the Ministry of Transport cannot be whittled away neither by frivolous remarks nor can it withstand the brutal attacks which the public of this country will visit upon the Government. The Government of this country has a responsibility to the people of this country, and no amount of gainsaying or factuous observation will change the fact that, in the light of some \$45 million in subsidies in the last few years, the transport system in this country is worse than it has ever been.

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: It is not true!)

(*Aside:* Mr. P. M. GREAVES: True!)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I stand subject to the correction of the honourable Members on that side if they say it is not true. Let me put it this way, Sir: according to the reports of the public, it seems to be the worst it has ever been. But let us assume, Sir.....

(*Aside:* Do you mean Trotman?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: They are talking about Trotman, Sir. They are out there shouting, "Trotman". I put it to you, Sir, that if they mean the person I think they mean, he is in an excellent position to comment on effectively and correctly about the shennanigans and goings on in the Transport Board. So you shout, "Trotman" and I say, 'Good. He is an expert', and if he says that there is corruption, I would err with him until you straighten me out, because now I have a bank of commentators. I have a Minister of Transport who said there is corruption. In here, and he could not lie in here! He could not lie in this Parliament, not with impunity so if he said there was corruption, there must have been. I have a highly respected labour leader saying, "Yes, corruption!" And I have large numbers of people every day saying there is corruption. I do not know.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central tells me it is so and he does not lie in this Parliament.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. R. TULL: Only outside.)

Laughter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: So, Sir, I am not dealing with the corruption point at this stage. I am merely saying there is confusion, and I am saying that the Minister responsible for Transport and Works has given us, on more than one occasion, the same speech, and now he says he is looking at management contracts! Now, Sir, let me.....

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I said that today?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sorry, Sir, now he is reported as having said — let me be accurate — that he is looking at management contracts.

Now, Sir, let me make my position clear. There is no amount of utterances by anybody in Bridgetown or anywhere else that can convince me that the transportation system of Barbados should be put in the hands of any so-called private sector. As far as I am concerned

that is flying a kite. We have minibus operators in this country who are doing a fantastically good supplementary job, and I see nothing wrong with a duo of operations in this country. I am further convinced that the Transport Board can be successful. I am satisfied that a subsidy of sorts must be given to transportation in certain circumstances.

Mr. SPEAKER: And I am satisfied that the honourable Member has used up the half an hour given to him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: With much regret, Mr. Speaker, I wish I could speak for just five more minutes as I wound up, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not permitted under the Rules.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In all the circumstances, therefore, Sir, I thank you for your patience and hope that I will get a chance to continue this speech at some other time, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, this debate has taken a turn which I myself did not expect. We listened for a very long time to the reading of some form of report, and one would have thought that one was listening to a lecture coming from some place in Belleville or in that area and not really to an enlightened discussion on the subject before us. Then followed the speaker before the last, but that speaker has always been very tame in his approach and tries to be as logical as he can, and we ended up with the speaker who has just spoken. He said in his remarks — the last speaker — I refer to the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) — that the Transport Board is full of confusion. I want to put it to him that he and his group are completely confused and totally full of confusion. It is not the Transport Board, it is he that is confused.

We heard a lot said today about the taking over of the transport system in 1955, and one was led to believe that the approach taken at that time was wrong. The Right Honourable Member for St. John said it was taken without any thought, it was just a dispute between the owners of the then bus system and the Government with respect to certain conditions of service, and, therefore, without any in-depth analysis of the transport system, the service was taken over. There comes a time in the life of a Government, like in the life of any person, when decisions must be taken at the spur of the moment, and if the Government felt then in its wisdom that in order to save the transportation system in Barbados it had a right

to involve itself, it is not for me, from this distance today — 1985 from 1955 — to condemn them for that decision. We nationalized the bus service then because we thought it was in the interest of the people of Barbados so to do.

The Labour Party, as part of its 1976 Manifesto to the electorate, promised a complete nationalized service to the people in this country, and it was my charge, as Minister then of Communications and Works. I sought to correct the honourable Member for St. Michael West with respect to the terms Transport and Works and Communications and Works for a significant reason. The Ministry, as it then was, carried certain parts of communications that dealt with information, and when the changes were made in 1981, those areas were put under Information and the other section remained under what then became Transport and Works. It was not for any other reason that I sought to make the differential. 4.00 p.m.

But when we came into office, the transport system was in total chaos in this country. People could not get buses, and it is dishonest, Mr. Speaker, for anybody to say that the transport system today is worse than what it used to be. I will briefly set about to say why that cannot be so.

When we came into office, the last bus you would get going into the countryside was 6.30 and 7 o'clock to all points in the outer districts from Bridgetown. Representation was made to me, based upon the manifesto pledge of the Barbados Labour Party, to introduce a later bus service which would meet the demands of nurses and people who were studying at Cave Hill, hotel workers as well, and a number of people who would deserve a late service. It was at that point that I came to the firm conclusion — the honourable Member for St. Michael West talked about a magic date of June, and he read from Hansard what he said at that time — I was looking at a June date because it was a crucial point not only for the people of this country, but also from a point of view of arriving at a subsidy which Government would want to allocate to the private concessionaires if the service was not totally nationalised. It was not only because that you wanted to cater to those people who were working late and studying late, but you wanted to take into account the normal travelling public from 6 o'clock in the morning up to 6.30 in the afternoon.

There were people who found it extremely difficult to get from one point to another if rain was falling on any occasion. Instances were brought to my attention where people were in the buses and had to take out their umbrellas in order to shelter from the rain. That was the type of service which you permitted in your time. The Rocklyn Bus Service, which you allowed to operate without insurance or taxes, or anything at all, was allowed to operate in this country.

Aside.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I can tell you whose friends they are, if you wish me to tell you. The honourable Member for St. Michael West, who is going to cast aspersions upon people who are much more worthy than he is or could ever be, started to talk about the question of Lord Stokes and the Leyland buses. I recall very well that the Right Honourable Member for St. John came in here with a number of questions which he asked of the then Prime Minister with respect to the Leyland arrangement with Barbados and my going to London in order to have discussions. It is the record of this Parliament, and it can be found in Hansard, that those questions were answered in this Parliament, and there was not the slightest trace of any wrong doing with respect to that Leyland arrangement.

The reason why the Leyland people were approached was because we had good dealings with the Leyland people in the past. I do not know, but if you want to talk about corruption, talk about the 70s, Ministers of Communications who went before me, from your side, who used to get cartons of cigarettes on a monthly basis from the Barbados Tobacco Company and who had friends up in the Pine running cars on their behalf. I know them, and we will say a lot of things in the fullness of time. You better put your own house in order before you seek to cast aspersions on people who are much more worthy than you.

The transport system in Barbados is regarded as one of the best in the Caribbean. I want to ask you on that side a question. Your leader actually sought to tell us that we are wrong to have a nationalised service for the transport system. I want you to tell me in clear and unambiguous form what type of service you want for the travelling public in this country. Do you want to give the private concessionaires the buses again? You tell me, if you want to give to them again, what system of regulations you are going to have for them and what type of fare structure are you going to bring about? If you are going to tell me that you would like to see a mix of the travelling public sector, tell me that. It was not my view nor my party's view in 1976 that it should be so. The party sought to bring about a good and cheap service to the people of this country. What did you do in 1975? In 1975, when a fare structure was put up and a figure was arrived at of 50 cents, the then Minister of Transport, Communications and Works, Dr. Caddle, had you over a barrel, and told you that if you did not agree with him, he would resign, and his proposal was 25 cents per ride, even though he knew that the transport system would have collapsed under the weight. That is a fact. I have the record of that. Just before elections that was done. The 25 cents was totally uneconomical. That was known.

Aside.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: It was nothing like that, no social anything, because that is not within your policy. As a matter of fact, I will tell you this is not your policy to nationalise anything. You do not have a social policy, none at all! Any policy that you introduce that redounds to the credit of the working-class people is a policy by accident, not by design. You are not capable of doing it, you have never done it, and you come in here making a lot of noise, and tell us that we have done something wrong. What have we done wrong? To bring a structure of bus fare for the person in St. Lucy which is equivalent to the person who lives in Bank Hall? That is what a Government that has its heart and roots in the people will do. But I want you — your leader has not done it, the honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I think it is, and the honourable Member for St. Michael South has not done it either — I want the succeeding speakers who speak after me to say what is their policy with respect to the transport system in this country. I am the person who brought in the final stages of it, and I remain unrepentant over that decision. It was Government's decision, I was the instrument of that policy and I do not feel ashamed of it.

4.10 p.m.

Let me put it very straight to you. This Labour Party has the courage of its conviction. Even if we make a move and we feel that we have gone wrong, we will say that we have gone wrong, but we are not afraid of any decisions which we have taken. It is for that reason that the public has confidence in us and not in you. You have played around too long with too many games and you are trying to fool the people.

The honourable member for St. Michael West talked to me just now about a Mr. Trotman. Mr. Speaker, it is a serious thing in our community. Trade unions have rights, their members and leaders have rights, but it is a serious thing in our society when trade union leaders decide to go on one side of the fence to fight the other side of the fence. It is a dangerous thing. When he can negotiate wages on behalf of the workers at the Transport Board and seek to get a reasonable concession from the Government in order to hold it up to public ridicule, and then go on the platform of the Opposition party to destroy the Minister of Transport and Works and the Government of the day, he is totally unfit for public office, either on the political scene or on the trade union scene. The time has come when we in this party must shoot it straight, when we must tell it as it is.

In the run up to the election you believe that you are seeing something. Even the *Wall Street Journal* is telling you that you are seeing nothing.

(*Aside:* Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Who paid for the advertisement?)

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Who paid for what? We do not have to pay for anything. My friends, I am not dealing with that. The country knows, the country understands and the country will pronounce. When you get up, read it. Ask the Speaker if you can read it. We are not worried about that.

As far as I am concerned, I want to let you know that this Resolution before us, while we do not feel that the Government should go overboard in subsidising anything — we have never done that — we believe that this is a small price to pay for working class people who live in the country, for people who must use the large transit service to get to and from work. When people say that the Government is not assisting industry, not assisting the business houses in Bridgetown, we can proudly say that our contribution — if it is 14, 16 or 18 million dollars — is a contribution towards the services which are offered by us to the people in this country. Therefore, the totality of all this is that the Government is helping in a very positive way in order to assist in moving the country along.

You get criticisms of potholes, you get criticisms of all holes, criticisms of the bus service, but what nobody ever seems to remember is this. There was a time when you had a little van on the roads, not even a lorry to travel. You had the donkey cart, the horse and buggy. Today you have the 45 tonne, the 60 tonne and 70 tonne vehicles on the road. Do you expect them to stand up? No greater destruction is done to the road system in this country than the destruction by the heavy vehicles or the digging up of the roads from time to time in order to put in the public utilities which redound to the credit of this country.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is an important Resolution. It is a Resolution to bring about greater satisfaction to the people in this country, particularly the working class people in this country, people who have got to depend upon Government transportation, and I want to say another word about minibuses and that type of system. No minibus operator is going to go into St. Lucy easily. He is not going to go into St. Joseph, St. John nor St. Andrew, nor certain parts of St. Thomas and St. James. He cannot afford to do it with the small bus fare. Let us face it. For the type of service you get in Barbados, in another country you would be paying \$1.50 or \$2.50 for the journey. The quality of service you get in Barbados would not be cheaper in any other country within the entire Caribbean. Go to the United Kingdom, go to Canada and the United States of America and see the cost of train travel, or the Greyhound travel, and you will realise what a beautiful service we are getting in this country.

I cannot blame the minibus people if they do not want to go into those areas, because it is uneconomic for

them to go, but the Government cannot, like a private concessionaire, sit back and allow the problems to exist in difficult areas and say we are not going to service those areas. It would be like telling the people in St. Andrew we are not going to build roads because you get slippages there. If you are going to be a heartless Opposition party — no doubt you will be as heartless as you have been Government in office — and if the line which you are going to take is that you will give the buses to private concessionaires; I want you to hammer that home in the country. I will tell them that that is what you want and you will have to tell them that it is not true and prove to them that it is not true, because I do not think you enjoy their confidence, and therefore they will not be too willing to listen to you.

This Resolution seeks to give assistance, not to the rich. If there are vagabonds in the transport system, the unions have assisted in making it so by having people in there like Trotman and that gang. They have assisted in making it so. But what we seek to do is not to find money for people to carry away, or to buy parts for them to carry away, but to assist the poor person who lives miles away in St. Philip, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Andrew, St. James, St. Thomas, St. Peter and St. Lucy. It is the small people in these areas who need this very vital and important service which only the Government can give, and I make bold to say that I believe, that as long as this Government is in power, it will continue to ensure that the working class people in this country get a good, proper and reasonable bus service.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member who just sat down has made a gallant effort to turn the tide of debate, which has been going very much against the Government all day, by seeking to resort to, the carriage of ideology. The policy of this Democratic Labour Party on public transport has been, and always will be, to provide the best public service for Barbadians at the cheapest possible price.
4.20 p.m.

You do not arrive at that position on the basis of ideology, and I say so for very good reasons. Our leader has demonstrated very clearly that until this Government, the Barbados Labour Party Government, took over in 1976, there was a reasonable public transport service in Barbados and that it attracted minimal subsidies from the public purse. In fact, if my recollection is correct, no subsidy was ever in excess of approximately \$1.5 million a year, and that subsidy was entirely in the area of capital grants to the Transport Board. Indeed, the subsidy to the Transport Board was not a structural part of the public finances of this

country, and the loans from the Port Authority assisted in any current short falls and, in many instances, also assisted with capital expenditure in the years when Parliament did not make a subvention by way of subsidy to the Transport Board.

But what has happened is this. That Administration now sets about to blame the Barbados Workers Union representatives, and to blame the workers for what has happened at the Transport Board. This is only a repetition of what has been happening in here, year after year whenever they are faced with the embarrassment of coming to Parliament for further subsidies and so on. The fact is, Sir, if there is any sabotage, the sabotage is caused by the ignorance and incompetence of the Barbados Labour Party Government, and in particular by the present Minister of Transport. That is where the sabotage lies, in his own ignorance and his own incompetence! It has nothing to do with the question of whether you have a nationalised public transport system, or a privatised one, or a partially privatised one. The fact is that the present Government went into a programme of nationalisation of the public transport service in this country without providing for a management structure that is commensurate with the capital investment that they were making and, indeed, Sir — what has happened over the years? The massive subsidies have largely been a problem of mismanagement.

What have you done? You have expanded the size of the fleet over the years. You have not provided for proper management in terms of a proper system of repairs, a proper replacement system, management of your availability of parts, proper garage space and proper mechanics' training. The whole paraphernalia that goes along with the proper management of an expanded transport fleet, whether it is private or whether it is public, has not been put in place. All that has happened over the years is that each time you have gotten into trouble, what you have done is you have gone and bought new buses, and all the new buses do for a while is camouflage the basic problems, and after they have been on the road for a year or two, then you see the same problems surfacing again and again. So the problem, fundamentally, Sir, is a matter of incompetence on the part of the Barbados Labour Party.

Let it be said that it was this Democratic Labour Party that took the critical step of introducing the uniform bus fare of 25 cents in this country. It was the Democratic Labour Party that did that. What have you done over the years? Let me tell you what you have done. You have increased the bus fares by 300 per cent. You claim that you have increased the number of people using the buses by 300 per cent. That means that your revenue has gone up by 900 per cent according to what you say on the floor of the House, and, in the meantime, your losses per year have gone up by more than 1 000 per

cent. That is the kind of management you are boasting of! You have increased your revenue by 900 per cent and increased your losses per year by over 1 000 per cent, whilst, at the same time, creating greater dissatisfaction among the travelling public than at any time in the history of Barbados! It is not the principle of nationalisation that is at stake; it is delivering the goods, and you have failed to deliver the goods.

You have done worse than that. You have broken the laws of this country. Many people hearing the Ministry of Transport talking about the usage of the Transport Levy Fund would believe that he was buying buses. I will tell you what he has been doing. He, in his capacity as Minister, has been unlawfully committing his Ministry to loans, including foreign loans, and creating a liability against the Transport Levy Fund for future years. That is what has happened. It is not only a question, Sir, of any illegality involved in the way in which the loan was made, but it also has a continuing liability against the Transport Levy Fund over the years, and I say it is quite wrong for the Minister to have continued in that vein, and I say it for this reason.

I am terribly upset about this Resolution that is before the House, because I recall that when this matter was first ventilated on the floor of the House, the former Minister of Finance said that he knew nothing about it. That was his first response. And when we presented the information indicating that the Barbados National Bank was one of the banks involved in one of the loans — I think it was a loan for \$6 million — a quick check was made and we were assured that it would not happen again. One can make concessions in respect of the first one or two loans contained in this Schedule here, but what is quite clear is that although the matter was ventilated on the floor of this House and although Parliament was given an assurance that a definitive legal position would be sought — and, if necessary, an appropriate instrument would be brought before the House to correct it — this Minister of Transport has proceeded to commit five additional indiscretions amounting to several million dollars in debt, committing his Ministry, and ultimately the taxpayers of this country, to this sort of debt, and now we are called in here to legalize the illegalities which he has committed his Ministry to.

We are prepared to make a concession in respect of the first two loans because at that time the matter had not come to Parliament, nor did the debate as to the legality of the matter ever arise. Those loans, after that, show a total contempt of public opinion, and certainly contempt of the opinion even of his colleagues on that side. And I sincerely hope that I did not hear the Prime Minister of this country say that Cabinet agreed to all these loans, because if he said so, he would be saying something completely different from his predecessor, who told us on the floor of this House that he knew

nothing about it when it was raised by the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King), who was then the Shadow Minister for Transport, when he raised it on the floor of this House and produced the appropriate documents from the National Bank. Both stories cannot be right. I think there is some problem here with memory. At least I hope it is memory, because if you are saying now that it was a Cabinet decision, then how it is that the former Chairman of the Cabinet knew nothing about it?

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Anyhow, it is a fact that that is what took place on the floor of this House.
4.30 p.m.

I want it to be known that the Democratic Labour Party does not accept that it is the workers at the Transport Board who are responsible for the problems at the Transport Board. The last time there was a major shortfall of funds at the Transport Board, the workers were blamed. They said they were stealing the money. Now the workers no longer handle the money and yet you are losing more money, so how could it be the workers? Try to explain that now. I have no doubt that there has always been corruption at the Transport Board resulting in considerable losses of money, but it is not at worker level, it is not at conductor level. Many of us know where to look and who to look for in relation to what we are talking about, and it will all come out.

They undermined the whole system of management by putting their own yardfowls in important positions in the Transport Board. It has been known that people have been employed as conductors one week and as supervisors the next week and have never worked in public transport in Barbados. That is a fact. And it is known that the Minister responsible for Transport has intervened on many occasions in the day-to-day management of the Transport Board, and many a decision that turned out to be a failure has been as a result of his interventions in the management of the Transport Board.

It is known, Sir, for example, that the major problems that they have had with some of the buses they got had nothing to do with the quality of the suppliers, whether it be Leyland or Mercedes. It is because they got certain yardfowls to supply the wrong specifications to the suppliers of the buses, so the buses came down with the wrong gear ratios and found they could not go up hills and what not. I think some day there will be a thorough investigation into the whole question of direct purchases and the ultimate commissions in relation to all those buses at the Transport Board. We all know what we are talking about, and it is millions of dollars involved, which if they had remained within the transport system,

and if the suppliers had been required to provide the service for the maintenance of these buses while they kept the commission, then we would have an ungraded public transport system in Barbados. We could have had all the computerisation supplied either by Leyland or Mercedes. They would have set up a parts system where it would be computerised. They can have a maintenance system on computer so that you do not have one-third of the fleet lying down and you never have more than probably 5 per cent of your fleet down at any one time. All that expertise is available to you, but the whole point is, the choice was whether you purchased that or what happened to the commissions on the purchases.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You investigate it and you will find out. You are too late in this thing. You do not know what was going on all along.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You don't know either. You are a wild accuser. I will handle you when I reply, though. That is your usual style.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Your problem is that you try to defend things that you know nothing about, and if you would make an enquiry first, you would not get yourself in trouble all the time.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Your problem is that you say things you can't prove!)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Do not go out defending the indefensible.

What I am saying is that when you are making a capital expenditure of this kind, you have to look at your management structure. There are modern ways of managing a fleet. We may not have all the expertise here, but that expertise could have been acquired as part and parcel of the package of acquisition of these buses. It is too late now, but it could have been done. Make no mistake about it, I have checked it out over the years and in most major centres with a fleet as large as the Transport Board's, it is considered to be doing badly if you have more than 5 per cent of your buses at any time off the road. Look and see the kind of record you have here. With the introduction of computerisation now in the management and forecasting of problems with fleets of this size, even that can be improved on.

Now, Sir, I want to deal with this whole question of the charges of privatisation. I said what you wish to have in Barbados is an efficient service. There can be no question that the minibuses, whose owners have been harassed by this Government year after year, are providing a valuable service, and I am shocked to hear a Member from that side getting up and praising the

minibuses today. They harass them with taxation — they pay punitive levels of taxation — destroying their basic investment from the moment they put one of these buses on the road. These minibus drivers make a valuable contribution. It is my understanding that they move as much as 30 per cent of all commuters in Barbados per day, and my calculations have shown that they have put some \$30 million in the Treasury over the years, and if they paid the same kind of taxes which the Transport Board pays, they could operate at 45 cents profitably. What I am saying is that if they did not have to pay the import duty on the vehicles, the consumption taxes, the stamp duties, the initial massive licence fees, the recurrent licence fees, they could operate at 45 cents at the same level of profitability. That is a fact. Now having said that,....

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is not a question of not replacing their fleet. They cannot replace their fleet now because of the problems that you have created, because you have forced them to pay about \$110 000 for a small minibus, when the Transport Board can bring in a much bigger bus at a much lower cost. But that is beside the point. The point I am making is that we already have a comparable system in Barbados, in current, social and economic conditions, which indicates that a private sector operation can be a profitable exercise and contribute to the public purse, and if it was not called upon to contribute to the public purse so massively, then the bus fares could be substantially reduced.

Look at the Transport Board now. They pay no import duty, they pay no consumption taxes, they pay no stamp duties, they pay minimum road tax, they have bigger and better units more suited to the kind of work they are called upon to do, they carry a larger number of passengers per load. In other words, they have everything going in their favour, and yet they run up a massive loss. There is something wrong. Something has got to be wrong, because you have a yardstick, and even if you concede that the minibuses only run at peak hours and in conditions that are advantageous to them, then I do not think the disparity should be so great under any circumstances.

What I am saying to the Government is that the people of Barbados are no longer prepared to pay through a transport levy to have debts created against a transport levy in the future; to pay through taxation with subsidies to the tune of \$16 million or thereabouts; to pay through concealed subsidies, because you may recall that some of this year's subsidy to the Transport Board is concealed under the Ministry of Education, where unfortunately the Ministry of Education is called upon to pay over some money to the Transport Board, and some is concealed, I believe, under the Police vote as well. So

they have two other areas where there are continual subsidies, and the people are not prepared to continue paying and getting the quality of service that they are getting at the moment.

Let us face it. There has been a substantial deterioration in the bus service in Barbados.
4.40 p.m.

(Aside: Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: When?)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Ever since the new buses started to need repairs and replacement. There must have been some deterioration, and that is reflected in the concerns of the people. It is not the concerns of the Democratic Labour Party that I am responding to. I am responding to the genuine concerns of the people out there, the people who leave work at 4.00 o'clock in the afternoon and cannot get a bus until 9.00 o'clock or 10.00 o'clock to get home, the people that had to stand up in the water during the heavy rains recently in the bus stand down there for three and four hours in the evening. I am responding to the people who go through agony every day at the prospect of losing their jobs because they will be late because of the bus system. These are the things that I am responding to. I am not responding to any ideological position taken by the Democratic Labour Party, and you all over there must know that your policies have been a failure, and I think that the failure lies in your incompetence in managing the expanding transport fleet. That is where I think the failure has been. The failure is not ideological, as I have said before, the failure is not conceptual, the failure is at the level of implementation. Indeed, anything the present Minister has been associated with, there has always been a massive failure at the level of implementation. His record has been a disastrous one as a Minister in Government, and he has carried the same record into the Transport Board.

Sir, we keep hearing that the Barbados Transport Board is the best in the Caribbean. That may be so, but it is also the most expensive in the Caribbean as far as the taxpayers are concerned. No other country has pumped or put this kind of money into a transport system. So if you really want to compare like with like, I can make an equally silly statement. I can say the Barbados public transport system is the worst that I have seen in the past six months. If I say so, that is a true statement, but it means nothing, because the ones that I have seen would be in Europe and the United States in the past six months. So by saying the best in the Caribbean means absolutely nothing.

There was a time in Barbados, for example, when we had hardly any potholes and there were potholes all over the Caribbean, the other islands, but you can still say we may have better roads in the Caribbean — all that

has happened is that their potholes are bigger than our potholes!

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: There are potholes in New York, all over the place.)

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: There is good China food, I agree, and I agree there are potholes in New York.

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Go down Eastern Parkway.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: There are potholes in New York, but they are not like the potholes in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us keep to the buses. Leave out the potholes today.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Back to the buses, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Back to the buses! Come on!

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Right, Sir.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am about to wind up....

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I know that.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES:.....but I was a little concerned that the honourable Member for St. Andrew could get up and make such a highly politicized speech. I would like to suggest it was a little insensitive, because the people out there are very concerned about public transport at this point in time.

I would urge the Government to look strictly at the concept of having a fleet of buses owned by the public transport system which is commensurate with your management potential. Until that fundamental decision is taken, we are back here year after year with the same debate, over and over again, identifying the wrong causes year after year. And I cast my mind back to September 1981, at the time of the mini-Budget Debate, when you may recall that your predecessor in office stated that if any international agency came to Barbados and were to point a finger at any aspect of Government finances which was in total chaos or something like that — I do not know the exact words — it would be the Transport Board. And nothing has happened over the years. That was the definitive statement by your party four years ago, and four years later now, you are in the same position.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, every time we have this debate on the Transport Board, members of the Barbados Labour Party make the same speech over and over. They speak about buses going into areas that used to be inaccessible before, they speak about buses that never used to run after 8.00 o'clock....

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: True!)

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN:...and they speak about we in Barbados having the best transportation system in the Caribbean. Mr. Speaker, it is precisely because of these things and the way the Barbados Labour Party Members speak in debates of this kind that we are having this problem with the Transport Board year after year, for the past three or four years. Except for the present Attorney General who spoke today, not a single member of that party found it necessary to speak about any of the problems at the Transport Board. And let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, it is not the Democratic Labour Party that you have to be worried about. It is the people outside you have to be worried about. I read in the newspapers every day that they are quarrelling. I listen to the radio between 12.00 o'clock and 1.00 o'clock and the people are complaining. I hear people throughout Barbados complaining about the bus service. So do not think it is the Democratic Labour Party you have to be concerned about, you have to be concerned about what the people out there are saying. And I am saying this, it does nobody any good if Members over there are going to get up every three years and make the same speech about how good the transport system is when the people out there cannot see how good it is. It makes no sense, and — I will tell you this — if the people outside had to sit down and listen to this debate today, those people who suffer daily at the hands of the transportation system, they would not believe that persons who are in control of the transportation system, like the Barbados Labour Party, are getting up and making those sorts of speeches. They would not understand that despite all the suffering, members of the Barbados Labour Party can get up and paint this rosy picture of the Transport Board.

Mr. Speaker, not a single member of the Barbados Labour Party has mentioned anything about the problem of spare parts.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: There is no problem there.)

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: The Honourable Prime Minister is saying there is no problem with spare parts. Am I to believe, Mr. Speaker, that many, many persons concerned with the Transport Board, drivers, are saying

that one of the main problems at the Transport Board is that there are not enough spare parts for the buses....

Asides.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: The papers did not have to put it in. It did not have to come out in the newspapers. It is a fact that, for years, the Transport Board has been brutalizing certain buses to fix other buses because of the lack of spare parts.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. R. TULL: Cannibalizing!)

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Cannibalizing buses to do it.

The Prime Minister is saying there is no problem with spare parts. So the drivers are lying.

Asides.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Cannibalize or brutalize, same thing!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.
4.50 p.m.

Not one single member of the Barbados Labour Party has mentioned the problem of political interference, not one has mentioned political interference, where you have persons coming to work as conductors one day and being pitch-forked as inspectors within a week, or people coming as drivers and being pitch-forked as supervisors within a week and a half. How can you have morale on the Board when people are working for years as conductors and as drivers, and then someone comes in, depending on his political persuasion or from which constituency he comes, and he comes in as a conductor one day and then in one week he is an inspector.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The honourable Member has given way.

Mr. SPEAKER: Has he given way?

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

I think we can settle the whole debate. Let us move the suspension of sitting and we all go and sit in the bus stand for 15 minutes, Sir. Adjourn and go and have a visit to the bus stand is a serious motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. Will the honourable Member please continue.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: As I was saying, the problem of morale of the Transport Board is one of the

greatest problems affecting what is happening in Barbados today as far as transportation is concerned. The morale of the workers is at a very low ebb and not one single person over there thinks that he should mention anything about the problems, not one of them. There is a lot of political heavy handedness at the Transport Board itself, a lot of heavy handedness. You have to understand that if you come to this Honourable House every 2 years for more buses and more money to buy more buses, that is not going to change the basic problem, because the buses are not the real problem.

You have to understand, Mr. Speaker, Members over on that side believe that the Democratic Labour Party is trying to undermine the transportation system in this country. Nothing could be farther from the truth. When we come along on mornings and on afternoons and see persons at the bus stop who find it impossible to get a bus...and I will tell you this. There are persons who say that their constituency is bad, and this constituency is bad, and the next one is bad. If any constituency is worse than St. Philip when it comes to transportation, I have to see that constituency, Sir, and especially on Sundays or bank holidays. People in St. Philip have to wait 4, 5, and 6 hours for a bus and, I will tell you this, on afternoons, Mr. Speaker, I know for a fact that there are persons who wait for buses in St. Philip on Sunday afternoons from about 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock and do not get a bus until 7.30 or 8 o'clock, and it happens every Sunday.

I go further, Mr. Speaker, and say this. The problem is only slightly better during the week on early evenings around this time. There are persons I know — I have to drop to work some of them, so I know what I am saying — there are persons who go to the bus stop in St. Philip to go to work at Southern Palms. I had to drop them to work, many, many times. They go to the bus stop around 3.30 and at 6.45 I have to drop them to work. What I am telling you is a fact. I have to drop them to work at 6.45. I am talking about early evenings.

Let me say this now. In 1982, whether you believe it or not, the Transport Board began to work, for a short period. At that time — I hold no brief for anyone — the honourable Member for St. Michael East was the Minister responsible for Transport, and I do not want to call any names in here, although I am not going to be derogatory, but I believe every single person in here knows who the Personnel Manager then was and the Manager of the Transport Board. But at least the comments that I was hearing at that time was that the Transport Board was beginning to work. The basic problem that has happened at the Transport Board since then — it happened before he went there and after — but the basic problem is that every Minister who goes in decides that he should take his own people with him, regardless whether the person he is carrying in has the

necessary ability to run a transportation system or not, or regardless of if the person he found there had the necessary ability to run a transportation system or not. As long as these things continue to happen, I do not care how many times you come in here for money to buy buses, the problems will remain.

I will just suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Government has to look at the management efficiency of the Transport Board. There has to be less political interference and there has to be less yardfowlism in employment and in promotion, and you will see a big change in transportation in this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON (St. Michael West Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been treated to a historical dissertation, and I am indeed indebted to the honourable Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) for going back into the archives and pulling out a document which he imagines anticipated in 1963 and answered the problems of mass transport in 1985. I gather that the conclusions he would lead us to reach, based upon the passages he chose to recite from that document, are that if we are to succeed in Barbados with mass transport, we have to resort to a system where the buses reside in the hands of private concessionaires operating on the basis of profit. That document asserted that it was the expectations of the Democratic Labour Party, and the recommendations in that document, that the recapitalization of the transport system would depend on profits made out of the operation of that system. Sir, I cannot believe that any political leader anticipating governing this country in the 1980s, could seriously expect that a moth-ridden, mossy document from the long past could be the document that he expects us to receive as the one to solve the problems of mass transport in this time.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) was at pains to point out that he is not in agreement with his leader, because, although he did not use the word "madness," he was bold enough to assert that in today's economy, and in an industrialized society, it would be madness — not his language, but as good — to resort to a system of operating the bus service on the basis of a franchise system geared to profit. I would have expected that the Member for St. John would have reached his own conclusions when he himself drew to our attention the fact that that very document asserted that the reason why mass transport now resides in the hands of the Government is because those private concessionaires from 1955 who operated for profit, when it did not suit them abandoned their responsibility to the public of Barbados and refused to operate the bus service because the Government did not allow them a half cent addition on the fares at that time. Now, how can we take a political party seriously that on the one hand reads in

its own document that the concessionaires abandoned their responsibility to the public, thus forcing the Government to assume its responsibility and take over the bus service, when that same political party now comes in here and tell us we have to go back to that very system? I believe the Democratic Labour Party must be grateful to the honourable Member for St. Michael West, because he retrieved them from that position of madness and recklessness by dissociating himself from any of that sort of political malice.

5.00 p.m.

Sir, this Government understands its responsibility to the public of Barbados. It understood it in 1955 and it understands it today. There is no point any Opposition party coming in here and telling us what is wrong with the transport system without offering solutions that make sense.

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: We do not have enough time.)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: No, it is not that you do not have time, it is that you do not have anything, and therefore you cannot look in your own infertile brain for solutions. You do not understand the system, and that is obvious from the fact that your leader himself clearly demonstrated that he has to rely on a time-worn document concocted by men besotted, back in 1963. We are talking about 22 years afterwards.

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: "Besotted" means that you are in love, man!)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I mean that they are drunk.

The honourable Member is reported in another place to have said it is the policy of his Government once again to privatise the transport fleet.

(*Aside:* Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: He never said that!)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Go and talk to the people that record what he said, the journalists. You go and talk to them.....

Mr. Speaker, in those days it used to be \$30 000 — that is what the Government paid. We are talking about a system that we have admitted is demanding too much of the people of Barbados. We are not satisfied with the level of the subsidy. We have said it repeatedly, and we say it again, it is unacceptable to us, and we have initiated a programme designed to deal with the subsidy.

Now, Sir, if you were to ask me to answer the problems in the Transport Board within the context of a

private transport service, I could answer the problem. It would only take me six months and I could answer the problem, but we are dealing with a social service. We recognise the role of mass transport in the development of our economy and towards the improvement of the social style of life of our people. We understand that, and it is for that reason that we will continue to resist any easy solution, because the problems of the Transport Board are complex problems. Easy solutions fly easily from the heads of fools, but it calls for wisdom, prudence and sensitivity for the problems of the Transport Board to be solved.

When I became Minister I continue on a path that was forged in the head and executed by the hands of the first Minister for Transport in this Government, and I am speaking of Lloyd Beresford Brathwaite. We had set the pace in 1955 and we did not have the opportunity to continue, but in 1976 the people of Barbados once again gave us the mandate and the Minister responsible for Transport carried on. It is my role now, Sir, in that relay system to put together the remaining pieces in order to bring a satisfactory service to the public of Barbados.

It is very easy to identify one or two problems and point to those as if they sum up the totality of the service. It is easy to say that the people from St. Philip cannot get home in the evening, they have to wait 8 hours for a bus. I do not believe that anybody in St. Philip has to wait 8 hours for any bus.

(*Aside:* Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Six hours on Sundays.)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I do not care. Eight or 6, I do not believe it. I do not believe it. And if they are waiting for a bus, they are waiting in their homes, not on the bus route.

When I became Minister of Transport and Works, we heard that it was the morale of the workers that was responsible, and we decided right then and there to undertake a programme designed to improve the lot of the workers of the Transport Board in a way that those problems had not been addressed. We heard that there were no water facilities down in the Lower Green for the drivers. They had no comfort stations, they had to go to Kentucky and all about Bridgetown looking for sanitary facilities. We built a modern sanitary service down there in the Lower Green, providing all the other amenities that would add to the comfort of drivers operating on those routes.

We understood the problems of the people in Fairchild Street seeking to catch buses in antiquated galvanised sheds and we eliminated those, and in their place have put up what I have understood is now being described as "the Concorde station."

Aside.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I do not know. The workers at the Transport Board call it so.

Sir, that facility does two things. It allows the public of Barbados to wait for a bus service in comfort, and when it is completed it will be a modern masterpiece of architecture sitting in the middle of Bridgetown. It was not built to satisfy the whim of anybody. The Barbados Labour Party, in its enduring commitment to service and recognizing its responsibility to the travelling public, decided to allocate the funds for the construction of that facility. That was in our 1976 Manifesto, and look at it, a masterpiece! Why does the Democratic Labour Party not talk about that? Does that diminish the service? Does it improve it, or does it not exist? We submit, Sir, that that represents our commitment. It is a positive statement by this party to the people of Barbados that we are determined to humanize the transport service.

5.10 p.m.

We did not stop there, Sir. We went to the north of Barbados, and we are building another ultra-modern station, which is partially completed. All of the civil works are just about finished. When that is completed, that will be another modern masterpiece. What is its function? Its function will be to provide the passengers with suitable accommodation to wait for their buses. It will provide workshop accommodation, so that the works in the workshop can be carried out in a satisfactory environment, and it is designed, as well, to provide the proper operating atmosphere for those persons who are responsible for the operation of the service.

Is that progress? Does that make the transport service in Barbados worse than it was before? Or does any reasonable person recognize it as a decisive progressive step that must, by definition, improve the quality of our service?

We did not stop there. We have instituted a programme of modernisation. Each step is a progressive step and a continual one that is calculated to end in a satisfactory service to the public. Rome was not built in a day, but I believe the people of Barbados are a reasonable people, and even though there might be some inconvenience experienced from time to time, it is unreasonable in the extreme, it is hypocritical, for any man to stand up in this Chamber and seek to assert that the transport system in Barbados is worse now than it has ever been.

Aside.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: That would be, as the honourable Member for St. Michael West likes to say,

the gravamen of the statements that I have been hearing all day from that side. That is what I am hearing.

The honourable Member for St. Andrew pointed to the fact that, under the Democratic Labour Party system of free franchise, the Rocklyn buses ran down the steepest terrain in this entire island without the benefit of insurance, and without the benefit of registration, and it is only a testament to the skill of the drivers of the Transport Board on that particular route, and the mercies of Almighty God, that we did not have a major tragedy in those times.

Aside.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Not a single bus has been put off the road this year for failing to register. Well, they are talking about progress.

Aside.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Not a single bus has been run off the road this year, not one!

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the honourable Member who has responsibility for shadowing Transport wanted me to give him an assertion as to whether or not it is our policy to privatise the Transport Board. The answer, eternally and unequivocally is, "No." We will not privatise the transport system. As I said, Sir, that is the edit of people who do not really understand the problems of mass transport, nor the concept of mass transport, the new, current and in-vogue policies and programmes relating to mass transport in this country.

Every country in the world that operates a mass transport service operates it as a municipal service. In other words, every one is operated by the Government, and to the extent that the Government does not operate in certain select sectors, persons are given specialized subsidies to carry out their service. Now, Sir, with that in mind, I do not want to hear anybody else coming in here and seeking to offer as a solution that we go back to a system which was so graphically demonstrated to be an inappropriate system by the report that the honourable Member for St. John read from, but, nonetheless, which he has recommended that we go back to.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: He said so. He said that that report indicated that the buses should be operated by a commercial enterprise and profits would go to purchasing the buses and replacing capital. That is what he said.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of elucidation, Sir. I never said that, neither did the report

say that. The report is here before me somewhere. I do not want to waste time. I want the honourable Member to read it. What the report said was that there were three alternatives. Without going into the three, the last alternative which the report mentioned was that the buses should be wholly run as a public system but they should be run on a commercial basis. That is a different thing altogether. It is the opposite to what the honourable Member is saying, and I, at no time during my speech, made any recommendation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Point of explanation.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not care if the Government operates it. I do not care if it is operated by the honourable member for St. Michael North West (Mr. L. A. Weekes). If it is operated on a commercial basis for profit, it does not square with our understanding and with the informed understanding of the rest of the international community on modern mass transport systems. It cannot be done.

Aside.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I do not want to see that gray piece of paper. If I can see from you any recommendation, any example, just one.....

Aside.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir: "Sell CBC, suggests Barrow." Now, I do not know who that is.

Mr. SPEAKER: What does that have to do with this Resolution? We are dealing with buses.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: "Sell CBC." That is his recommendation. "Give it out to private enterprise." That is his recommendation.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with this Resolution.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: This Resolution deals with a Resolution to regularize the purchase of certain Transport Board buses.

Sir, I want to come to another matter, because I will have another opportunity and another time to expand on the programme that we, in this Government, propose to do for the people of Barbados. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, (Dr. R. C. Haynes), in his normal style, sought to create the impression that the transport levy funds are there for people to play up in and that Ministers are empowered by Act or otherwise to have illegal jurisdiction over transport levy funds.
5.20 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that an Opposition party and a political party that claims to be part of a Government system has a duty to inform its electorate — and I mean inform, not mislead — because any sensible person who can read, can go and get a copy of the Transport Levy Board Act and read it for himself to see what powers the Minister has. The Minister of Transport and Works is not an accounting officer, nor can he engage under the Transport Levy Board Act in any acts of purchasing or transacting for buses. All of the transactions relating to the purchase of buses in this country under the Transport Levy funds are done through the Ministry of Transport and Works. The Accounting Officer of the Ministry is the Permanent Secretary of that Ministry, and he, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance and the Legal Department, make out the arrangements through which buses are purchased, or any other assets. It is therefore wickedness in the extreme to seek to create the impression that the Minister has any power to direct a Permanent Secretary to do anything contrary to the law. It cannot be done.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation, if the honourable Member would give way.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I am not giving way.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member has given way. On a point of elucidation, having referred to the decision by the Ministry of Transport, which I said was illegal, I have to draw to the Minister's attention that what I said was this: the Ministry of Transport, when confronted with the idea of borrowing money, sought assurance, and the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance told us that the Cabinet gave him the assurance in writing, so that was a direction to do something illegal.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: You see I told you I should not give way. I gave way to foolishness like that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I do not need to spend a great deal of time because I credit the intelligence of the Barbadian public to know when irresponsible people commit irresponsible acts of misinformation and seek to create disquiet in the minds of the public by indicting the character of political persons, because all of them over there know what the rules of law are. We have come here after the fact because the lawyers differ. I am not a lawyer; he is half of a lawyer. The lawyers differ on whether or not it is necessary to come to Parliament on these matters. The prevailing opinion is that we should come and we have come, and that is all there is to be said on that matter. For the future...

(*Aside:* Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You spent the money first.)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I wonder if the honourable member for St. John ever bought assets without coming down here.

(*Aside:* Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Never!)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: What about the North Point?

(*Aside:* Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: By vote of Parliament.)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I have heard honourable Members refer to the fact that people are indicting the reputation of responsible people at the Transport Board when certain statements are made. Mr. Speaker, I am going to give you an example. Just a few weeks ago a driver at the Transport Board who was supposed to be going on one journey — the normal route to Christ Church — determined in his own wisdom that he did not feel like going down that road at that particular time, so he took the bus down Wilcox Hill, contrary to the instructions of the conductor. He said, "I do not feel like going down that road, I am taking a short cut." Bearing in mind that passengers were waiting on the normal route for that bus. The driver determined that he did not feel like passing that route that night, so he took a short cut down Wilcox Hill, hit the bus, goes into the Transport Board and lies about where the bus was hit, because he knows that, if he admits to hitting in Wilcox Hill, he would be in trouble. He lies about it. When investigations were carried out, it was discovered that that bus was off route, and the conductor then gave a detailed statement. There are honourable people that work at the Transport Board. This conductor determined that he was prepared to give the facts of the case and so he did. That person who was dismissed for having the bus off route has gone to about ten to fifteen different politicians seeking reinstatement to the Transport Board and is walking the length and breadth of Barbados saying that he was victimised because he was dismissed for having a bus off route.

Mr. SPEAKER: And that brings the honourable Member to the end of his allotted time.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Yes, Sir, but I will have another opportunity in another place at another time. For the moment I support the Resolution.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: And this sitting stands suspended for 15 minutes.
5.30 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The question, Sir.

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport and Works was able to avoid addressing the major problems of the Transport Board by diverting the debate to philosophical lines. He raised the philosophical issue as to whether we on this side supported a transportation system which was owned and operated as a public transport system as against a private transport system. To me, that is not basically the issue which we are dealing with in the course of this debate, and I want to make my own position clear for the Record.

In this country of ours today, Mr. Speaker, there are still a whole lot of people who do not have the means of private transport, who have no access to private transport, so that, in socio-political terms, public transportation for them is a necessity of daily life. I think this is basically how we have to see it, that there are masses of people out there who have no access to private transport and therefore need a properly-run and efficient public transportation system. This is where we have to start. So that it is part of public obligation, as far as I am concerned, to provide for the masses of the people in the community who have no access to private transport, a properly run and efficient public transport system.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it must follow that the whole question of financial self-sufficiency of a public transport system is not the major critical issue when you are dealing with the problems of transport. And you cannot be diverted along the road in assuming that a public transportation system has to function and can only function on the basis of its making money. So that again, as far as I am concerned, the public has an obligation in some way to finance public transport.

Having got that out of the way then, we come to grips, essentially, with the problem of transport in Barbados. What has happened is that, over the years, we have had a series of the loans that have been taken by the Ministry of Transport and Works, which would not have been approved by this Parliament, so that the problems of accountability of the Ministry of Transport and Works for the use and expenditure of public funds, to that extent, becomes a critical problem. We have the Ministry of Transport and Works borrowing money over the years and there being, in my view, no public accountability in regard to that. So that if you accept the principle that a public transportation system has to be supported out of public funds and you need things like the infrastructure in buses and so forth being provided by public funds, and yet, you have the situation where in the use of those

public funds and yet, there is no provision for accountability, you see then that the question which is raised by my honourable friend for St. Michael North West (Mr. L. A. Weekes), when he calls on the Minister to state the Government's position as to whether they support a privately owned transport system or a publicly owned transport system, is of relevance, because the Ministry of Transport and Works, over the years, has been operating as if it has been a privately-funded operation. They are borrowing the money, no question of public funds which are being used to support that Ministry through these loans being debated in Parliament, no Parliamentary accountability, and that is why at this late hour now, we are in a position where we are being asked to validate the monies which has been borrowed.

What the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central has not come to grips with in his presentation is that in the Transport Board today — and the Minister has to take accountability for this — there are a number of serious problems which have caused the Transport Board to be in the position where it is perpetually having to borrow these large sums of money, and, apart from borrowing the money, getting substantial subsidies from Government. Because all the monies which the Transport Board gets from these sources, whether they are loans which are eventually guaranteed by Government or whether they are in the form of direct subsidies from the Government voted in the Estimates, or whether they are in the form of grants through the Transport Levy Fund, the fact remains that they are all public funds which the Ministry of Transport and Works is using in its public service. So that there comes a time when we have to be concerned about the extent to which public funds are being used by the Ministry of Transport and Works, through its Transport Board. We have to be concerned about the question of whether the funds the Transport Board is using are being most effectively and efficiently used.

I think the Minister of Transport himself must be one of the first to recognize that there is a problem in the Transport Board, because in the past few weeks we have heard talk, for instance, about getting in a management team to deal with the problems of management of the Transport Board. We have heard talk, for instance, of considering the question of the necessity to farm out the contracts for the repair of the units for the Transport Board because so many lie idle day after day on the premises of the Transport Board. So that these are problems which the Minister himself recognizes. He has serious problems of management, and management encompasses also the problems which confront the Board through an inability to get the necessary repair work done. So that the Minister cannot escape responsibility

and say, 'Well, look, it is a question of private as against public ownership' and skirt the problem of management.

In most debates in this House on transport, on many occasions the Minister has been adopting the position that the problems of the Transport Board are problems of management. I have heard him make that statement on several occasions in this Honourable Chamber when dealing with the Transport Board. And I remember on one occasion, responding to the Minister and saying that at the end of nine years in office, you cannot at this time still be heard to say that the problems are still problems of management when you yourself hold yourself out to be some kind of management expert of some sort.

(*Aside:* Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Consultant.)

Mr. M. A. KING: Management consultant. Whatever kind of management expert the Minister hold himself out to be, the fact is that he holds himself out to be some expert in the areas of management. So that here is a man who either recognizes that there is a problem of management and is not getting to grips with it, or, alternately, recognizes that there is a problem of management but is unable to come to grips with it, or recognizes that there is a problem of management but — I almost said wilfully refuses to come to grips with it, but I would not say that. The fact is that, whichever way you look at it, the problem essentially, as he recognizes, is a problem of management and it is a problem which is not being dealt with and which has not been dealt with over the years. The result of that is that the subsidies which are required for the Transport Board year after year are escalating. And the question is, is it reasonable that we should have this escalation in subsidies necessary for the management of the Transport Board, and the continual need for the Transport Board to be borrowing money year after year, when the essential problems which affect the Board, and which can go towards reducing the need for the subsidies and the loans which are necessary, are not being dealt with.

During the course of this debate, Mr. Speaker, I have heard mention made of the subsidies which were required over the years for the Transport Board, and when one looks at the historical position, one sees that major subsidies for the Board started round about 1976, when the first subsidy approved by Parliament was in the sum of some \$1 million. In 1977, \$4.5 million; in 1978 you had \$3 million; in 1979 there was a total of \$8 million in subsidies; in 1980, \$4.6 million; in 1981, \$10 000 900, \$11 million; in 1982, \$18 million; in 1983, this is \$22 million, because it is \$21 989 000. The story goes on and on into 1984 and into 1985 of subsidies being continuously required despite the protestations by the Minister of Transport and Works in this Honourable House that he is looking forward to the time — and he

says this year after years — when the subsidy will be gradually reduced. I believe that at one time he was even hoping that there would be no need to come to this Honourable House for subsidies at all. But the whole problem, and the Minister must continuously come back to this problem, is that if he is not addressing the problems of management, he is going to find that the subsidy is going to continue to escalate. You cannot hide behind the philosophical position that we are providing a public service, and therefore, everything which is necessary to maintain and support that service cannot and should not be questioned and is properly accounted for. There has to be accountability, and we need to ensure that whatever monies are being spent are being properly spent. 5.55 p.m.

When the Honourable Minister talks about, what I would call, some cosmetic arrangements in relation to the provision of better service, he talks about the Fairchild Street bus stand and he is proud of that. Not knocking the Fairchild Street Bus Stand, but the Fairchild Street Bus Stand does not provide the facility to get people to work and from work during a course of the day. That is the fundamental problem which has to be addressed. I believe that in the airline industry, as in the ground transport, it is important that the units which are engaged in providing the service be kept on the move. We do not want to have luxury places for them to park and to sit down when there are people waiting to be moved from point A to point B. So that the emphasis should be, and the direct, important and primary reason has to be, getting the units which are required in providing the service on the move, and continually on the move, and not held up in some luxurious terminal where you can say, 'Well, look where we have provided a terminal for people to wait and for people to board the buses.' That is cosmetic in relation to the real problem, which is the problem of moving people from point A to point B.

The Minister again, as part of the arrangements of providing better service, talked about a modern, sanitary facility which he built in the Lower Green. Now I would like the Minister of Transport and Works to tell this Honourable House how much money has been expended in providing that little facility which I see in the Lower Green. Because I believe that some substantial sum, way out of proportion to the actual.....

(*Aside:* Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars).

Mr. M. A. KING: Man, you all are making sport. Some substantial sum, way out of proportion to what the facility should really cost, has been expended on that facility. I would wish that the Minister, if not this evening at some time, let this Honourable House know what it cost to provide the facility in the Lower Green, which is not a large facility. It is a convenience for the drivers and the transport workers, but, from my

understanding, it has been far too costly, totally out of proportion to the size of it, and in my view clearly indicative of the kind of mismanagement and mis-spending which you get coming from the Ministry of Transport and Works.

The Honourable Attorney General in the course of speaking on this debate — I was not privileged to hear the entire contribution which he made — the part which I heard and which really struck me was the part of his speech where he was dealing with these allegations about sabotage and suggesting, so to speak, that the problems of the Transport Board have their origin — I do not know if the total origin, or part of the origin, or a large part of their origin — in problems of sabotage by the workers of the Transport Board. He went further than that and accused us on this side of inspiring the sabotage in the Ministry of Transport and Works. Well, one can understand the political point which the Attorney General is trying to score in dealing with the Opposition, because you are going to try and heap calumny and scorn, and attack on the Opposition in a political debate. We can understand that, but at the same time we think that it is a serious injustice to the workers of the Transport Board when you are saying that they are the type of persons who would deliberately set out to sabotage the operation which is, after all, providing their daily bread. It is an injustice to the workers of the Transport Board.

We have to recognise that when elections are in the offing — and they have to come sooner or later — we always hear talk about sabotage and Sydney Burnett Alleyne. He is in the news again. Elections are around the corner, so we have to talk about sabotage and we have to talk of identifying the Democratic Labour Party with sabotage. We understand the political point which the Attorney General is making. We accept it in the course of the debate for what it is worth. We only caution them that it does a serious injustice to the working people of the Transport Board.

Mr. Speaker, much was made during the course of the debate about the service which the minibuses provide, the necessary service which they provide, in the context of the inefficiency of the Transport Board. I think all of us recognise that, in this day and age, were it not for the minibuses of this country, the travelling public of Barbados would have serious problems day after day. And I say that we would have serious problems because you must remember that in the context of shortage of jobs in the community, where employers in this day and age are always looking for a chance to dismiss workers, workers arriving late at work is a serious problem and must be regarded as a critical problem for them. So that we must recognise the value of the contribution which is being made by the minibus operators in Barbados today.

But the Transport Board and the Government have a responsibility in this regard, too. It seems to me as if the Government has not assumed its responsibility in directing the transport service to the extent that they rationalize the relationship between the Transport Board's operation and the minibus operation. If you want to ensure that you have an efficiently run public transport service you certainly have to rationalise that relationship. You cannot allow a situation to continue forever where you have direct competition on the same routes by minibus operators and by the Transport Board, and then be heard to complain that the Transport Board is operating at a disadvantage.

6.05 p.m.

The basis for the competitive position is not equal, because the minibus operators do not have to run to any particular schedules. They are assigned to routes, true enough, but they can operate in a way in which the Transport Board cannot operate, so that the competition between them is not entirely fair to the Transport Board. But those are problems which have not been directly addressed by the Minister of Transport and Works, and the position can be rationalised without doing any injustice to the Transport Board or to the minibus operators, because there is enough out there that both can operate properly and efficiently. The Transport Board has to streamline its operation, has to get on top of its problems with management.

The honourable Member for St. Philip South (Mr. H. A. Blackman) talked about some of the essential problems which they have. The Minister has said that we have not dealt with the problems, but when the honourable Member for St. Philip South talks about the problems of political interference, the problems of nepotism in the Transport Board.....

Aside.

Mr. M. A. KING: The unions are not any problems, the unions have never been a problem. The unions negotiate with private industry as well. The unions negotiate with private employers and you do not have the same kind of problems, so why, suddenly, should there be this insuperable problem when you are dealing with a publicly-owned company. It is not the problem with the unions, because whenever problems arise in relation to enterprises, rather than put the blame where it should squarely be put — problems with management, the ability to deal with workers and with workers representatives and to get those issues properly under control — because you cannot say that the Barbados Workers Union or the unions in Barbados which deal with the problems of the employees of the publicly-owned institutions, are unreasonable institutions and that they take unreasonable positions in dealing with the problems of the working class in this

country, therefore, it has to be some other kind of problem. And the sooner you recognise that it is a problem of management — and the Minister has recognised that the better. So you cannot say in one breath that you recognise it is a problem of management, and then in the next breath, out of the mouth of someone else, you say it is the unions. It is not a problem with management any more, it is a problem of labour. You have to make up your mind. You have to be downright honest and forthright with yourself, recognise what the problem is and stop trying to make a political issue out of it. Deal with it as the problem which you recognise it to be, because you say that you recognise it as a problem. Deal with it in that context and then you will begin to see the light of day.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, the Minister, went on to make the point that there is no point in the Opposition telling them what to do. That was a foolish statement, because when you are administering — anything at all — it is important to hear whatever opinions there are. I am sure the Minister cannot say that the problems which he has heard articulated in transport are not problems which he hears articulated outside this House as well. Again the honourable Member for St. Philip South was at pains to point out that in the public domain the public comments about the problems which the Transport Board create for the working population of this country are problems which certainly should be looked at and taken seriously. But instead of listening and trying to deal with the problems, he tries to divert the debate into one of philosophical issues, public ownership against private ownership.

Before I sit down there is just one other aspect of this matter that I want to comment on. When I say that the debate is not about public ownership or private ownership, I mean that seriously, because even in the context of a privately or semi-private system — and the minibuses are privately-owned — we in some of the Third World countries today tend to talk in terms of participation between private and public enterprises, so that in the existing transport system you have a bastard system where you have part public and part private, because the minibuses are there. The important thing in any privately-operated system in this day and age is that the process of regulation must exist where any Government is concerned about the masses of people in the community. Whether they be problems of electricity or telephones those companies are subject to regulation by the Public Utilities Board. The Transport Board at one time was subject to the Public Utilities Board.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Your half hour has gone.

Mr. M. A. KING: Just let me make one sentence, Sir. I am only saying that the regulation has to be an

important consideration when you are considering any question of private ownership.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Just briefly, Sir, I will make a few comments in relation to this Resolution. Let me just start by saluting the speech made by the Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite), the former Minister of Transport and Works, and also let me salute you, Sir, during your term of office as Minister of Transport and Works, and also to give credit, where credit is due, to the former Ministers on this side for managing a very, very complex organisation. There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that according to Barbados' standards, we on this side are not as happy, according to our own standards over the years — over the past 10 years, I may say — with the Transport Board and its functioning, but no one can deny that the Transport Board has come a long way, it has made tremendous strides, and the Members on the other side during the Estimates last year, the Member for St. Philip South (Mr. H. A. Blackman) in particular, on the floor of this House had hailed the Transport Board as doing a good job.
6.15 p.m.

Now, within a couple of months, there has been.....Are you going to let that clown make you get up for me to knock you down?

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I think that the honourable Member is misleading the House since I was not in Barbados during the Estimates.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I did not say the last Estimates. You see, you are such an adviser that you have not been able to advise your own self correctly over the past years. He was there half sleeping and you touched him to draw his attention to what I was saying. I am quite sure, Mr. Speaker, that Members on that side — and I repeat, the Member for St. Philip South — during the Estimates had lauded the Government for its transport system and also had lauded the Ministry of Housing.

I heard today, Mr. Speaker, a historical background and a picture painted of the Transport Board from 1955 up until 1961. We heard of the reports. We heard of the problems at the Transport Board, and I may add at this point in time that this is not the first time that the Transport Board has ever called upon the Government for a subsidy by this Government or by that party when they were in office. They subsidized the Transport Board to the tune of \$2 million. They had on the road on that occasion something like 80 buses serving only the coastal lines of Barbados, because although

during those years the Rocklyn bus and, I think, it was the Boston bus, if I am not mistaken, used to take to the hills and come from under the hills under the difficult terrain, today the Transport Board boasts of a fleet of some 320 buses, of which, at any one time, 20 per cent of those buses, according to the experts, must be in the Transport Board for maintenance.

The Transport Board, today, is employing something like 1 700 and in 1976.....

Asides.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Suppose 200 were from South Ridge. They are Barbadians. There are 200 Barbadians that live in Black Rock. That is where they live and those are who they are, Barbadians earning their living that live in Barbados in Black Rock. Seventeen hundred persons today they employ, and in 1976 they were employing 600 persons, 80 buses, and at that time was subsidizing the Transport Board to the tune of \$2 million.

I think we have heard over and over in here — it has been recited repeatedly — that during your tenure of office the travelling public lives were in danger. There was no sort of insurance on the buses, they were leaking, they were old, and this Government should be saluted by members of the Opposition for being able to boast of having the finest transport fleet in the entire Caribbean. And they cannot deny that, because many of them on the other side have travelled across the length and breadth of the Caribbean and further than the Caribbean waters and they cannot deny that. But our standards are high, we set high goals, and because of that, the first thing that goes wrong, you can hear there is always some furore with the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that although these problems exist which are going to be corrected — I would never support privatisation of the Transport Board again, as enunciated by the Leader of the Opposition on more than one occasion and supported by some of the Members on the other side. What are you asking us to do? You are asking us to put the Transport Board back into the hands of concessionaires so that they can get up one morning and say, 'We want an increase in bus fares by \$2,' and if the Government says, 'No,' then the entire country is closed down because they have the right to withhold the buses from the streets. And that is the courage of the conviction of my colleague, the then Minister of Transport and Works, in 1976 for what is now referred to as the nationalisation of the Transport Board.

I heard charges made, as usual, by the Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) in his speech and accusing people, and I think he even

indicated Members, of having something to do with commissions. Now, this is the type of thing you get. You and the Commissioner of Police do the same thing, throw out statements, leave them open like that and leave John Public in a cloud of suspicion there, and yet have not the courage of your conviction to name the person or persons that you know received these commissions. I asked in here not too long ago, in the presence of my colleague, that you let me know who you are referring to. "Are you referring to the Member for St. Michael East?" He said "No." 'Are you referring to the Member for St. Andrew?' He said "No." I said, 'Are you referring to the member for St. Michael West?' He said, 'I am not talking.' Right here he said that, so the only conclusion that I could come to was that he was referring to the Member for St. Michael West. Those are the vicious, wicked and malicious statements that are thrown out here on the floor of the House and he would not go outside and say them.

(*Aside:* Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I said that outside already.)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You are such a money hog that you would sell your soul for a dollar. You would say anything at all. A hog you are, so you cannot talk anything about commissions! You get commissions from the people that run the bandits. You have always been in the commission business. You are a real estate broker. You are not a medical practitioner. All of your money that you boast about comes from real estate, bandit money. You are in the commission business so you cannot accuse people of taking these things. As my colleague said, you are a Medici.

(*Aside:* Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Where you got yours from?)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I do not have any.

Mr. SPEAKER: Back to the buses.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, it is this very party that in the 1976 election, when all over the world you had rising prices, petrol, parts, increases in wages, they went across the entire country and tried to hoodwink the electorate by way of a King Report, and when bus fares at that time was something, I think it was \$1 a haul, by saying on that occasion that they were going to reduce the bus fares to 25 cents.

(*Aside:* Dr. R. C. HAYNES: They were reduced.)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is true, and the electorate took you for exactly what you were, 25 cents! Just what you were, 25 cents!

Mr. Speaker, no doubt no one can deny the fact that there are new buses on the road. There are no more leaking buses, to the best of my knowledge. But there are problems, as the Minister himself admitted here on the floor of the House, inside the Transport Board, and when you are dealing with 1 700 persons who are as political as I am — you have two parties in there; there is a full division in the Transport Board — what do you expect? What commitment have they got to John Public, or what commitment have they got to their own children, who are left stranded on the roadside, and the old age pensioners who are left on the roadside? They have commitment to one thing, to do whatever they can do to embarrass the Ministry of Transport and Works for their own party's aggrandisement, and this is the problem, I believe. It is a difficult situation to handle. They are politicians in there. I have heard them on mornings when I am up by the Garrison, the conductresses "chupsing" when they see me, the drivers seem vexed to stop near to me, but there are a few who wave their fingers. On both sides you have them, and this is the problem that you get, Mr. Speaker. I feel the Minister is doing everything in his power to make sure that the Transport Board can reduce the subsidy and that the Transport Board can be as efficient as he would like it to be.

6.25 p.m.

I plan — because I am very malicious, or I should say inquisitive — to go to Church Village in St. Philip, to Brereton, into Foul Bay, all out in the Crane, out in Union Hall. I am going to spend some time in St. Philip and I am going to talk to at least 50 people and ask them if they have to wait for any six hours ever to get a bus.

(*Aside:* Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Go and check with Linton.)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Go and check with Linton what! Is Linton haunting you? You and Linton are alike!

Sir, I am prepared to do that, and you can believe me. Let me tell you something. A marathon of 26 miles takes you two hours and some minutes to run, so a person could have walked to Bridgetown. He would not take six hours to walk to Bridgetown. As a matter of fact he would have got back home. Two more hours and he would have completed a whole eight hours day. With a lot of nonsense you try to magnify a situation!

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt in my mind that Government's approval, which we seek today for the loan, is very much justified. You have heard the legal men on this side explain the legal problems which were involved in the arrangements leading up to this loan, and I feel, Sir, that Barbados is going to be better off in its present position, and under the present Minister and under the present Administration, as has been hailed by Members on that side that there is still a good transport

system in this country. I was very happy when the Minister highlighted the positive things that are at the Transport Board, the facilities that exist which did not exist prior to 1976.

I heard a lot of nonsense about the fare boxes. You hear this nonsense about the fare boxes and that they are losing more money since they have the fare boxes. If you are saying that they are losing more money because they have the fare boxes, there is only one person that you can be accusing, and that is the person in control of the fare boxes, and if that is how you feel about the conductors at the Transport Board, you will have to answer that charge outside, because you have accused them of downright stealing out of the fare boxes.

Sir, I believe that I have said my little bit in respect of this Resolution, and I sincerely hope that the Minister, in his wisdom and better judgment, along with the members of the Board, will provide an improved service. You have accused the Minister of changing the Chairman, changing the Board members and changing the manager. Listen, when you are playing football or cricket or basketball, if a man is not playing well enough you take him out. There is nothing wrong with changing your team until you get a winning team, and that is what the electorate did in 1976. They changed the team to a winning team, and they will continue to be in a winning position because you have nothing to offer. Not one single recommendation came from your mouths over there today. You talked about potholes, you talked about the cement factory, all these things you talked about, and not a single recommendation as to how to get the Transport Board functioning properly came from you, apart from telling the Government to resign!

Sir, I support this Resolution in its entirety, and I have no doubt the Minister will do everything in his power to remove the fears that at this time John Public is experiencing, because he himself admits that there are problems within the Transport Board and he is setting out on a path to correct them.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR (St. Peter): Mr. Speaker, the substantive issue that this Resolution deals with is that of regularising the situation in which the Transport Board had entered loan arrangements on behalf of the Government of Barbados without the approval of Parliament. I rather suspect, Sir, that this expedient was resorted to as a reaction to the urgency of capitalising the Transport Board to provide it with the rolling stock that is necessary to give the Barbadian public a decent bus service. Notwithstanding the expedient, I must say for the records that I very much regret that this irregularity did, and could, arise. But having said that, I am very proud this evening to be part of a Government which does not need any cover up and which views Parliament as the proper place where the irregular must be put

regular. I view this debate, Sir, as an act of confidence by Government in its own integrity and as further evidence of our resolve at the Government to bring the right thing to the right place in the right time.

Mr. Speaker, the debates on the Transport Board tend to make instant experts out of all of us regarding the problems and solutions of mass transportation in this country. I do not profess to be an expert on mass transportation, neither do I profess to have all of the solutions to the problems of the Transport Board, but I will want, Sir, to reflect on a few matters which have excited a lot of discussion during the course of today's debate.

The first point I would want to make is that in my view the biggest problem facing the Transport Board has to do with the politics of bus fares in this country, for there can be no doubt that a very substantial part of the problem facing the Transport Board today has to do with the fact that we have not yet devised a system whereby its revenues can be made to bear a reasonable relationship to its expenditure, and I believe, Sir, that that problem is deeply rooted in the politics of bus fares in this society. It started, Sir, in 1975—76 when a draconian decision was taken to reduce the bus fare from \$1 at the extreme to 25 cents, Sir. And I would want to submit to the House that...

6.35 p.m.

(*Aside:* Mr. P. M. GREAVES: It never went to \$1.)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: From 50 cents to 25 cents....if 60 cents or 65 cents was a reasonable bus fare in 1976, if we were to make allowances for inflation, then it would be beyond imagination for anyone in this country to contemplate that in 1985, 10 years after the fact, 75 cents could be a bus fare that could make a reasonable contact between the gross revenues and the gross expenditures of the Transport Board in this society.

(*Aside:* Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You say you have money.)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: And even today, Sir, we must recognize that the bus fare in this country has remained fixed for a period of 3 years, notwithstanding substantial wage settlements over the period, notwithstanding the increment in cost to which the Transport Board would have been subject as a result of the increased prices of its spare parts and other operating items, Sir. The point I want to make to the House is that, so long as there is a terror in setting an economic bus fare, we will have to accept that a subsidy must be a normal part of the operation of the Transport Board in this society.

On the question of subsidies, Sir, the first point I would want to make, of course, is that the subsidy to the

Transport Board amounts to, in per capita terms, about \$50 per person per year, a minor point. The major point, Sir, is that we cannot truly disassociate the size of subsidies from the extent of the service that we want the Transport Board to perform. If we commit ourselves to a transportation policy which says that the Transport Board must serve every awkward corner in Barbados, on demand and into long hours of the night, we have to brace ourselves to the reality that we will have to pay for that service....

(*Aside:* Mr. P. M. GREAVES: It is true.)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR:...And if we set our bus fares for long periods of time at fixed rates, then the only way that we can pay for that convenience of service and that extent of service is by making a subsidy available to the Transport Board to enable it to continue its operations. The point I want to make, Sir, is that, in a real sense, the issue that concerns us is whether we are going to ask the persons who use the Transport Board to bear the full cost of its operation or whether we are going to be guided in part by a social policy which says that we will ask the commuters to pay a part of the economic cost and tax, the rest of the society, persons like myself and other persons who have an income level higher than that of the normal commuters, to help subsidize the service that we want them to enjoy.

I am not, Sir, going into any substantial debate on the management or technical solutions to the Transport Board, but I would make one or two points, Sir. We must not run the risk of believing that every solution at the institutional level in this society will lend itself to a management solution. The easiest thing that comes off the tongue every time we hear of a problem is that it is a problem which must be solved by improved management.

I believe, Sir, and I want to submit to the House, that part and parcel of the solutions to the transport problems in this society will have nothing to do with what the Transport Board itself sets out as its programme. A fundamental part of the solution to the mass transportation problem in this society, in my view, would have to do with the way in which we go about the decentralization of economic and social activity in Barbados. To my mind, the Barbados Transport Board performs a minor miracle each day, to the extent that during the morning hours it has to evacuate a large part of Barbados and bring it to Bridgetown and in the evening hours it has to evacuate Bridgetown and carry it to a large number of districts in this society. I see the development of the Glebe, the development of Speightstown, the development of Oistins, the long term development of Belleplaine and Six Cross Roads, and the creation of a society in which people can work and play in their immediate surroundings as one of the long term solutions to our mass transportations problems in this society. I

want to submit, Sir, that this is beyond the capacity of the Transport Board to determine, but so long as we have that existing situation where such a large part of our social and economic activity is concentrated in Bridgetown, I want to submit to the House that we will have a continuing mass transportation problem.

By the same token, Sir, for the immediate short term, and insofar as we will not be able to decentralize our economic and social activity to the degree necessary, we might have to give some thought to a proper staggering of hours, as between school hours, the hours for industrial workers, the hours for Government workers and the like because it relates back to the same problem, Sir, that we have a concentrated peak where mass transportation is concerned. What must be necessary, Sir, if we are to manage men and machinery properly, is to space out that peak, so that the school children, the office workers, the Government workers, the industrial workers do not have to concentrate for the same service at the same time. The spreading out of the peak and the management of machinery and men in relation to that peak service, I think, Sir, will be fundamentally a part of the short term solution to the proper management of transportation in this society.

My final contribution to this debate, Sir, would be to urge Members of the House not to indulge the Barbadian public in the belief that we can provide too perfect solutions to the problems of this society. On sober reflection, Sir, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with our transportation service. There truly is nothing fundamentally wrong with it. And equally so, over the years there has been an incremental improvement in the facilities at the disposal of the travelling public and also, Sir, there has been an incremental improvement in the number of routes, the availability of a bus service and matters of that like. Our problem in this country will be to put ourselves on a treadmill whereby we seek to guarantee perfect solutions to problems, Sir, and put ourselves in the position where we will have to spend incredible sums of money in search of those perfect solutions.

I will close, Sir, by re-emphasizing my main points that I welcome this debate as an act of political courage of a Government which has nothing to hide and which recognizes that Parliament must be the place where the irregular must be put regular, and I am pleased and proud to be a member of the Barbados Labour Party team this evening.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: Hear, hear!)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I welcome this debate, Sir, because I do feel that we should use opportunities such as this not to rehash old clichés about the size of subsidies and whether there are problems at the Transport Board or not — there are problems at the

Transport Board and perhaps, there will always be problems at the Transport Board — but what we should be doing is thinking about serious and creative solutions, both at the level of mass transportation as well as the development of a society at large, which will allow us to put these kinds of trifling issues behind us once and for all.

Thank you, Sir.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Question, Sir.)

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Michael South.
6.45 p.m.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, this particular Resolution that we are dealing with is one in which, by all admission, the Government finds itself in a position that it has to be defending the actions of itself which have fallen far short of what this Parliament itself requires. The Government has had to come to the floor of this Chamber and indicate that it has acted contrary to the requirements of the law of the land. At that time from this side of the House, we pointed out that the actions being taken were contrary to the parliamentary requirements of this country. When we raise the question of the role and place of Parliament in our democracy, they want to know why we shout so much about it. But here we have ample evidence of what we have been saying, and I have very grave doubts that that matter can be validated by the steps that we are taking here today. I believe something more than that is required in order to validate what has happened, and I would like to know that even if an error has been committed, why has it taken all of this time, why have so many years elapsed, before the approval of Parliament has been sought in order to validate what was wrong? Up to this particular point, we have had no answer to that particular question. So there are two points I am raising here on this. Firstly, I have very grave doubts that this Resolution here really validates the illegality that occurred in the past. Secondly, I am asking the Government to explain why it has taken so long for them to come here to get even a semblance of a validation.

The transport system in Barbados is a national service. It takes people to work, it takes them to recreation and it exists for social and economic purposes. Looking at our transport service against that particular background, I am surprised that anyone can say that that service is adequate for the purposes intended. We all have to admit that our transport service is inadequate, it is unsatisfactory and it is deficient. There is no point trying to pull any wool over anybody's eyes by trying to prove that it is not what it is, or that it is what it is not. Let us admit from the outset that it is inadequate, that it is

unsatisfactory and that it is deficient. Let us try and examine why it is so and also what kinds of solutions we can bring to bear on this particular problem.

I want to deal once and for all with the kind of defence of the present transportation system which has been mentioned by a number of speakers here, including the Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig), that is, we try to defend the deficiencies in our system by saying — 'Well, we have the best transportation system in the Caribbean, and, look sharp, we would want to say that we have the best system in the Third World, or in the Second World, or in the First World, in the Western Hemisphere. I want to raise this particular question here, that what we must be talking about is not whether we have the best system of transportation in the Caribbean or elsewhere, but whether, for the money we are putting into transportation, we are getting the best system that we can for those inputs. That is the basic question. Are we getting the best kind of system for the resources and the input that we are putting into transportation? The answer is clearly, "No", because the workers at the Transport Board themselves, whether they are at the level of administration, whether they are at the level of the supervisors, whether they are at the level of artisans, are dissatisfied with what is happening at the Transport Board. The commuters themselves, the passengers who travel on the Transport Board, themselves complain about the service. So what is all this talk that we have the best system in the Caribbean? That is a pure red herring, appropriate only for those who dwell in the murky undergrowth of politics. So let us be serious about what we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, we have also got to look at this particular point. It is no point blaming a previous Administration for what has gone wrong in the transportation system. That does not provide any solution to the problem. The fact is that you had a fresh start in 1977. You nationalised the entire service by taking over the private concessionaires such as existed at the time. You boasted at that time that you were going to create the finest transportation system in this country. Now, in 1985, we are hearing not only that there are buses at all of the depot terminals inadequate for the purposes for which they were purchased, but that the passengers in the bus stands, at bus stops, and wherever cannot get the service that they require. On every occasion we have heard that we are introducing a time schedule bus service. I do not think we have heard about that today, but in each previous debate we have been told that this time bus service was going to solve all of the problems of this country.

We have had a lot of chops and changes, stop and go at the Transport Board, more Ministers, more General Managers, more Personnel Managers, more members of the Transport Board than in any other

statutory corporation in this country. How can you expect to get continuity of planning, continuity of policy, and continuity of service with those kinds of chops and changes. It does not make management sense what this Government has been doing to the transportation service in this country. The last thing we heard was that the Government was going to use its resources to put in charge of policy at the Transport Board their management genius, who was going to outdo all of the other Ministers. And where are we today? The system is grinding to a halt, and we have to appeal now for the understanding of the public in trying to deal with this problem!

6.55 p.m.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the solution to this particular problem is not in any management contract. Let me say from the floor of this House now that anything which may be in the mind of the Minister about some new-fangled means of managing the transportation system in this country by means of any management contract, let him know that he has to bring those proposals to the floor of this House for examination. No more underhand, no more quiet, no more ministerial directive or lunch table directive that this should be done, it must come out in the open and the proposals must be spelt out. They must be brought here with proper legislation giving authority for whatever is to be done or what is proposed, and we will examine them on the floor of the House as a Parliament should examine these matters, because we have had too many of these things, and there are a lot of other matters which we will deal with in the fullness of time. A lot of other illegalities have taken place within Government. We are aware of them, and we will deal with them in the fullness of time. I am issuing this warning from out here. Do not think that you can come and give an interview or come out and say something about some new magical solution to the transport system, it is all at the management level that we are going to get some kind of contractual arrangement, and that will solve the problem. No, it has to come here!

And we have a system of ministerial responsibility. That means that the Minister is accountable to Parliament, and today he has had to take his lashes in here in this Parliament, because I do not believe that within the last two years there has been any Minister who has had to stand up to the kind of withering attack that the Minister of Transport has had to stand up to in this Parliament.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: He is a mob of man, because he survived all. So what?)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I have the highest regard for him in his ministerial responsibility. When he errs or when he falters, we have to deal with him in here.

Let me again dispel some kind of misguided view that the member for St. James North has tried to introduce into this debate, namely that when the Democratic Labour Party left Government it was subsidising the Transport Board to the tune of some \$2 million. The information I have at my disposal — and you can correct me if I am wrong and supply the correct figures — is that the Government operating subsidy for the period July 1975 to September 1976 was some \$1 million approximately. That was the Government operating subsidy, just over \$1 million. I believe the Member for St. James North has really got himself confused. He is confused between figures; very confused. He mentioned the figure of \$3 million, but he was talking about the first year of your Barbados Labour Party Government when the operating subsidy provided by the Government was \$3 million, so let him get the facts right. You started it that way at the \$3 million level. In 1975-76 it was \$1 million.

Let me correct the record also. According to our statistics, the amount of money provided over the period from 1962 to 1976 — the total amount provided for purchases of equipment, buses and so on for the capital contribution from the Government — was \$4.3 million approximately over a period of 14 years. Those are the facts, but now you come with all kinds of solutions.

You tried a Member from St. Joseph. A Member from St. Joseph was a Minister of Communications and Works or Transport and Works, and he tried, but I have already said on the floor of this House that people did not understand him. He tried, and, before he was able to get his proposals in place, he was fired from that particular position.

Mr. SPEAKER: No! With all due respect, the honourable Member is now misleading the country. The term of office of the Government came to an end and I never became a Minister again, I returned to private practice. I was never fired from anything in my life, or should never be fired!

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw those remarks.

Aside.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Thank you, Sir, for reminding me. He fired the Government and they were begging him to come back, but he said no, he wanted to get back to private practice because he was finished at that level with the Great Combination.

Mr. SPEAKER: With all due respect, the honourable Member is misleading the nation again, because it goes in Hansard. I made my position known two years before the end of the term that at the end of the

term I would be returning to private practice. Nobody fired anybody.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, you have not got to worry, he is completely confused. You are so confused! Even the Speaker you accused of being dismissed, so confused are you! The word "fire" is in here. I will make you put a sign on your back and walk about with it. I tell you that. You and your family are handing out leaflets? Continue, Son. Even the Speaker you are telling lies on!

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I do not have to tell any on you or the Speaker. I withdraw the remarks, as I have said already, and I have no intention of misleading the nation. I am sorry, it is the Speaker who fired the job.

But then you came and you had another Minister, and again you had these problems, a Minister trying to implement a forward looking policy on behalf of the masses of people in this country.

Aside.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am talking about the Member for St. Michael East (Dr. D. G. Blackman). He tried to develop a policy in the interest of the masses of the people in this country, because, let us understand what the Transport Board is all about. You have Members in here boasting that they do not travel by bus. Not only they do not travel by bus, but some of them have no interest in the people who travel by bus. None of them has that kind of interest. The Member for St. Michael East, as Minister, tried to create a policy in the interest of the masses, and we have reached a situation in this country where you have people creating services for the masses but who do not ask the masses about the kinds of services that they need. You have people drawing up travelling schedules. They are working out repair schedules and schedules for everything relating to transportation in this country, but they themselves are driving around in expensive motor cars — MLs, MPs and whatever — and crashing them too, having no interest at all in the people of this country! They complain about the high rates of insurance that they have to pay on these buses, and the other vehicles belonging to the Transport Board and that Member tried to create a service in the interest of the people of this country, and — now, I cannot be wrong on this one now — he was fired or he fired the job. Because we had two persons. The Prime Minister said he fired the Minister and the Minister said he fired the job.

7.05 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Point of order.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I would like to draw to Your Honour's attention what the Resolution is all about, and

I am really wondering what has this Resolution to do with who has been fired from the Ministry and who the Ministry fired. Would you like to give a ruling on this, Sir? It is a money Resolution we are dealing with.

Mr. SPEAKER: As I understand it, we are dealing with the Minister responsible for Transport and Works.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: No. As I understand it, the Resolution is dealing with a loan for \$2 million.

Mr. SPEAKER: To approve a loan of money for the purchase of buses, etc., for the Transport Board?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Right, Sir, but I am only drawing to Your Honour's attention that I could not understand what the Resolution has to do.....

(Aside: Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: You do not understand anything that goes on).

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I can understand you. I do not understand anything, but I can understand you. I understand that you are packed up, that you are senile. That is what I know about you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member should not.....

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Encroach on my time. Sit down!

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I ask for Your Honour's ruling. That is all I ask for.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Member can discuss the Minister responsible for Transport. He can discuss that because it is all to do with the Transport Board.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, Sir. That is Your Honour's ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Thank you, Sir. That is the ruling I am asking for.

I can understand you. You do not have to understand me.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: One thing is certain. They never made the mistake of putting you at Transport.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: In fact, there was a time in this country when you had no Ministry at all, a *sinécure* in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now, the honourable Member is discussing transport and he is not to go outside of transport.

Has the Member concluded his speech?

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Not yet, Sir.

So we have this particular position, that the Member for St. Michael East examined the situation and found that everything was not right inside of the transportation system, and when he set about to put it right, he was put elsewhere. That is part of the chop and the change that we have been having in the transportation system in this country. The solution to every problem is to fire somebody, or to accuse somebody of being a Dem, or against the Government, sabotage and saboteurs! That is the solution, instead of dealing with the fundamental problem.

One thing is certain. The Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) has put forward his particular approach to the matter of transportation in this country. We are, of course, aware of those kinds of approaches in which there can be a decentralisation of services in which you can have centres outside of Bridgetown which could act as a means of reducing, to some extent — you will never remove it — the dependency of areas external of the city itself. But that is a long term solution which calls for the kind of planning that the Government is not capable of. It is a tired Government and it cannot come up with those kinds of solutions.

Mr. Speaker, let us understand this area clearly and let me make my position clear, and I make no apologies for it. The transportation system, as run by the Transport Board now, is too big for the capabilities of those who are planning for it because you have never provided the resources to deal with the problem, you have never provided the kinds of infrastructures that are required for it, and a clear ineluctable logic leads to the conclusion that it must be made smaller. We are saying from this side of the House that we need a public transportation system, but, I believe, in a mixed economy — I make no apologies for that — and I believe, that there is an important role for the private sector to play in the mass transportation in this country. I make no apologies for that. We believe that the role being played by the minibuses is a very important role, and heaven knows, if they were not running now, how the people would get to their work, to their recreation and to their social and economic activities, and we believe that there is a further role for private enterprise to play in the running of mass transportation in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: And I hope that you have come to the end of your half hour. Thank you very much indeed. 7.15 p.m.

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN (St. Michael East): Mr. Speaker, this debate like all of the Transport Board debates that I have heard in this House ultimately resolved itself into the veritable Tower of Babel, because the important issues that need to be clarified got lost somewhere along the line.

I do not for a single moment believe that the running or functioning of the Transport Board is an esoteric matter which requires high-powered management. I do not know where you will get appropriate high-powered management in Barbados since an effective manager in Barbados must of necessity understand the idiosyncracies of the work force that he is managing.

A former member of the Transport Board — I think he is the Governor of the Central Bank — once told me that the appropriate management for the Transport Board was an industrial magnate from Tokyo, Japan. It is this fundamental colonial inferiority complex which has led us to believe that management is like some extra-terrestrial entity, and that Barbadians, people who were born in this 166 square miles, are incapable of handling it. In fact, if one looks at the epoch in the history of the Transport Board, when your humble servant was Minister, one would see that for the first time — the first and only time — the historical trend of ever increasing deficits was reversed, in the financial year 1982-83, when the deficit was reduced to, according to a signed authorised audited account, \$14.9 million from a projected \$17 million, and this having regard to the fact that consumption taxes were increased in that year which gave rise to an additional \$2 million in costs, and this was a cost which could not have been anticipated. So the effective reduction in the deficit was in the vicinity of \$5 million, and it is crystal clear that if one honestly looks at this reversal of a historic trend of ever rising deficits, that it is within the competence of people bred and born in this country, who breathe this air, who came out of the loins of Barbadian women, to resolve some of the knotty problems that bedevil the Transport Board.

But, first of all, before I get to the question of the problems of the Transport Board, it is necessary for me to advert to the issue here, the substance of the Resolution. I, for one, share the opinion of the Ministry of the Attorney General which I was given at the time, that 80 buses were purchased that there was nothing illegal or improper in the transaction, for this reason. The loans were negotiated on the basis that the Transport Levy Fund would be used as security for repayment, and there was clear, unequivocal legislated authority to the effect that the Minister of Transport had the power to use funds from the transport levy for the purpose of capitalisation of the Transport Board, which the transaction precisely was.

One may argue about whether Parliament should be informed or not. But Parliament would have been informed in any event, so the issue boils down to whether Parliament should have been given prior notice of the intention of the Ministry or be informed of the transaction *ex post facto*. In any event, when the *ex post facto* information was transmitted to Parliament, in the form of the presentation of the accounts of the Transport Levy Fund, it would have been possible for any questions in respect of irregularities to be raised then. The money was used for the purposes that the Transport Levy Act authorised, and that is to capitalise the Transport Board, in this case for the purchase of buses, and there can therefore be no question of impropriety. So if we strip away the rhetoric of illegality or impropriety, the argument reduces itself simply to this, whether it was desirable that Parliament be informed beforehand or whether Parliament be informed after the transaction had been completed. That is stripping the issue of all of its mystification; that is all there is.

There can be no contention that is sustainable that anything improper — or, in my view, illegal — was done. And having been the first person to propose, I accept the full responsibility for proposing this. It was my idea because I deemed it to be in the interest of the public so to do. People were crying out for buses and no money was available to purchase increased rolling stock for the Transport Board, and I took that decision in the public interest.

I think that it is very very important to approach the issue of public transport from a level of clear conceptualisation. The question is this: what kind of operation do the people of Barbados want? What kind of operation is desirable? My own view is that the operation must be a public service. Even in rabidly capitalistic societies, the metropolises that operate mass transit systems find it necessary to insinuate a social component in the operation of a bus service. Most states in North America that operate mass transit systems make the same kind of concessions to police officers and to senior citizens that the Transport Board in Barbados makes. Therefore, if you accept that it cannot be a crassly commercial undertaking, then the possibility of a subsidy arises, especially in view of the rigidity of the movements of revenues, as the honourable Member for St. Peter referred to. The sources of revenue are limited, and revenue movement upward is restricted because the poorest of the poor are those who use public transport system, and Government exercises the greatest circumspection in increasing the bus fares in order to avoid increasing hardship on the most vulnerable segment within the society.

7.25 p.m.

I believe there is a consensus in this House that there should be a subsidy. But we have never seriously addressed ourselves as to what the magnitude of such a subsidy ought to be. My very arbitrary assessment is that the subsidy that is desirable for a country such as Barbados ought to be somewhere in the vicinity of \$7.5 million, and, given the present condition of the Transport Board, I believe that such a goal is attainable within a four year period, provided that certain things are done. And what needs to be done is unequivocally clear.

I do not, for one, believe that the revenue position cannot be improved. The revenue position can be improved by addressing the minibus issue squarely. I believe, for one, and I have said it time and again, that it was a serious error to allocate minibuses in such large numbers on the short-haul routes. The short-haul routes, the routes within a radius of three miles, are the revenue generating routes of the Transport Board. And it is obvious, if one looks at the passengership from the year 1980, when minibuses were introduced in significant numbers, within the three mile radius, that it represents a sharp and in some cases a phenomenal reduction in the passengers who have travelled on the short-haul routes, and with this reduction in the number of passengers travelling on the profit-bearing routes came a reduction of revenue.

We are going to abandon the enterprise of enhancing the revenue of the Transport Board, except on the basis of increases of bus fares, unless we deal with this unpleasant and intractable problem of removing a large number of minibuses from the short route profit-bearing areas where the Transport Board buses also ply. Now it is not an easy task. Minibus operators, the Minibus Association constitute, at least in the minds of some politicians, a formidable political lobby, and, therefore, some politicians find it necessary to talk with tongue-in-cheek about the minibus operations. But it must be plainly said that this situation with the minibuses must be resolved, and if a Government does not have the will to recapture the revenue which it lost to the minibuses within this three mile radius, it might well sell the buses out to private enterprise, because there is not going to be any serious improvement in revenue earning until this issue is faced.

I believe that there are several things that can be done to bring about this objective. I feel that where you have a reliable Transport Board service on shorthaul routes and you have enough seats available to the passengers, in the last analysis, they will opt to travel by Transport Board vehicles. I have no doubt at all about this. It is an experiment which was carried out when I was Minister of Transport, and the President of the Minibus Association told me that we were having a devastating effect upon the revenues of the minibuses that ply within

that particular area. We need not drive the minibuses brutally from this three mile circle, the Transport Board can improve the quality of the service within this three mile radius and effectively recapture most of what it lost to the minibuses.

My view is this, that there will always be a need for minibuses. There is no public transport system anywhere in the world which adequately transports the travelling public at peak periods. Nowhere in the world is this done! Therefore, minibuses — genuine minibuses, quite distinct from private bus concessionaires posing as minibus owners — genuine minibuses in that situation will continue to function and will always serve a supplementary role to the publicly-owned transport system, and I believe that that is a desirable goal. As long as Government is committed to a programme of having a publicly-owned transport system, then the minibus operation must be seen as supplementary to, and, to this extent, I am philosophically opposed to the proposition of integration that has been floated, because I stand for the view that Government should operate public transport as a public service, not being crassly commercial but not being managerially permissive to the extent wherever increasing deficits will be amassed, I believe the desirable limit aimed at should be \$7.5 million, and on the revenue side, quite apart from the politically explosive nature of increasing bus fares, it is still possible, by dealing with the minibus problem on the profit bearing routes, to increase the revenue of the Transport Board.

On the cost side of it, there are some things that we do not need any expert on transport to advise us on. One of the deplorable phenomena of the public transport system in Barbados is that we have no preventive maintenance programme, and it is horrendous to contemplate the operation of a fleet of some 300 vehicles, or more, without a preventive maintenance programme. A preventive maintenance programme is a cardinal feature in every operation. There is even a preventive maintenance programme of sorts operating in the workshop at the Ministry of Transport and Works — imperfectly operated it is true, but it is there nonetheless — and one of the serious contributors to inflating costs within the Transport Board is an absence of a preventive maintenance system.

7.35 p.m.

When I was Minister of Transport, one of the things that I did — and the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) took part in those discussions — was to secure a concession from Mercedes Benz to set up a preventive maintenance programme. Unfortunately, such a programme has not yet been implemented, and as a consequence of this, mechanics and those who are responsible for organising the workshop of necessity miss out certain buses. There

is no adequate documentation or checking of buses. There is no record of the longevity of parts. There is no basis of information at all for determining whether a particular bus should be checked, unless the police begin their programme of harassment of the Transport Board buses, or if a bus happens to break down. That is when the workshop generally becomes conscious of the need for servicing a vehicle. It is absolutely critical to have a preventive maintenance programme in order to obviate these kinds of difficulties. It will go a long way towards reducing maintenance costs. It will go a long way towards the reduction of the cost of parts.

I want to emphasise that this is not an exercise in metaphysics. This is no vapid or empty theorizing. This was done when I was Minister of Transport and Works, and it worked. I am talking about a programme that has been successful. This is not a eerie-fairy theory that I am proposing. Although we did not get to the area of preventive maintenance, yet it was possible to develop a programme where you were in a position to check and monitor the movements of the newer buses.

One of the tragedies of the Transport Board is that it has been in operation for some 30 years now and there cannot be found within that organisation any body of information which will enable planners to predict the performance of vehicles of any kind. For the most part, buses are randomly bought. One looks into a brochure and says, 'this is a good bus, we heard about this. This is a good bus, it looks beautiful, it has a nice fur — let us buy it.'

For the first time, in 1982, topographical factors were taken into consideration in the purchase of buses. Barbados is not uniformly flat. In parishes like St. Andrew and St. Joseph that are very hilly, a different kind of stress is placed upon a vehicle, and it was felt, therefore, that buses built with certain specifications ought to be allocated to those hilly routes and used nowhere else, so that we could acquire a body of experience, based upon the performances of those buses, which would enable us to build even better buses more appropriately constructed for the hilly areas in the country. Unfortunately, that programme did not continue.

Some speaker mentioned the question of continuity, which is an important aspect of human life and human development. If we use a nihilistic approach to the work of preceding generations, we will never make any progress, and one of the historical weaknesses of the Transport Board has been an attempt, time and time again, for new management personnel to remake the wheel, so to speak, and not to build upon the experiences of the past. If this were not the case, then it would clearly be seen not to serve the best interest of our public transportation system to have buses specifically

designed to ply routes in hilly areas moving all over the place and other buses not so designed allocated elsewhere.

This brings me to the question of the diversification of the fleet. During my tenure, buses of different sizes were purchased, and there was a good reason for doing this. During the off-peak periods, buses that have to run fairly regularly within the 3 mile radius did not run at full capacity, and it was, therefore, felt that if economies were to be effected within the area of the consumption of fuel, it was necessary to have smaller and more fuel efficient buses on those routes during the off-peak periods. I have seen such buses running in Sugar Hill and such places, and I believe that that is really to savage those buses. It is predatory to those buses to have them running and plying in circumstances and in conditions for which they were not built.

There are many other aspects within the cost-cutting exercise that I can refer to, but I do not want to tire this Chamber with an enumeration of all the things I believe to be easy within the purview of people of reasonable intelligence who are prepared to address themselves to these particular questions. I believe that if one looks at these things, re-examine these programmes, measure their success, perhaps improve upon them, then we can go a long way toward reducing the deficit to the desirable figure, which I arbitrarily considered to be \$7.5 million, attainable in the present circumstances within a four year period.

7.45 p.m.

I say these things in the spirit in which I hope they are taken. I do not say them in any fit of nostalgia. I do not want to be Minister of Transport and Works, or Minister period, so I do not say it with any nostalgia or with any view to create the impression that I know better than anybody else. I say it because I believe that it is in the national interest for me to make these declarations: one, that we must try to conceptualise clearly the problems of the Transport Board. We must answer the first question, what sort of service do we want? Do we want a vastly commercial undertaking? Or do we want a public service? Once we agree that we want a public service, then we have to acknowledge that there will be a deficit, but since our financial resources in this country do not exist in cornucopian abundance, it is necessary for us to fix a desirable limit for that deficit, and once we fix a desirable limit for that deficit, we must look at ways in which we can increase our revenue and reduce our costs.

I do not believe that it is at all helpful in resolving the problems to utter the word "management, management, management," because it is indeed a tautology that any place that is not properly run, or that is run at too large a loss, is a place that does not have good management. It is tautologically correct...

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member has just two minutes to wind up his speech.

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN:....and it is not useful, it is a use of words. We must get down to the serious business of asking ourselves concretely, what does all of this entail? Then, such debates will be conducted in a more rational manner, in a more logical sequence and devoid of many of the irrelevancies which I have had the misfortune to listen to this evening.

Thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I am going to suspend the sitting now for dinner, because the Prime Minister obviously would wish to wind up.

I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 8.30 p.m.

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

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

7.50 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

When the suspension was taken, the Honourable Prime Minister was about to reply. I see the honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, the debate today, a very long debate, centered primarily around whether or not the Ministry of Transport and Works, or Communications and Works, acted properly in incurring expenses without approval of Parliament, and mainly whether Parliament at this time had the right to regularise itself. The important part of this entire procedure, as far as I am concerned, is that whatever we say tonight, the entire debate does not help us to answer the very simple question which I would like to ask, that is, what do I tell the people of St. Philip is the result of this debate? I say so for the simple reason that what we are here doing is trying to regularise some loans of some \$17.4 million which have already brought to this country some 90 buses, etc. etc., which, in summary, Mr. Speaker, means that I cannot look forward, or the people of St. Philip, to any improvement in the service as a result of this Resolution.

This is a very serious situation for me. About 5 weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I had an unusual number of telephone calls from the people of St. Philip. It has reached the stage of crisis where they could bear it no more and they were calling to find out what had gone wrong. It was a day after a young man from Clarkes Hill, who was working at Southern Palms as a security guard and had to get to work at 11 o'clock, called. For three consecutive nights he had been waiting from 6 o'clock the evening for a bus to get to town to go to Southern Palms and on all three occasions he missed it. The manager informed him that he could no longer employ him since he was only there for three weeks, and the young man called me very infuriated to find out what I was doing about it.

A lady called me, because she could not get to the university, and I decided, in order to provide some answer, to call the General Manager of the Transport Board. I telephoned the General Manager; he was not available and the next in line spoke to me. I said to him, "I have had an unusual number of telephone calls about the bus service in St. Philip, what is happening?" These are the exact words of that officer: "Mr. Franklin, I am afraid I must tell you the truth. Today we have only 150 buses on the routes." He said, "Things had reached crisis position. The entire Ministry was down here this week and I have got a directive to find parts and spare tyres from wherever I can find them, because it cannot continue like this." He said: "I apologise for it, but we can do absolutely nothing, and I cannot give you any assurance that there is going to be any improvement in the very near future." I said to him, 'Thanks very much. At least I can tell the people that not only the people in St. Philip are suffering, but the entire island.' And I communicated this back to the people, that on that particular day — and the Minister is here, he can verify it, because I called the day when he said that almost the entire Ministry was down at the Transport Board, they held meetings for the entire day, because it had reached crisis position. He said they had no spare parts but there were shipments in the harbour they were trying to get out, and they had just got permission to try and get bus tyres from wherever they could get them to get a few more buses on the routes. I called my people and I told them exactly what was the position.

Mr. Speaker, I am still faced with the same problem I had, because even after we have debated this, this is not putting any additional money into the hands of the Minister of Transport and Works to put any additional buses on service on the routes. And I am saying that despite whatever we have said, when you have reached the situation where they can admit — and I believe the Minister came some time subsequently after that and said that the Transport Board has never been in a worse position than they were, and he used the figure of

160 buses, if my memory serves me right, ten more buses than what I was told on that particular morning.

Aside.

8.35 p.m.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: The point is I was told on that same day that the fleet requirement is 320 buses.

Asides.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: If I had my diary I would be able to tell you, but these are the facts. I said it was about 5 weeks ago. If you check back and see when you had the meeting at the Ministry of Transport, you would have the dates. It is about 5 or 6 weeks ago. I am not sure when it was, but the important part, Mr. Speaker, is this. I have said repeatedly that something is definitely wrong with the Transport Board system in this country, and something has to be wrong if you have a fleet of 320 buses and you cannot get more than 150 on the road.

I have spoken since then to a few of the drivers, because they were claiming that there was sabotaging by the drivers. I am told by the drivers that this is the position, that back in 1982 — and a driver showed me a list — they were provided with a check list which they had to run through the buses before they moved them out, and their instructions were that if anything on the check list did not work, they should put the bus back in. But, within recent times, they could not do and most of the drivers, when they turned up for work on mornings, if they did not go out, the most they would get is 4 hours, so in order for them to get their day's pay, they would take the buses out, despite the fact that some of them have been faulty, in order to make the rush traffic, and when the rush traffic was finished, they would make an arrangement to come back in with these buses to see if they could be repaired. So the fact that you are saying that the drivers turn back in the buses is not quite true because the drivers claim and pointed out to me that if they do not work, they only get 5 hours if they only turn up for work.

The problem that they have, and you will notice it, is that any time you have a rainy day, there is an extraordinary problem, because the drivers say that they fear to take the buses on the road with the tyres when the rain is falling, because there is an additional problem of possible danger to themselves and the passengers. You can check and see that, any day we have rain in Barbados, there is an extraordinary problem with the public transport, because the drivers, in the interest of themselves and the safety of the passengers, do not take any chances and go out.

It is a fact that the Transport Board, even a thing like sizing of the tyres they have not done. I have been told — I would not call the person's name, for obvious

reasons — that the Transport Board's administration has never taken the advice of the technical man in charge of the sizing, and he told me that almost always the tyres are undersized. As a result, you have to have an extra revolution in the tyres, which adds to the wear and tear of the buses, and that has caused them a considerable amount of problems and costs in the entire market.

The tyre facility alone — there was a time, some three weeks ago, where there was no material for the technicians in the tyre section to work with. Drivers have told me that many nights they could not take buses out for the want of a single bulb.

All I am trying to find out, having spoken the whole day, is, what am I to tell the people in Bayfield that leave Playtex at 4.30 p.m., I want to invite the Minister, as Mr. Barrow said, I would invite any one of you any afternoon to go into Route 10 stand, that new stand, and you would see people climbing on top of people's shoulders to get in a Bayfield bus. Any afternoon, if you want to do it, change into any clothes you want to and go into the Route 10 bus stand any time after 5.30 p.m., and you will see that the new bus stand that you have built has not, in any way, stopped the rushing and the pushing. It has gotten worse!

Asides.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: That is a fact. You have facilities for the people, but the people what to get home. When a person has left home as early as 5.30 o'clock in the morning from St. Philip to get a bus to get to town, come 6 o'clock in the evening that person wants to get back home. That is 12 hours he has been away from home, so when you see 7.00 p.m., 7.30 p.m., and they have not got a bus, you must have the kind of problems that you get in the bus stand over there. People are pushing to get home. I am saying that their words to me are simple, that they would have much preferred to be able to get home to the comfort of their home than to be, however modest it is, than to be in a luxurious shed and cannot get home to their families.

Asides.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: The luxurious bus stand, the concourse, whatever you want to call it. That is what I am worrying about.

School children have a problem. You find that we have a lot of children from that route at St. George's Secondary, and you find them on mornings on Route 10 all the way down to Route 5, and they have to come all the way to Bridgetown on mornings. Many mornings they have not been able to get down early, then to get a bus to go up to St. George's Secondary School which causes them considerable problems.

On afternoons I pass on the Route 4 outside St. George's Secondary School, particularly now it is getting dark. There is not even a street light there, and you see school children — 50, 60, 70, 80 — at 5.30 p.m., 6.00 p.m., 6.30 p.m., dark at this time of the year, waiting, thumbing lifts, going to College Savannah, going to Church Village, because they do not have a bus.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: On a point of elucidation, if the honourable Member would give way. To give you only one example. We heard all these complaints. We sent a senior officer from the Transport Board to the Lodge School to monitor the children, and those children remained in the school yard. When the bus arrived, they refused to board the bus. The bus left, and that man had to go in the afternoon on the "SHARE" programme to explain to the parents of the children that he, himself, had witnessed a situation where the children involved in play elected to miss the school bus so that they could continue their play and then figure out how they would get home afterwards.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, are you telling me then that if children are taking part in organized recreational programmes at their school, you should not have facilities to accommodate those children?

The point I am making is — all I need to find out from the Prime Minister when he is finished, is how this Resolution today is going to allow me to tell the people of St. Philip that they are going to have an improved bus service over the next six months. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is purely a matter for the legal people to have a discourse on. It has not done anything for the improvement of the transport system for the people in St. Philip.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: There cannot be anybody else, Sir. Everybody on that side have spoken.

This debate has been long, interesting in some respects, and I will be able to tell the honourable Member very shortly what it will mean. On this occasion, it is obvious that Parliament, on both sides, have taken the opportunity not only to debate this Resolution, but any Resolution that comes for any supplementary for the Transport Board.

The Government has taken a position to provide additional subsidy for the Transport Board for this year. I must repeat, Sir, that, strictly speaking, on this particular Resolution, nothing that has been said on the other side can contradict the fact that the Government gave this House the assurance, sometime ago, that the

better opinion was that the law should be followed literally, and that a specific Resolution, for the specific purposes of the borrowings under the Special Loans Act, should be brought to Parliament. That is what we are doing.

8.45 p.m.

We heard the person who was the Minister at the particular period of time set out very clearly, very succinctly, exactly and precisely what happened with the major amount of these loans. It was always understood when we created the Transport Board Levy Fund Act that the stream of income that would be coming in would be sufficient to finance a major loan which would be used for the purpose of modernising the bus fleet, carrying into effect a policy that was started when the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) was the Minister of Transport; that was a policy to standardise the units and to modernise the fleet. We have settled on the Leyland and the Mercedes Benz, and a number of the other buses that were there have been weeded out of the fleet. That is all.

I say, Sir, that I find it difficult to follow the argument that the Government has no consistent policy in relation to transport. The most amazing thing that I find is that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition could read from the King Report, but if he follows the King Report he will find that a major number of the recommendations have in fact been implemented by the Government. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition referred to the King Report of 1973. The only confusion we have is that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is confused, because he is thinking about two different reports. There were in fact two reports, but the King Report was in 1973. I have it before me and I am going to read it, because some people seem to forget it. It is a document of the House, File Copy, Library of Parliament, B-1047, and I will give you the recommendations.

The Committee comprised J.C. King, W.E. Armstrong, Henry A. Cuke; — the Honourable Leader of the Opposition called Henry Cuke's name as a member of the Committee — N.O. Harper, H. R. Hunt and William A. Johnson. At page 20 paragraph 36, listen to them:

"In conclusion, the Committee summarizes its main recommendations as follows:-

- (1) The operation of the motor omnibus service throughout the island by a single concessionaire which should be the Transport Board established by the Transport Board Act 1955-37."

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You might not disagree with it, but the Leader of the Opposition disagrees with it. You know you talk in two tongues, or 3 or 4 over there! The Leader of the Opposition disagrees with it. He even said the other night he did not agree with it.

"(2) The single concessionaire be required to put into service and to maintain the number of units determined by the Ministry of Communications and Works as essential to provide an adequate service throughout the island, within a stipulated five year period."

Now we started that in 1978. Sixty buses were brought in, the Leyland Viking, and then another 25, a total of 85 buses, plus the 90 we are talking about here. That is 170 buses since this Government has been in power, brand new, that we have brought in here, and we are continuing.

The third recommendation was that the concessionaire, with the approval of the Ministry of Communications and Works, should make use of services of approved minibuses on an agreement basis with registered co-operative transport societies.

Well, that is impractical. The minibuses are there, but the capitalistic instinct of the Barbadian is such that they are not going to put their minibuses in any co-op, and I want to say that I categorically reject the suggestion that comes from the other side, that this Government has no policy in relation to minibuses.

The Government approved 195 permits for minibuses, and those were the numbers that were in operation at that particular period of time. Even at the time when the King Report was being written in 1973, there were over 150 minibuses in operation in Barbados. We are talking about a persistent problem that has nagged all administrations for a long period of time. At page 3 of that report you will see the number of buses that they set out. The number of units that had passed the test was 203; 119 for the Transport Board, 57 for the Elite and 27 for the Rocklyn Bus Company. At page 5 of the same Report,

"As at December 31, 1972 there were 55 minibuses operating with a Ministry licence, and it is estimated that a further 100 were operating without the appropriate licence."

Fifty-five and 100 are 155 minibuses that they had operating as long ago as 1972, together with the fleet of 203 buses!

So what is the position today? I am told that licences have been renewed for 138 of those minibuses. You hear all this talk about exorbitant fees. The total

fees collected from the minibuses are \$1 million. There is no exorbitance in that, and we have the routes. I told the Honourable Minister for Transport that he should publish and let the public know where the minibuses are supposed to operate. There are 54 areas that the licences have been granted for them to operate on, and there is one characteristic about them; very few are in the country areas, and that is a fundamental point we have to face. No minibus operator is going to operate outside a certain zone, so that is one of the problems that we have to face, and one of the reasons for the increase in the fees was to provide some measure of compensation to the Transport Board for the fact that they have to do the long uneconomic routes and the minibuses do the routes that are near to Bridgetown and lucrative, and they are able to do more than one trip within a stipulated period of time. So it is not correct to say that an attempt has not been made to segregate the minibuses and to minimise the competition. But progress is going to be made in this direction. Progress is bound to be made, because one of the conditions of the increase in the Police Force that took place last year and this year was that the transport section would be activated and that there would be better policing of illegal operations of minibuses and "Z" vans. That is a fact. I told the Commissioner of Police that that was one of the conditions that Cabinet had agreed upon, and we will see that it happens.

(Aside: So his hands are tied in truth.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Tied what! Neither his hands nor his mouth! There has been a battle. Do you want to hear it? There has been a battle going along for years, under successive Commissioners of Police, and the Ministry of Transport, under successive Ministers of Transport, because the Ministry of Transport has been arguing that the police have not been enforcing the law in relation to the control of the minibus operators, and the argument has been that they wanted to have their own inspectors to police the transport law. In the end a decision was taken to increase the Police Department so that they would be able to enforce the law in relation to the transport, but that there was nothing to stop them from having inspectors, as recommended by the King Report.

8.55 p.m.

(Aside: Mr. B. M. TAITT: You know the problem with reports.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The problem was that you would not implement your own report. You had plenty of time between 1973 and 1976 to implement it, but you did not implement it.

(Aside: Mr. B. M. TAITT: You did not implement the Malone Report.)

(*Aside:* Hon. L. R. TULL: What Malone Report?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The Malone Report? Of course, that was implemented.

Let us continue. Consistently, successive Ministers of Transport have tried to deal with this problem, so that the minibus problem is being dealt with. I am not sure that it is being dealt with at as fast a speed as I would like to see it dealt with, but it will be dealt with.

The second point that the King Report recommended that we implemented — and I am glad to see the blatant disagreement that is existing between the unionist politicians and between the recommendation of the King Report — is that fare boxes should be installed in every bus, as long ago as 1973, and they have been installed. The King Report also recommended that there was no use for conductors, having put the fare boxes in. The King Report recommended that.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Oh, I am going to read it! I am going to read it, of course.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is what they say. They say that it is a modern method.

Now do not let us fool ourselves. There are 600 people employed in the capacity of collecting of fares when you have fare boxes. That is one of the problems with the Transport Board, and I know the Government has always said that the true measure of the subsidy that should be given to the Transport Board was the cost of the wages to the conductors. You know that that has been repeatedly said in here. They have repeatedly said that. That is the true measure.

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: Who? I never heard that.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Well, that is not surprising, you are not often in here.

The position is that we have a problem. That is another issue we have to face. Nobody is saying the conductors would not have work, because you retrain people and they do something else. There should be drivers. There has been a strong recommendation that.....

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: What about the hostesses?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN:.....the buses should be allocated to two or three people, so that each bus would

have two or three people only who would be driving that bus, so as to have a sort of a loyalty built up in relation to particular equipment and people will have enough pride in that — or four people — so that over the period of time of seven days, multiplied by the number of days that they have to put them on the road, at least some person, working a shift system, would be able to get their 40 hours within that. That is another problem. An agreement made when the Democratic Labour Party was in power introducing the 40-hour week stated that 40 hours mean Monday to Friday, a nonsensical agreement with any service industry in Barbados. I say that is a nonsensical agreement!

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is a union agreement.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: We have been trying systematically to get it understood that you cannot have.....

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

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member, Sir, is misleading the House, indicating that the Democratic Labour Party entered into a union agreement with the union. The Transport Board is a statutory corporation that can enter into any agreement. To say that they entered into an agreement with the union when the Democratic Labour Party was in power is to mislead the House, Sir, I submit.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The problem is that the honourable Member does not even know what were the patterns of agreements that took place during that time when the Democratic Labour Party was in power. No one objected to the introduction of the concept of 40 hours. What was objectionable was to introduce the concept that 40 hours could only be worked between Monday to Friday, because there are certain service industries that would suffer, because any time outside of that, you would have to pay overtime. And part of the agreement relating to weekend work in the workshop relates to overtime that has to be given if you work other than certain days.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please, order.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: So what are you talking about? We have, in addition to the problems spoken of by the honourable Member for St. Michael East, what I would call, redundant rules, too.

(*Aside.* Mr. B. M. TAITT: Your problem is you do not go to church Saturday nor Sunday.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: One of these days I will live to see that Barbadians would say that on a Saturday and a Sunday we are going to close the airport, we are going to close the port, we are going to close the hospital, we are going to close the electricity company, we are going to close the Telephone Company, we are going to close everything, we are going to close the Waterworks, because our week is Monday to Friday, stop at 12.00 o'clock on Friday night. We will all become Seventh Day Adventists and stop at 12.00 o'clock on Friday night or something. We would see how impractical that is. We obviously have to look at what our existing rules are and revise them in the light of the fact that today, in modern Barbados, we cannot afford the idea that overtime has to be paid if you work outside of certain days.

I am in full agreement with the concept that 40 hours is a basic unit for a week. I am in full agreement with that, but it cannot be 40 hours Monday to Friday, and we have to get over that, too. These are important points that we have to face, important issues. We have to face the issue of conductors and retraining them as drivers. We have to face the issue of the Monday to Friday week. We have to face a number of other issues. We have to face the issue of regulating the minibuses along the routes that they have. We also need to face the issue of the Transport Board contracting with some of the other equipment that is available in Barbados to do some of the routes when anything goes wrong with their buses.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Adding them? How could you be adding them? What I think you mean, what I see in the newspapers is that it is not your view. I always thought that.

So that all of these are matters the Government is looking into. A Resolution will come down here shortly for the \$8 million, which is the balance of the subsidy that they need for this year.

(*Aside.* Mr. B. M. TAITT: How much would that be for the year?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No. What has happened is — I am going to give honourable Members the information — that the subsidy that was requested at Estimates time was \$14 million. That was not granted. Six million dollars were granted. Some money was put into the Police Vote and in the Education Vote and they were to pay it over. But the point is that you have to pay over the money on the basis of evidence that the policemen used it or the children used it, so that if there is a reduction in use,

which there has been, there has been a reduction in use by them of that.

The other point we have to take into account in Barbados is that we have 50 000 vehicles on the road. With the small Suzuki car, the Daihatsu Charade, the little small cars now, together with credit unions having access to funds, a lot more people have become car owners, particularly since the small cars — I am not talking about the big cars, I am talking about the small cars — have come on the market, so that is going to lead to a reduction in ridership. So you have competition from the minibuses, competition from the "Z" vans, competition from these small cars, and having got an increase in prosperity, there are more people who are able to buy some of these small cars. Those are the factors.

9.05 p.m.

Now I give the honourable members this assurance, that the Transport Levy Fund will continue to be used with the primary purpose being the development of adequate facilities for the Transport Board. That is the primary purpose.

Now when I hear people continue with the false allegations of the use of the Transport Levy Fund, I constantly have to remind the public that, under the Transport Levy Act, reports have to be filed in Parliament.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No, no, no! If we went through it, it has not sunk into your head, and this is the position. I am not going to let the honourable Members get away with the idea that the Transport Levy Fund is a fund that any Minister can put his hands in.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is not true! The honourable Member is having absolutely no effect on me. I will continue to press home the point that it is a false, malicious accusation to say that the Transport Levy Fund Act permits any Minister to have any slush fund to use the money for purposes for which the Act did not envisage. That is a problem. I hear that many times coming from that side. The reports are here — 1983-1984 is the latest — audited by Coopers and Lybrand from the very beginning, and we have how much that went to the Transport Board and how much went to the Ministry of Transport and Works. The 1985 report will soon be in here and we shall be using the reports up and down this country, and we shall expose you for what you are doing, because you know that it is untrue.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You know it is untrue when you say that the Transport Levy Fund is used for purposes for which the law does not authorise.

Sir, the position is very clear. Anyone with any degree of objectivity can look at the total transport fleet, public and private sector, in Barbados. Look at it today and see what it was 10 years ago. So that what we have to do now is to make some tough decisions, and I am glad we had this kind of debate, because it helps the public to understand the situation in which we are operating and the tough decisions we have to take, and they will be taken. The decisions will be taken, so that one can envisage an improvement.

It is not right that \$14 million a year should have to come out of the public treasury to subsidize the public transport. It is too large a sum of money, and it has to stop.

(Aside: Mr. B. M. TAITT: We agree with that.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Well, you agree with that. I am very glad. I am not agreeing with you, because you do not know what you agree with.

The wage increase that has just been negotiated is a 12 per cent rate increase. It will cost \$3 million. That will either be made up by increased productivity, or by the rigorous enforcement of measures to ensure that that \$3 million is reduced. It has to be so.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: What does a Minister has to do with that? The Minister has nothing to do with that. Incentives are going to be offered to ensure that there is better production in the workshop.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is too much cross talking. Members must be able to hear in silence.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: People talk about not having any technical people in the world, no technical staff. The honourable Minister can tell you that both Mercedes Benz and Leyland have had people here continuously carrying out training programmes of the Barbadian mechanics. That has been going on, and specific recommendations for upgrading the workshop are taking place all of the time. The trouble with the workshop is that people wish to work on the overtime rates, and this

Government is against the principle of hiring a specific number of people and giving them a large amount of overtime. In the context of the Barbadian society, we prefer to have more people drawing that amount of money, and whether the unions like it or lump it, that is the policy of this Government. That is why if you do not want to do it from Monday to Friday and you do not want to work Saturday and Sunday without overtime, Catlyn will get the work, Stuart will get the work, and Acme will get the work. More workers will be employed outside for the given amount of money. That is the position. Rather than pay overtime we prefer to distribute the work outside and let more people share in the joy. That is the position, Sir.

I think that I have set out very clearly all of the surrounding facts. If the honourable Members want another debate, when we come to the \$8 million, we are ready to face that debate, too.

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Divide!

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to draw to the attention of this Chamber that those Members who have voted "Aye" cannot change their vote on a division. A division has been called for. Please ring the bell.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member can only speak when it comes to his time to count the vote.

Mr. Clerk, will you please take the vote.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative with the House dividing as follows:

Ayes: Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Hon. L. R. TULL, Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Hon. B. A. MILLER, Hon. V. L. JOHNSON, Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, O. S. ARTHUR, Esq., Hon. H. deB. FORDE, L. L. SISNETT, Esq., R. E. BRATHWAITE, Esq., J. G. ODLE, Esq., Hon. A. TRUSS. — 13 Ayes.

Noes: M. A. KING, Esq., B. M. TAITT, Esq., W. O. FRANKLIN, Esq., P. M. GREAVES, Esq., and L. A. WEEKES, Esq., — 5 Noes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I refer to Standing Order 41(5) as follows:

"In a division the Clerk shall call each Member's name separately in the order of sitting. Every Member present, unless he expressly says that he declines to vote, shall record his vote either for the 'Ayes' or the 'Noes', but a Member shall not vote in a manner inconsistent with any opinion which he may have expressed when the voices were taken collectively."

I deem it a dishonour to this Honourable House for the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) to have voted in a collective vote then to take the Chamber on a division called by his side.
9.15 p.m.

Mr. Clerk, can I now have the count, please? I am told 13 members voted Aye, 5 members voted No. I declare the Ayes have it.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Every Member is entitled to a point of privilege.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege in the light of the ruling which you gave a moment ago. It is not possible for one to speak during the time of the taking of the votes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Make your point.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I rise on a point of privilege, Sir, to ask Your Honour, in the light of the circumstances, to not record in Hansard the....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am on a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, can I be heard in silence?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You want to be heard in silence?

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member must be heard in silence. It is in accordance with the Standing Orders of this Honourable House. The honourable Member may now proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. I take the point that the ruling by the Chair is explicitly correct and I am not challenging it. I am drawing to Your Honour's attention, however, that, in the course of the proceedings of this

Honourable House, it is perfectly possible that what may be called a vocal emission, a person may in fact utter as an almost spasmodic response without at that time recording a vote.

Furthermore, Sir, the ruling which Your Honour made, while it is correct, does not take account, I submit, Sir, of the circumstances in which there is, as Your Honour said, a voice vote. Your Honour indicated, by virtue of the ruling, that Your Honour was able to identify a particular Member voting in a particular way in a voice vote. I do not question Your Honour's ability to do so, Sir, but I am saying, and I am inviting Your Honour to consider that for the purposes of the record of this Honourable Chamber, that the ruling may in fact, having identified the honourable Member for St. Michael South, reflect on the conduct of that honourable Member, who, as a parliamentarian, has never fallen into the position where he could be seen to be dishonourable in this Chamber. As a matter of fact, Sir, that particular parliamentarian has always striven to uphold the highest levels of Parliament.

I am appealing, as a matter of privilege, to Your Honour to reconsider not the ruling, but the expression which Your Honour made in the ruling. I am inviting Your Honour to reconsider for the purposes of the record of this House, not necessarily for the honourable Member but for posterity. I draw it to Your Honour's attention from my position, and I am seeking it as a privilege.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: This is also on a point of privilege, Sir. What I understand the honourable Member for St. Michael West is asking you to do is to falsify the records of Hansard, not to withdraw your ruling, and do not allow what should go into Hansard, from you, Mr. Speaker, is nothing but the essence of another dishonourable Member, and, Mr. Speaker, your integrity cannot be questioned.

Mr. SPEAKER: I refer to Standing Order 41(8).

"If a Member states that he voted in error or that his vote has been counted wrongly, he may claim to have his vote altered, provided that such request is made as soon as the Speaker or Chairman has announced the numbers, and before the Speaker or Chairman has declared the result of the division."

Therefore, there is sufficient provision in our Standing Orders to rectify any errors that might have been made.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I draw it to Your Honour's attention that Your Honour spoke immediately after and indicated...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to you, Sir. Your Honour spoke immediately after the

apparent infraction, and therefore it is possible — and I am sure Your Honour will agree with me....

Mr. SPEAKER: I have no intention of tampering with the records of this House at any time whatsoever.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Hear, hear! Order No. 7, Sir. Today is the 10th day of December, 1985, Sir, a dishonourable man he is, condemned by you, Mr. Speaker. Sir, before moving the next Order, I would have thought you would have gone a bit further and even called the Member to the Bar.

Order No. 7 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.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL, 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 of Supply.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985—86, NO. 13 \$5 551 235 HEAD 13 — SERVICES COMMISSIONS — SUBHEAD 1 GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Sir, this is a supplementary for the sum of \$10 800, and it is necessary to have this to be able to meet expenditure for the balance of the year.

I may say that, as a result of a meeting between the Head of the Services Commissions and the Chief Personnel Officer, certain structural changes have been agreed upon to provide for some additional manpower to do a research project in the Services Commissions area. The research project relates to an investigation into all the rules, regulations and standing orders of the Civil Service, an investigation into what consequential changes are necessary in the rules and regulations consequent upon the constitutional amendments that occurred in 1974, and it is felt that it is necessary to have an additional person at the level of Deputy Chief Personnel Officer to carry on this work, because it cannot be done by the Deputy or the Chief Personnel Officer while they are doing their ordinary day-to-day work of looking after personnel management. But you cannot do it with a person at a lower level than a Deputy Chief Personnel Officer, so that some money will be required there.

9.25 p.m.

There will also be some money required for miscellaneous expenditure in the Services Commissions. I am one of these who feel very strongly that in today's world, with information technology, it ought to be possible to have every applicant for a post in the Civil Service put on computer. I really feel it is wrong that we still have the old card system, some of which are lost or forgotten. There is no matching up of the requisite qualifications that people have so that we can have a comparative look at the people and things of that kind. I would hope that this exercise that I spoke of will also be done, so that it is our contemplation that some of this work can be started at a very early date.

I am told by the Chairman and the Chief Personnel Officer that they have identified someone — this is under the Head of Services Commissions generally — who they feel is competent to do this work. It is an appointment of the Public Service Commission, it is not my appointment. All I can say is that I have approved, from an Establishments' point of view, a post at the level of Deputy Chief Personnel Officer, and he will really be doing research work for the Services Commissions.

There is one gray area in Barbados that I think we should advert our minds to, particularly since the Constitutional amendments in 1974, and that is, what is the position of a person who is neither on the established staff under the Civil Establishment Act, neither a person who is appointed under the Public Employees Pension Act, nor a casual employee? One or two situations are arising, not only in Barbados but in other parts of the Commonwealth, and it is an interesting exercise to know what their position is. I am not going to deal with the details of that.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: They have been appointed because they draw money out of the Treasury either their posts have been abolished and they have been kept on. All kinds of situations arise. We have found one or two cases. I am not going to say anymore on that, but there are some legal opinions which have been found, not only in respect of Barbados but in respect of the rest of the Commonwealth. You have it also with people who have been appointed abroad. Those are the matters that I would like specifically to draw to the attention of the House.

On the question of the word processors and the electric typewriters, again I feel we should make more use of word processors in the Government Service in Barbados. The Addendum sets it out quite clearly, Head 13, Subhead 1, and it takes in (1) (2), (3), (6) and (11).

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Prime Minister could just be so gracious enough — he spoke of the creation of a post at Deputy Chief Personnel level and he said this is research and he illustrated three areas that need to be researched — is this a permanent post? What would be the continuous responsibility of a person at that level?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: My understanding is that the work that should have been done is so much that it is envisaged that this post will go on for a long period of time. Quite frankly, there is no continuous updating going along on what is called your General Orders or your general personnel procedures, your regulations for discipline, your regulations that are envisaged under the Constitution. This should have been done for a long period of time.

A proposal was put to me as Minister of Establishments that a tour should take place through other Commonwealth countries to observe how they deal with these matters, how they continuously update their General Orders, how after you have negotiations with the unions which impact on your General Orders, what is the procedure then for getting them updated. My own view was that that was a research and development job, and we should sit down and deal with it, so what we should do is to research what we have.

(Aside: Do you have someone?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes. They tell me that they have someone in mind. I have approved the amount of money you need for it. It starts off as a temporary post, but, as far as I am concerned, I believe that it is a job that should be done permanently, because I feel that, with a Service as large as Barbados, we should have an arm devoted to research and development. I feel so.

I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 34 — MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

SUBHEAD 20 — CULTURAL AFFAIRS (New)

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

The question that Head 34 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 36 — MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I think the Addendum explains Head 36 quite clearly and I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I must say that I am going to be speaking on this matter. There is a matter which has come to my attention; I intend to spend some time on it, and I think I should let the Chair know. Perhaps, it should have been taken under Education but I am taking it under Health, because it has to do with the question of the transfer of nursing education from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education.

It has been brought to my attention that there is a tremendous amount of distrust among those staff members who have been tutors in the Ministry of Health and who have found themselves, as a result of a Cabinet decision, being moved to the Ministry of Education by way of the Community College. My information is that, previous to 1984, a few discussions took place between the Ministry of Health, the tutors, the Principal of the Barbados Community College, the National Union of Public Workers and others. Nothing concrete came out of these discussions.

At the last discussion in 1981, the tutors and the union pointed out that they needed assurance that they would not lose any of the benefits which they then enjoyed through the General Orders, for example, things like salary, vacation, the right to appeal, sick benefits then enjoyed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, uniforms, status, etc. The tutors, according to my information, were then assured by the Principal of the College that they would not be disadvantaged in any way, and they were told that they could have a secondment for two years and were free to return to the Ministry of Health at the end of that time if they did not wish to stay at the College. The Ministry, according to my information, also told the tutors at that time that they would put the matters relating to those issues to the Attorney General so that he could go to Parliament and have the Barbados Community College Act amended, so that that particular group of tutors could be transferred or seconded to the College and take with them all of their benefits, while working in the conditions to which they had become accustomed. My information is that that was the last discussion held that involved the tutors.

9.35 p.m.

In early 1984, the tutors received a letter from the Ministry of Health, according to my information, informing them of the pending transfer and stating that

it may not be (1) possible, (2) feasible or (3) desirable to take all of the tutors, and the communication asked the tutors to state their preference for employment in the College. It was a letter addressed to the individual tutors, as I understand it, and the tutors replied accordingly that they were interested in employment in the College, but could not give a very affirmative answer because of lack of information as to working conditions *et cetera*. The Minister of Health, according to my information, called the tutors and told them that responsibility for nursing education would be transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education as from April 1984 and, according to what I have been told, Mr. Chairman, subsequently he told the tutors — that is, the Minister — that the transfer would be effective in the September of that year. It took place without any of the foregoing promises being kept. The Minister — that is, the present Minister of Health — also told the tutors that the Ministry of Health would assume responsibility for placing tutors in jobs if they did not go to the Community College or if they were not accepted by the Community College.

Now, Sir, what I am giving you is information that has been given to me. Five days prior to the notification by the Minister, the Principal of the Barbados Community College and the Chairman of the Board of Management of the Community College and one other of the Board members called the tutors to a meeting to find out if there was anything the tutors wanted to know. My information is that the tutors did not know what the Chairman was talking about. Then the tutors were told that the Minister of Education has mandated them, that is, the Community College, to get on with the plans for the transfer.

Again, Sir, there was nothing concrete told to the tutors. Broad mention was made of the area of proposals which they said they had made to the Ministry of Education for the school. The tutors, according to my information, did not know that such proposals had been made. But one point stood out, that the posts for tutors would be advertised and the tutors would then have to apply and be interviewed as any other applicant with no guarantee of being accepted.

Some weeks following this, the tutors received a communication from the Community College setting out, "Guidelines for Nursing Tutors" working in the Barbados Community College. These guidelines also proved to be somewhat of a departure from the requests made by the tutors in 1981 as well as the promises made to them by the Principal of the College and the Ministry of Health. The guidelines now offered a one year period of secondment and went on to state that at the end of that period of secondment, the posts would be advertised and the tutors could apply. Their years of experience would be considered, but they would not be guaranteed a

job. The tutors were also directed to make their decision known to the Principal of the College, the Ministry of Health and the Service Commissions.

Now my understanding, Mr. Chairman, is that the majority of tutors refused to accept that particular position in the light of the 1981 requests and promises, and they asked the NUPW to intervene on their behalf. A communication from the NUPW to the Ministry of Health, the Principal of the College, the Service Commissions, the whole bit, asked that there be some discussion on the matter. After several weeks there was a meeting with legal representation on both sides, as I understand it, but there was no change on the part of the College.

In August 1985, Mr. Chairman, an advertisement for the posts of the grades of tutors, as set out by the Board of Management of the College, appeared in the national newspapers and on the radio. The grades of tutors had changed in status from what the tutors of old had, and the salaries were different. No conditions of service were set out.

Sir, the majority of tutors did not apply. Service Commissions were approached. They discussed the matter with the Ministry of Health, as I understand it, with the Ministry of Education and with the Board of Management. They heard nothing, but on Monday, November 5, the tutors received a letter signed by the Senior Personnel Officer in Health indicating to the tutors that "by courtesy" the Community College had extended the closing date of the advertisement to November 15, 1985. My information is that the NUPW is still trying to help.

Mr. Chairman, my point, and the reason I bring this to this Honourable Chamber, is that I believe that the tutors are professionals who have dedicated all their life to the institution called the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and before that. They have been the ones who have been responsible for training many of the nurses who now function in the system, and it appears — and even if it is not so this is their perception, or at least the perception of some of them — that after many years of dedicated service to Barbados and Barbadians, in some cases 30 years and in some cases nine years, they are now under duress to apply for a job which they have been doing for some considerable time, a new job, and this through no fault of their own.

Mr. Chairman, I think I would have to say that I hold a brief for them in these circumstances, if that is true. The question that we would have to ask, Mr. Chairman, is, are their qualifications and their status being held up to ridicule or are they being challenged, are they being rescrutinised? It seems, from what I understand, that the posts which are available to them in

the Ministry of Health fall below the status which they now enjoy. There is a well-known principle in personnel affairs which suggests that that is not acceptable, if it is true.

The Ministry of Health is offering them posts, apparently, which, if they take them, will lead to some fairly bad interpersonal relationships. The persons who have been hanging in there in the Ministry waiting for promotion to the posts which are now being offered to the tutors are unlikely to welcome those tutors when they go into the Ministry of Health. Those posts, incidentally, are Ward Sister and Principal Nursing Officer at the district hospitals, and having had to spend a little time examining the length of time it takes, with the equivalent of the Ombudsman in Barbados, for persons to move from an acting position into a permanent position in a similar post, I can understand the difficulty which the tutors perceive. I know from consultations that some tutors believe that this sort of action on the part of the Government for the authorities.....

9.45 p.m.

(*Aside:* Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: With who?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT:..... is saying to the public — they perceive that the public is being told that for all these years they have been operating under false pretences.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: Man, sit down!)

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: We know the woman he is putting a case for.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are better than I.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I know the woman, you know.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The tutors are being pushed out of their jobs. Some of those tutors are at a certain age in life where.....

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Burger Bee shut down.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: — it reopened — it is very difficult for them to accept these kinds of changes.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: I tell you. Especially if you want them to do work.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There are 13 tutors, Mr. Chairman, and the Board of Management of the Community College has proposed to the Ministry of Education, as well as advertised posts for only ten persons.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That is a cabinet decision taken in the market square Sunday night. That is a decision taken in the market square.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the College has to advertise posts for tutors in nursing, I am sure, Mr. Chairman, you would agree that it gives.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, Sir: I think there is a particular Standing Order which makes it very clear that Members shall not read from newspapers or speeches, Sir. That is exactly what the honourable Member is reading from disguised in a file.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: His notes are copious.

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

I wish that the honourable Members would take what I am saying seriously, since it does not concern me personally but it concerns the whole question of morale in a service, and I really do not believe that it would fall well from the mouth of any honourable Member in here to talk, even if the person is a psychopath, a yardfowl or whatever you choose to call them, if the person or persons perceive that after serving the community they have a grievance, it does not fall well for any Minister on the front bench to pretend that I know who the person is and therefore I should sit down.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: Are you advertising Right Guard or not? Put your hands down.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am going to finish, Mr. Chairman, bearing in mind the demeanour of the Prime Minister, who seems to understand what the difficulties are.

Mr. Chairman, what I am saying is that here is a voice or voices crying in the wilderness for help. If you have worked as a dog catcher and you have any pride in yourself as a dog catcher, the Government cannot or should not appear to be moving you aside without consideration for the service which you have performed. Bearing in mind all of the practices of personnel administration and the practices of human relationships and bearing in mind christian charity, it could not be acceptable.

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: How are you going to know about that?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The same way you know about it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Alright, carry on.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It would not fall well for this Parliament not to take cognizance of what I am saying. And notwithstanding what other Ministers might say, I am appealing to the Prime Minister, in his capacity as the Minister responsible for the Establishments Division, to examine the plight of the tutors, and if there is a tutor or two, or three, who the Government believe they can no longer use, give them their just reward and let them go in peace.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

Hon. B. A. MILLER (City of Bridgetown): Mr. Chairman, all that carry on discloses very clearly that there have been years of consultations between the nurses, the Ministry of Health, the Community College and the unions. All of that harangue made that perfectly clear. The truth is that the nurses and the union cannot agree, and that is why they have sought now a third person, in the form of the honourable Member for St. Michael West, to carry the brief for them. But he does not even know what his brief is. All he knows is that there is a problem of some kind.

It is a problem not unlike the problem which arose when the Hotel School was being absorbed into the Community College as Hospitality Studies, when there were people who worked in the hotel school for years, just as there were people who worked in the Tercentenary School of Nursing for years, who do not now have the qualifications set by the Community College for this course. It is a different course. Mind you, the course has been going on for three years because I have said I am not going to let any foolish argy-bargy between tutors and the union stop me from getting on with what I have to get on with at the Community College. The course has been underway for nearly three years, but it is a quite different course from the old course.

The days when student nurses were used as ward maids and as donkey workers in the hospital are gone. We are training technicians nowadays, so the qualifications required for entry into the Community College are higher than they used to be, not only for the students but for the tutors as well. So some of the tutors, just like the tutors of the old Hotel School, cannot possibly qualify to tutor at the Community College. They have been made offers to go back to substantive jobs, they have been made offers to go to jobs other than the substantive jobs which they held and they have all declined, because, Mr. Chairman, to be frank, those jobs entail some work which these tutors have not done for a long time. And I agree with the honourable Member, the jobs have been advertised. As he himself said, I myself instructed the Community College, "Give them an extension of time" and the last extension — and this is over four years now

and I am not going beyond it — was November 15 this year, just a few weeks ago, and those who qualify and are selected by the Community College for the School of Nursing there will go forward. Those who do not will either take a job elsewhere in the Government Service or they will be compensated and they can go and work elsewhere, if they are disposed to work at all.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, there is a level of cynicism displayed by the Minister which grieves me. Mr. Chairman, I wish to tell the Minister that she or none of the people in her Ministry will necessarily be qualified to teach tutors how to teach children who come in raw how to be nurses. Most of the nurses in Barbados, and some of them are among the best in the world, were trained by those same "incompetent, do not work tutors."

Mr. Chairman, when she is telling you about nurses that operate with bed pans, I can tell you, from my own knowledge that if you compare the system that is used to teach nurses in this system and the system in which nurses are taught in places like America, where the people have absolutely no hands-on experience, what you get is a lot of paper pushers who do not know much about nursing care. The honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull) could instruct you on this.

(Aside: Hon. B. A. MILLER: About what?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The business of nurses as opposed to nurses. That business....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Man we are talking about something that you would never understand, Billie. You do not know about this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I beg your pardon, Mr. Chairman.

You do not understand this, and you are talking now like if somebody took you and put.....

(Aside: Hon. B. A. MILLER: Your wife is a nurse. My mother was a nurse. We do not have bed pans now.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, if your mother was a nurse, why do you not behave so and.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please, please, please, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT:.....stop behaving like, suddenly, knowledge is something that comes through a pipe.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order: The honourable Member is talking about another era. Nurses do not handle bed pans nowadays; ward maids handle bed pans. Nurses handle modern equipment, new technology.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, that is the whole problem. There is no new technology for a bed pan.

Laughter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What are you talking about new technology? The same instrument goes into the bed pan, whether it is a male or female. They have not changed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Alright, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, what I am trying to say is, I do not doubt that we have to make progress. I am not even questioning the honourable Member's decision that she wished to upgrade the level of the tutors. I do not wish to question that, and I am sure no honourable Member in here will want to question that. What I am saying is, that we must, as a community that used to be a pastoral community, that is moving sometimes too swiftly into the 21st Century, take account of the transitional periods and certain steps that we have to take. We must not appear to be crude. We must not appear to be hard-hearted.
9.55 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Nobody is saying that. We all appreciate what you are saying.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I do not appreciate it if I come here as a Member of Parliament who had been given a brief — yes, let me say given a brief. Well, I could not know all of the problems of my constituency and that is why they sent me here, because I can take a brief. I may not be as fully competent to be able to deal with each issue that comes to me, but if they give me a brief, I feel it is my duty. That is when I am functioning at my best, Sir, when I am bringing a message from the constituents to this Parliament to say that, 'My boss,' whoever it is, whether it is the Government or somebody down in the private sector, 'has been ill-treating me.' That is my duty. So when I come to Parliament, I am gratified that the Minister responsible for Establishments gives me the assurance that he is going to deal with the matter.

I just want the Minister to understand that as it happened with the Hotel School and it is happening with

the Tercentenary School of Nursing, it will happen to other areas in the community and we must start making provision for easier transition from the old to the new.

The question that Head 36 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 41 — MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

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

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

The question that Head 41 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Where is Head 41?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: In the Addendum.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Head 41 has been called and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985—86 No. 14
— \$9 685 616

HEAD 14 — ESTABLISHMENTS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Establishments — I beg to move that Head 14 stand part, Sir.

I think it is a useful opportunity for me to say, Sir, that this implements the increase in the travelling allowances that have been agreed between the union. A number of these votes related to that. But on Establishments, I have been able to keep the promise that I made to the House, that we would make permanent a number of jobs before the end of the year. I have done some before and I said that I would come with another 900. I am told, Sir, that 535 have been signed and notice has been given to them today, to 400 teachers and another 135. We are still hoping to meet the deadline with respect to the others, but all of the mechanics have been gone through. We made the Order today, 400 teachers and 135 in the General Service, Number 3.

All these matters are in relation to establishments that were spoken of in the last debate. We are trying to clear up. It is a long, long job to clear up all of the outstanding matters, but we are trying our best to ensure that these outstanding matters will be cleared up. I gather that there are just 2 or 3 outstanding areas arising out of the last salary revision. We have put a final proposal to certain people in relation to Health. It is

really the Government's last proposal. We do not have anymore. They should have the letter in their hand. If they have not got it yet, they should soon get it. We hope that will clarify the position in relation to the doctors at the hospital. The other area that I know that is outstanding, the legal matters have been fixed. There are 1 or 2 other areas of regrading. I think it is the engineers in Transport. That has also been fixed.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Pardon me. All of them are paid out of the Civil Establishment Orders. Since you have increased money, the travelling rates have been increased. So you have to bring down a supplementary, because they will be paid out of the existing travelling vote, and it is not enough.

(Aside: Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Is this for travel?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, this is only for travel.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Could I have a seconder?

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

The question that Head 14 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 16 — PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: (Christ Church East Central): I beg to move that Head 16 stand part. That is the same thing, for travel.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Head 16, No. 17, CERO.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): Unless the honourable Member wants to second it, in seconding the vote, let me make one comment on the Addendum. I noticed in the Addendum that the Government intends to make a grant to Mexico and Colombia in respect to the very serious problems that they have had with an earthquake and the explosion of a volcano in the two countries respectively. I believe that it is timely that such a grant should be made, but I want to comment on the fact that provision is being made to assist persons who have been affected by the flooding in Wotton and St. Peter and wind damage in St. Andrew.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps the paper did not give publicity to the problems that occurred in my own constituency of Christ Church West, in the area of Second Avenue, Harts Gap and Barnes Land. It is probably because the question of flooding in these areas is now endemic, and we have had to resort to certain self-help measures of ourselves clearing the problems,

clearing the sluices and the drains as heavy rains come down. But I should like the Central Emergency Relief Organization to bear very carefully in mind that the area of Barnes Land, the area of Second Avenue, Harts Gap, the area just below the Marine wall and near the St. Matthias School is one of the worst flooding areas in Barbados. I think it is much worse than either Wotton or indeed St. Peter.

I believe that, historically, it would be shown that the problem has existed for over a century and probably a half. When the Colonial Regiment, the Colonial Forces, were here, some relief was granted by the construction of drains. These drains are not often kept clear, and I should hope that I can get some understanding from the Ministries concerned that there will be a regular programme of clearing drains and not merely waiting for an emergency to occur, and, secondly and most important, that we will have a preventative programme where the serious problem of drainage in this part of Christ Church will be attended to once and for all.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, whilst we would welcome grants being made to those persons in my area who have suffered damage, we are more interested in a long term correction of the problem rather than the grants which are made from time to time by CERO. In that light, I am appealing for assistance.
10.05 p.m.

When the damage occurred in Wotton, when the damage occurred in Speightstown, myself and about four or five other persons in my constituency were out there clearing the drains, opening sluices in the road, helping move people, without the publicity that attend some of these things, and the political controversy that I hear. I did not see any potential candidate in that area at that time at all. I do not know whether there is a candidate running against me in Christ Church West. I really did not see any of them there, and this is not the only occasion that this is so, and I am glad they are not coming to partisanise — if I may use that word — this problem. It is a problem that we have had for a long time, but we feel we need a solution to it.

I believe the Honourable Prime Minister will be familiar with this, but I take the opportunity, while some of the civil servants are here to emphasise it, in case it is forgotten, that Christ Church West probably has more serious drainage problems than any other part of this island.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, mine is just a very simple question, to enquire of the appropriate authority, what is the position when people have lost their houses by way of fire and cannot

get alternative accommodation at all? What is the Ministry of Housing's position on replacement or providing accommodation for people who have lost their homes by fire?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: If I can answer that very simply, the Ministry of Housing's policy is that we give the maximum encouragement to anyone who owns a house to insure it. The second point is that if there is a unit available and a social investigation takes place and they find that the priorities of the person whose house has been damaged by fire are greater than one who is on the existing list and ahead of them, they will get priority. But we must let it be clearly understood that the Ministry of Housing is not there to provide insurance for people's houses which have been burnt down. We try our best, but it is exceedingly hard to give priority to a person who has had a fire over somebody else who has been on the list and waited many years, and very often also has nowhere else to go. We want to get that across. We have been trying, through the Barbados Insurance Corporation, through the Press and others, to encourage people in chattel houses to have their houses insured. We do give them priority, but sometimes there are other people who have greater priority than they. That is all I want to say in respect to that.

Now, Sir, in respect of Wotton and St. Peter, this is only part of the damage. It is known that a rehousing scheme is going along in both those areas. At Golden Mile, where the St. Peter houses will go, the contractor, Mr. Rayside, is well on the way to the completion of the contract. The road, if you pass it in St. Peter, is very near to where the tenantry housing is. They roads are being put in by the contractor and we hope to be able to prevent people from having to move outside the district, because there will be some 112 or 114 lots there, and priority will be given to those people from St. Peter who were not only affected by this flood but by the previous flood.

In respect of Wotton, there are some houses that have to be moved, because despite whatever they have done, all the engineering recommendations, there are some, particularly which seem to be in the area where there is nothing anybody can do that is reasonable to help them. What has happened is, although you have put in all these extra wells and all these extra drains, now that another section of Kingsland has been built up, water is coming from a different section. So it is very clear that Kingsland, Stage 3, which is a Pillersdorf development, is now throwing water on. They said at first that water was coming from the industrial estate: Well, they did a drainage plan, they put in the wells up there. They said it was coming from another section with the houses; they put in wells there. We have decided among ourselves that we have taken the view that the engineers have an opinion that they can solve it, but at a cost that we do not like, so we moved the school and part of the

area where the school was going to be, the Town Planner has improved, it is on much higher ground, the Town Planner has approved a certain number of lots there and we will offer the people the opportunity to move up there and we will obviously have to take over their houses there. That is all. We will rebuild exactly the same size and offer the opportunity to the people there.

In the meantime, a master drainage plan will be prepared for the whole of the surrounding area. We have found some of the old plantation wells, some of them as deep as 60 feet. All the wells in the area now are 8-square feet wells, so we hope that that will solve that position. I do not want anybody to get away with the idea that we are not doing something up there. Obviously the vote in respect of the Golden Mile and the vote in respect of the actual development of Wotton will come under the Ministry of Housing and a supplementary will be coming down for them.

As far as the area in Christ Church which the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) spoke about, I know that area only too well. That was the original. That and the area dealing with the Garrison were the original flood areas in Christ Church that we have had. There are a number of drains passing through Marine Gardens which, from time immemorial, drained into Pavilion Court and into other drains. Many people are astounded at the fact that Marine Gardens has some 15 acres of land, and when you ask why wasn't it developed before, part of the reason why it was not developed before in all these years was the fact that it was prone to flooding.

We have now reached the stage in Barbados where once again, thank God, people regard well digging and well cleaning as an occupation that is deserving of their talents. For some period of time the Barbadians felt that well digging was not for them, you had to get somebody from St. Lucia or St. Vincent, but today, as a result of loans being granted for compressors and new equipment in well digging and modern protective clothing that people can wear, as a result too of the rates that are being paid, you even have now university graduates as contractors in well digging.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, if the honourable member will give way, can I raise a question which he can answer while he is on well digging? I remember that the honourable Member made a statement soon after the Wotton disaster indicating that, in fact, a large number of wells were in the process of being built. I have been agitating for some time for wells in the alluvial plain area of upper Goodland and Alkins, and that sort of thing. I wonder if the honourable Member could give an indication, what is the pattern that is established or how one might go about getting the services in a particular area, because, as he knows, we

are suffering in that area from constant flooding. I wonder if he can help.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Well, I can tell the honourable Member that we had a very serious talk between the Minister of Transport and my Ministry as a result of a Cabinet decision. We had a frank talk with the Ministry of Transport and Works about drainage. They told us they wanted an Inspector of Wells, we gave it to them. They told us they wanted extra money, we gave it to them. They tell us that they have a census of all the wells in Barbados, and for the first time they may be able to make a concerted attack on it. They told us that they wanted to divide the island into three areas and give out the work among three or four contractors within those areas, because only one man used to tender. It is a most amazing thing. One point eight million dollars was voted for wells. It was spent and nobody knows how many wells have been dug. It is true. It is a very serious thing. It is a positive fact.

Anyway, we have got a new infrastructure. I have gone further. It is nothing to do with the Minister, it has to do with the Permanent Secretary. We feel that we did not get value for the \$1.8 million because nobody used to check the well-diggers to see whether they had dugged 5 ft., 10 ft. or 20 ft. because their function was not to do that. They wanted the post of Inspector of Wells and we gave them the post of Inspector of Wells. I know normally it used to be the duty of the superintendent in the area to see that everything that took place in his area was under his jurisdiction, but, today, we have demarkations of responsibilities.
10.15 p.m.

In any event, a major change is taking place from January 1, 1986. Capital works in the Ministry of Transport will have a separate division, a separate Permanent Secretary, separate Technical Officers so that....

(Aside: A separate Minister?)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No, not a separate Minister. If you did not complain about the number of Ministers we had, we may have had one.

The point is that we have a massive capital programme going along and the span of control is great, so, therefore, we want to concentrate again on the Works Department — maintenance, drainage and transport — to make sure that that division has full supervision and control. We hope that they will be able to iron out all of these problems, because, as politicians, we vote the money. The honourable Member can copy it for their manifesto, but it will be enforced already.

The basic position is that we are satisfied in our minds that, with the amount of work that is going along,

we need to separate the two. So that the capital works programme is one thing and the rest another thing.

In Agriculture, we have had a Permanent Secretary, Special Assignments, looking after the Special Fisheries Project and the Scotland area for some period of time. It was just too much. So that is our position.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, since he is on the wells, Mr. Chairman, I have a problem, same area. I called the Ministry of Environment when it flooded. They said that is not theirs, it is Ministry of Transport and Works. We called MTW. They said "No. That is the Ministry of Health. You have to get the engineer." I really would like to know, quite seriously, who to call when we have flooding. MTW?

We have in the little gap by Philip's Baker Shop, right this minute a house that is in water. Well, we have decided that that is a health problem, because the larvae is there now, but the Ministry of Health has said it has nothing to do with them. MTW.....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But I called them. I will call the Minister next and see what happens. The Minister knows where it is because he has some family living down there who are drowning in the water. Go and check. The well over from Bosvigo Gap is choked. The one in Alkins Gap, No. 2 is choked. We now had a joker down there Saturday morning. He brought a Bobcat. He wanted to impress the people that he could do things for them, he drove the Bobcat right through by the well where the water only used to flood two houses; now, it is flooding seven houses! I would really like some relief.

(Aside: Relief is coming).

The question that Head 16 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 18 — AUDIT

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that Head 18 stand part.

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

The question that Head 18 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 19 — MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

The question that Head 19 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 20 — REVENUE COLLECTION

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that Head 20 stand part.

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

The question that Head 20 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 21 — STATISTICS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that Head 21 stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Could the Minister of Finance give an indication that the publication of statistics will be speeded up. Apparently, what is happening, in spite of what everybody says, is that when the raw statistical data is gathered, it now has to go to the Minister of Finance and Planning. That is contrary to the law.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: For what purpose?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know. The last Minister of Finance said on the floor of the House that he so wanted it. It is contrary to the law, and the Chief Statistician has responsibility for publishing the material. I wonder if the Minister of Finance could give us an assurance to examine and see what road it is taking, because we cannot get the employment statistics and other statistics on time. I am told from reliable sources that the material is gathered, and then sometimes two months go by while it is languishing in the Ministry of Finance. I know that this Minister of Finance has no particular interest in numbers. I wonder if he could give us an assurance that he will take steps to make sure that the thing is published in accordance with the law.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No. The honourable Member is making a vague suggestion that they come to the Ministry of Finance so that we could doctor them or so that we would be able to see them to mitigate their impact, but there is no difficulty with that. As far as I am concerned, I am the greatest critic of the Statistical Department for not publishing them on time. It is as a result of the suggestions and the criticisms that we have made in respect of late trade data, late tourist statistics, late inflation figures and late household sample surveys that we are making extra provision so that we can get

them out more timely, and that is why we want to computerize the whole of this statistical gathering. I hope that having put them on the computer, then we would be able to get a print-out fast, fast, fast. That is what we are hoping to do, so we have no interest in that at all.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, I am quite sure the honourable Member would appreciate, and I appreciate his position also, and I can assure him that inflation would never reach 40 per cent and unemployment 22 per cent. We do not have to try to doctor the statistics. You know it is 19.8 per cent unemployment, and going down, and that inflation is below 2 per cent, so have no fear about that. And if you would take a cue from the *Wall Street Journal*, which I was told that the late Prime Minister begged Tony Best to write that, what he wrote is not really quite true, so do not let that frighten you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member is a fine orator when he is talking about things he knows about, and if he said that the late Prime Minister told Tony Best what to write before he died, that is all right with me. I accept that.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that I was very concerned when I heard a Minister saying that the unemployment rate is going to be a certain amount, that in March it is going to be a certain figure. I do not know how anybody could tell us in December what the unemployment rate is going to be in March, but I want to tell the honourable Member that since I have my constituency on computer, I am able to tell him that the unemployment rate in my constituency is, in fact, 42.3 per cent. So if you say it is 19.8 per cent and going down, I am glad to hear that, but when you get yours on computer, perhaps we would be in a better position to have the real information. Nineteen point eight percent may very well be fine for a global figure that makes a little sport in a publication, but the reality out there is a lot different from 19.8 per cent.

Asides.

The question that Head 21 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
10.25 p.m.

HEAD 25 — MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25 — Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources — stand part of the Resolution.

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

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

HEAD 26 — CO-OPERATIVES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 26 — Co-operatives, stand part of the Resolution.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I wish to draw to the attention of the Minister of Finance that the Department of Co-operatives is understaffed. It would have to be understaffed. It is impossible to get the books back from the department when the co-operatives send the books up there.

Mr. Chairman, I happen to be a supervisor of a co-operative and we have just had to write a letter to the department saying, "you are causing us to be in violation of the law." If we say on the one hand that we are inviting all Barbados to join the co-operative movement and the people in Barbados are responding to that, because it is a proper way for countries like ours to have some savings, then the Minister is going to have to put his house in order and let the co-operative division be as efficient as we are saying we want the rest of the country to be, and I am saying to him that in the same way he is discussing having an improved quality of administration in the Transport Board, he definitely needs one in Co-operatives.

It is not good enough to have one lady or whatever it is up there any more. You need a modern department that is also computerised. Co-operatives ought to be able to get guidance from the department. The people who are there are doing a good job.

(Asides.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Man, if you want to go home, go home. Miller you don't have to go home whether I talk or not. You can go home. They will let you go home.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order!

(Aside: Hon. B. A. MILLER: Nobody is listening to you!)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am putting it in the record. Why don't you all go home if you are tired? Prime Minister, let the people go home. The three of us are in here; the Reporters we know have to go, but we are fresh. Look at them, tired! Look! He is lying down; well he is old. Mr. Chairman, if they are tired, let them go home.

(Aside: Hon. L. S. CRAIG: The Leader of the Opposition went home since 2 o'clock.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If he wanted to go home, he went home, not like her, sitting down there punishing herself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us get ahead with the co-operatives.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Why don't you sit down, Sousie?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member knows it was his friend that was called that. I do not know why he does not behave himself.

Listen, Mr. Chairman, this business about the co-operatives is serious. Don't mind all the talk, this is very serious.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): I agree with the honourable Member. Under the existing co-op law the only recognised auditors are the Co-operative Department itself or people designated by them, and this is a problem that I had 20 years ago, and we have always been trying to get an update of the law so that the public accountants can be designated by the law so that you will have more people to whom to submit the books, because the law says you cannot have your annual general meeting until your books are audited. I went through the whole of this exercise already. I was big in this thing.

I want to tell the honourable Member that provision has been made and co-operatives will now come under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and it is part of the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property, so the Co-operatives Department will have its own registrar. They will have everything and the new Estimates will make all of those provisions and they can designate more. I am sure the Minister can designate more people, so the co-op department itself does not have to do the audit. That is all they need.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member would give way, don't wait until the Estimates. Now that it is going to that Ministry, under Establishments put in some temporary officers and expand it now. If you wait until the Estimates it means we have to wait until March or April. We have not had an annual general meeting for three years. That has got to be wrong.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: There is absolutely nothing to prevent a submission being made to the Minister so that you can designate some other people. They have not

designated any of the chartered accountants as auditors for the purpose of the Act. I know a Mr. F. A. Parris used to be one. They used to take a few people from the Audit Office and there was a little Civil Service closed shop, a little extra perk they used to get, but we are perfectly willing to designate many people, because if you can audit a public company, you can audit a co-op society. So we are perfectly willing and I am sure the Minister will have a look at that.

The question that Head 26 — Co-operatives, stand part of the Resolution, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 34 — MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 34 — Ministry of Education and Culture stand part of the Resolution.

I may add that the co-operative job may suit the honourable Member for St. Michael South. That is why we have not filled the post yet.

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

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

HEAD 40 — MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 40 — Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs — stand part of the Schedule.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985—86 No. 15 — \$12 111 762

HEAD 73 — MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 73 — Ministry of Finance and Planning — stand part of the Schedule.

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

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

HEAD 76 — MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 76 — Ministry of Education and Culture — stand part of the Schedule.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): I have a few questions to ask. Is the Minister able to say whether the work at Westbury has been completed?

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: The backboards have been put up.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I went down there Sunday and I did not see any backboards.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: They are up!)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If she says they are up, I have to take her word for it. She would not lie to Parliament, but I was down there the day before Independence and I did not see the backboards.

Anyhow, I want to draw something to the Minister's attention and to the Government's attention. Now this school and a number of other schools have been "amalgamated" and this amalgamation fever seems to have struck the Ministry of Education. I have spoken on this before, but I notice that there are some other areas that are up for the high jump. The high jump is that these schools are going to be brought under the amalgamation scheme.

It is my considered view, and I put it to this Honourable House for what it is worth, that we are going down a very dangerous path with this amalgamation. We need to re-examine it to see.....

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: Amalgamation of what?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Amalgamation of schools. We have, let us say, three schools or two schools for amalgamation into one school, and I would like to point out — and I am very serious about this, because it is something that is causing me some concern — that where we have infant schools, let me call them that, next door to primary schools, you have a group of children that operate within one kind of ambience. The schools are of a size of 500 to 400 to 350 children in the infant school, and then you have the primary school, which is a relatively small school. When we have the combination or the amalgamation, you then have a headmistress or a headmaster having to contend with 800 or 900 pupils. In the case of Westbury, they had about 400 in the infants

school and about 500 in the primary school. They have now been amalgamated — I am subject to correction but I think that we are now talking about something like between 700 and 800 people with one headmistress and probably one deputy.
10.35 p.m.

There are two things happening. I think that, from the point of view of the children, we need to examine that very carefully to see if in this society we wish young children, four years and five years old, to start off at a school that is so de-personalized. It seems to me that most of the people in here have benefitted from a fairly personalized education in their early stages. In the schools that are amalgamated, we are in danger of having large schools that are, for little children, very de-personalized. The implication of that, psychologically, over the long term is worth examining.

But there is another problem which arises from that amalgamation even. Whereas before people in the education system could anticipate promotions at a certain rate, you could anticipate becoming a headmaster or a headmistress within a given time frame if you joined the teaching profession, by the time the amalgamations are completed, if the projections are correct in this country, we are going to reduce, very effectively, the possible areas of promotion to headteacher for a number of people in the system. That is going to have a reverberating effect on the whole career possibilities in the teaching service, and I think it is going to have a deleterious effect on the teaching service as a whole.

For what it is worth, it is my considered judgement that these amalgamations are not necessarily right for countries of this size, whereas they may very well be right for countries in North America and other places. I put it for what it is worth. Now is not the time to go into great detail, but there have been a lot of studies....

(*Aside:* Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They did not let you talk Sunday night, so that is why you are catching up now. You have poor Walter out there sleeping.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If you all want to go home, go home. They like they cannot handle this pressure.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of studies which indicate that the two points I have just made are very significant in determining the quality of education. I have noticed that, over the last 14 years or so, there has been within the Ministry of Education this, what I would call, mania for amalgamation. It looks good; when you.....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT:.....look, Sir, on paper, it looks like you are being very efficient. It seems as though you are somehow reducing the amount of plant *et cetera*, and it may very well be that the advisers from the World Bank, where these loans are coming from, look at these things in those terms only. I am saying that, for Barbados, it is very necessary and desirable that we examine our educational quality in terms of what is good for us. I do not accept that these amalgamations are necessarily good for the country.

On the question of the Lodge School, Sir, I should like to know.....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am going to stake you out.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On the question of the Lodge School I should like the Minister to give us some information on the latest position at Lodge.

(*Aside:* Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Aurie is not at Lodge. He is at Cave Hill studying Law.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: How many headteachers or headmasters do we have at Lodge? Has the matter been resolved? Is the Minister in a position to tell us what is happening? Has the previous headmaster received his money yet? Is he going to receive money?

(*Aside:* Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Which money?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He has not, as I understand it, received monies outstanding. That is my understanding.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am told, Sir, that the matter is probably *sub judice*. I did not know that, Sir, so I will.....

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: There are a lot of things you do not know. You do not know Burger Bee shut down. There are a lot of things you do not know.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know about you though. No. It reopened. You see that. In spite of your.....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Why don't you give me a chance? If I were like you, I would open about nine.

Mr. Chairman, I beg your pardon. Why do you not get the Minister to leave me alone?

Sir, I should like, notwithstanding the facts of the case — the Lodge School, we have not heard anything from the Minister about the Lodge School.

(*Aside:* Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No news is good news.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The former headboy says that no news is good news, but I do not think he believes that. Is the new headmaster in place? I will ask the Minister.....

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: Next term.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Minister is saying from her seat, "Next year." I think that she should get up and tell me what is happening. I want to hear.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, all that can be said about the Lodge School, I have said already. The new headmaster takes up his post at the beginning of next term. That was said months ago, and so, I say it again.

I just want to make a few comments in respect of amalgamation. I do not think the honourable Member for St. Michael West properly appreciates that the whole principle of amalgamation is a clearly thought out one. It is part of the criteria set down in the agreement between the Government and the World Bank. Not all schools have amalgamation. Amalgamation takes into account population shifts, declining school rolls. For instance, a few weeks ago, we opened a new primary school at Blackman's in St. Joseph, the St. Joseph Primary School. That was an amalgamation of three primary schools, St. Ann's, where the population had fallen below 40, and St. Joseph Boys and St. Joseph Girls, which had always lived in very close proximity with very inadequate support facilities, and that school is a 420 school. The World Bank schools are either built to carry 800 or 420. Very few are 840 schools. It is true that Westbury is an 840 school but when Westbury has always been a large school, and in my time, Westbury has declined its roll from over 900 to close to 840 now, because Westbury had serious overcrowding.

Aside.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Yes. The Westbury Junior and the Westbury Infants School. They have always had that.....

Aside.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Yes, which was seriously overcrowded. What we have done in the World Bank Project is to give more elbow room, more efficient use of the space that they do have at Westbury, and I think you need to know, if you do not already know, you ought to know as every Barbadian ought to know, that our school

population is declining and will continue to decline. But even in my time Westbury has declined.

When we are doing amalgamation, it is not just a matter of shoving two or three schools together. Take, for instance, Sharon in St. Thomas, which was recently opened. Now, Sharon occasioned the closure of Buxton, but look at the children who went to Buxton. Some went then to Hindsbury, it depended on the catchment area in which they actually lived, because we had children who were going to schools way outside of their catchment area. Some lived in the catchment area of Sharon and they went to Sharon, and that was how we did it. When, for instance, we built the Lawrence T. Gay School, that occasioned the closure of Roebuck Primary School, because, in truth and in fact, very few children who went to Roebuck lived within the catchment area of Roebuck. And those children are better deployed now going to school closer and within walking distance of where they properly live.

So there are a lot of factors. An amalgamation is not just a procedure which we are carrying out for the sake of it. We have to face the fact that in some areas, populations are shifting; in other areas populations are declining, and the size of the school plant has to take cognizance of it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Just for a minute. Do you not think it would be a good idea when you are about to consider to have, what they call in America, hearings in the areas where you plan to have them.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: We do.)

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, you see, you are speaking off the top of your head. We do have this. Parents are all invited to come in. They sit down with the staff and then class by class we go through it. Why do you think that the whole process of amalgamation has been so free of conflict or quarrel? It has been so easily accomplished because we have taken the parents fully into the consultation process. This is important, too, in the encouragement of a good PTA with the new schools, and these parents have played roles; for instance, deciding on the new school uniform, on a school motto, the school crest and all that sort of thing. So it has been very well taken into consideration.
10.45 p.m.

The question that Head 76 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 78 — MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

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

The question that Head 78 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 81 — MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Head 81 stand part, Sir.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is.....The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Chairman, this Head makes provision for repairs to housing for indigent people. The Addendum talks about the increased number of requests for housing repairs, replacements and new houses for indigent people.

It is a good thing that funds are being provided for repairs and replacement of new homes for indigent people. It is a good thing. It is a good thing that that is being done. The problem is that the indigent are always in need of financial assistance for getting houses repaired, getting repaired, getting replacement to houses, and things of that nature. But it is only in the last year of this term of office of this Government that we find that substantial funds are being provided for the provision of these necessities.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. KING: The provision in the Estimates 1985—86 was \$20 million and this is a supplementary which now seeks \$750 000, presumably for the rest of the financial year. But what is important, and what has to be important for the whole country, is that the indigent and those who are really in need of housing repairs and new homes throughout the country get the assistance they need and require, irrespective of their political allegiance, but solely and purely on the question of need, and perhaps some attention ought to be given, too, to the requirements which are necessary in making the decisions for the allocation of funds for housing. People have to know precisely where they stand.

Aside.

Mr. M. A. KING: I say people are entitled and should know where they stand. Because throughout the length and breadth of this country there are a whole lot of people, senior citizens, a lot of indigent people, who need to have some assistance, and a lot of them I know have made requests for assistance and have not been able to get that

support. I am hoping that, as a result of this supplementary provision, which is now being made, a lot of the problems which the indigent and the aged have had in getting the necessary assistance will be attended to. Certainly in the constituency, which I have the honour to represent, there are a lot of indigent persons who need assistance in getting their houses repaired. I am here making a public call on the Minister responsible for the administration of this vote to give immediate attention to the needs of all the indigent people in the constituency of Christ Church West Central who need to have housing repairs and who need new houses.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, I am so happy to hear that the Member for Christ Church West Central has called on the Minister to look after these people. I hope that he does not come back here and cry out that he spent all the money in that particular constituency.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I hope so, too.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He has really called on the Minister. Now I will say this. Your party should not really talk about looking after old people in this country. Really, you have a bad record on this. Historically, you have a bad record. You used to patch up old people's houses at election time, put in a new board and walk away, and you will see the house looking grey and brown. We do not operate that way. We repair the house, paint it and put electricity in it, and furniture. On top of that, you have the Home Help Scheme to go and bathe them, comb their hair and read to them. Do not tackle this aspect of government. We have a good record here. We pay their electric bills, water rates, and take them for walks. We could be a proud Government where they are concerned. We carry them to the polyclinics. Listen, do not tackle this area. You are weak in this area, and I must confess that I am happy that you have called on the Minister to look after that constituency, because there is no doubt in my mind — I know — that he is capable of doing it. We cannot quarrel about where he should do it and you should not quarrel either.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I really do not understand the honourable Member who just sat down. You left out two bits of furniture that you are putting in them — fridges and stoves.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I have no doubt that that is what Government aspires to do, to even give them fridges and stoves, unlike the Member for St. Michael North West (Mr. L. A. Weekes), who said that he would lend them money. Imagine you are going to lend old people money to repair their houses! He said that in Welchman Hall. Imagine my grandmother, who is 65 years old,

borrowing money from the Government to repair a house. That is your policy, not ours. We build houses for them.

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: And give them heart attacks by sending them bills after the elections.)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: And do what?

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: You give them heart attacks by sending them bills after the elections.)

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Listen, that is you. You are capable of saying anything at all. Nassar would make you say anything.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is true, but it is true. Nassar can make me say anything. But it is true though. You send them some bills. And let me tell you something. You just got up in here and said that you are paying the water rates.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. A. MILLER: Name one?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What? I am going to send you more letters.

Mr. Chairman, they have just got up in here and said that they are paying the water rates and they are paying the electricity. Only last week we went over to Verona House, and do you know what they told us at Verona House? They do not have any money to buy the forms on which you have to make the application to get the electricity paid.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: That does not mean that Government does not pay the bills, Sir. If they are out of forms, are you going to kill for that? It is a fact of life.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I would like to choke them. I would like to grab them and choke them. Yes, I would like to kill them for that!

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, it is a fact of life that the Government pay the electricity bills and water rates for old aged pensioners. That is a fact of life. It may also be a fact of life that the department....

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, take your seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I was on my feet. Man, behave yourself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please, please...Your point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. It is true that you can point to some bills that have been paid. That is a fact. Just prior to 1981 elections some bills were paid, and then they had some old people who sent their electricity bills to the Welfare Department, and then months after they had their electricity cut off because the bills stayed up there, Sir, and they sent them back. I think there are honourable Members over there who must be able to confirm what I just said. But if there is not one over there, let me tell you then that the ones who live in the constituencies represented by this side are singularly unfortunate, because they are the ones on whom this burden falls, where, in pursuance of the promise which you made them they send the bills to the Welfare Department and then some three or four months later they get their water cut off. Do you know how many times I had to talk to the Manager at the Water Authority, and say to him "Sir, do this old lady a favour. You cannot cut off the water, this is all she has." I must say that gentleman, from time to time, demonstrated a large capacity for understanding the problem, but the water still gets cut off if you do not put your hand in your pocket and assist in paying the bill. 10.55 p.m.

I am saying that there should never be partisanship. If you love them as much as you said, you should never subject them, any of them, no matter what their political stripe, to that. Do you know what is funny, Sir? When you believe that the old are Bs, you really do not know. You do not know if they are Bs or Ds, nobody in Barbados knows.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You do not even know how many of the electorate are Bs.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I win though. In my constituency I do not know what they are. In my constituency I do not know if they are Bs or Ds, but I know I get a lot of votes.

I really regret, and I think you will agree with me, Sir, at our stage of development in the last quarter of the 20th century, we really ought not to be in here putting partisanship on how we take care of our old people. I really get a little concerned...

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The next thing you will say is that we will not let them travel on the buses except they are Bs).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, you will not let them travel before 9 o'clock, and most of them like to go into town early and get back home before the sun comes out.

Mr. Chairman, the other point I want to draw to the Minister's attention, I think it may have happened inadvertently, but it does not look good to see a person who on certain days is out canvassing for himself and on other days he is the officer in charge of determining who is

going to get a house and who is not going to get a house. I am saying it does not look good. I am not even going to call the person's name, and except for the politicians no one knows who I mean. I am saying that it does not look good, it does not feel right.

My Constituency Secretary called the office to get some information with regard to a house in the constituency that needs fixing, and the girl said "We think you had better speak to the person in charge," and when she got to the person in charge and she heard the name of the person, she said to me it is Mr. So and So. I said it could not be. I picked up the phone and recognising the gentleman, I said, "Have a nice day." You cannot have that, and you really should take some steps to avoid that particular problem. It does not look right, it does not feel right and it cannot be right.

We know he is a candidate. I do not wish to vilify him, because it is not his fault that he has to work as a civil servant and that he wants to get into the House. There is nothing wrong with that, as far as I am concerned. All I am saying is that it is not right.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: All that he just said should be struck from the Record. I do not believe it).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Are you saying that you do not believe me?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This debate is becoming purely for the political platform.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir, I am not now putting it on the political platform. The Honourable Leader of the House says he does not believe it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us stick to housing, welfare, structures please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He cannot sit there and suggest that I am not telling the truth.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Pay no attention to those asides. Order!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not right, and the Prime Minister agrees with me that it is not right. I heard him say so, that it is not right. I am not able to deal with the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House is incorrigible, there is nothing we can do with him. I am saying to the Government that it cannot be right that a political candidate, a well-known political candidate, is in charge of determining whose house will be fixed or not fixed under this vote. It cannot be right, and I think the Government should take steps to make a change in that direction.

We know that there is partisanship, but I would like some of the houses in my constituency fixed, and I do not feel, furthermore, that any political candidate, not a Member of the House, not a member of the Government, not a member of anything, should be consulted in my constituency about whether houses should be fixed. I object to that most strenuously. It is not right that poor old people have to go and tell lies, to say that they support a political party, in order to get their houses fixed. I have old people in my constituency who have to say they support a political party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Everybody is agreed on that.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I could not sit here and hear the Member for St. Michael West accuse a colleague of mine, because we all know who he is talking about, and I am serious about this. In the first place, the gentleman whom he has referred to does not work in deciding who is to get a house. He is not in that section of the Welfare Department. It is not true. The gentleman is in Home Help, and you are misleading the House. That is why I say you are dangerous.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that I spoke to him myself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am saying that two honourable Members are on their feet and I will not have it!

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: He works in Home Help, Sir, and it is not fair to say that. You spoke and you do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Head 81.

The question that Head 81 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 83 — MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Head 83 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of three 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. L. R. TULL, the Resolutions were read a-first and second time and agreed to.
11.05 p.m.

GUARANTEE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF A LOAN OF U.S. \$2 000 000 BY THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK TO CARIBBEAN AIR CARGO CO. LTD.

Order No. 6 was called — To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Government of a loan of U. S. \$2 000 000 by the Caribbean Development Bank to Caribbean Air Cargo Co. Ltd.

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

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Resolution begins, as I understand it:

"Whereas the Government of Barbados has fifty percent equity participation in the air cargo company, Caribbean Air Cargo Company Ltd. (CARICARGO), the other fifty percent being owned by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

And Whereas the Caribbean Development Bank has agreed to assist in financing the purchase of noise reduction nacelles or "hush kits" necessary for the refitting of CARICARGO's two Boeing 707 aircraft, by providing a loan of an amount not exceeding the equivalent of US \$4 000 000 (approximately BDS \$8 000 000) at an interest rate of 9¾ percent per annum:

And Whereas one of the conditions of the Caribbean Development Bank loan is the provision of a guarantee by each of the Governments of Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, the two shareholders of CARICARGO, of their proportionate share equivalent to US \$2 million:

Be It Resolved therefore.....

I do not understand, Sir, why the "therefore" has to be there —

"Be It Resolved therefore that Parliament approve the provision by the Government of Barbados of a guarantee in the sum of US \$2 000 000 (approximately BDS \$4 000 000) which represents 50 percent of the total Caribbean Development Bank Loan."

Now, Sir, I believe that, first of all, if there is going to be a loan from the Caribbean Development Bank for \$2 million to meet our commitment under the arrangement between the Trinidad and Tobago authorities and the Barbados authorities, in which we have 50 percent equity participation and they have 50 percent participation, that is half and half,....

Laughter.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It seems to be that the general terms of the Caribbean Development Bank's loan should have been explained to the House by the honourable Member who introduced this Resolution. We should like to know, for example, to what extent the external component of the National Debt would have been increased. We should like to know when it is anticipated that this loan will be repaid. But, more particularly, there has been information put abroad by the authorities in CARICARGO which suggests that the nacelles or "hush kits" will not be in place, or, to put it another way, that the airline is not able to function because it is not meeting the requirements of the United States Aeronautical Board.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, you will recall that there has been a lot of communication between the Government of Barbados and the Government of Trinidad on this matter. You will recall.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not recall that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You usually say, "Mr. Speaker," but you really do not expect the Speaker to recall anything. You usually say that in passing.

Sir, between Barbados and Trinidad this matter has been pending for some considerable time.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You were to go to Trinidad.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: By the time I am finished you are going to wish you went to Trinidad.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT:.... And the Minister responsible for Aeronautics in this country, the Minister responsible for CARICARGO, had indicated to this Honourable House sometime ago that he had anticipated that CARICARGO would be in a position to make a profit within a substantially short time from when he had spoken.

Now, Sir, you would recall — and I am sure you will recall this — that it was only the other day that we guaranteed a loan for the said CARICARGO for a sum, I believe, in excess of \$5 million — is that correct? — to purchase equipment. What I do not understand is why it is that we have to come at this stage for an additional sum of \$2 million, when, in fact, we were led to believe that that was a small problem with regard to the hush kits.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Sit down. I will explain that).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Prime Minister is the only person over there that is awake. He knows what I am talking about and he is undertaking to explain.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That manufacturer has gone out of business).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You see? I know what I am talking about. You think that I got up just to talk, but the Prime Minister has now signalled to me, and in deference to him — I told him to come back because I am going to sit down now — in deference to him, I am now prepared to deal with this matter in short order, because he understands my rising on the matter and that this matter ought not to be brought at this late hour, because the record will show that we were given a categorical statement on this when a question was raised from this side. But the honourable Members over there do not remember that. But he has said that the manufacturer of the particular hush kits which were anticipated in that Resolution have gone out of business.

So when I say, Sir, that there ought to have been an explanation, I was not being facetious. I was indicating that it is not sufficient, because we have come to the bottom end of a long day, to merely thrust this upon Parliament, in a moment of weakness, perhaps, or a perceived moment of weakness, or a moment of perceived weakness, where they come and say 'well, the boys tired now so we can just pass this Resolution.'

Parliament is a place, Sir, where when monies are being guaranteed in a country that is under tremendous pressure,.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think we are talking about Parliament now. We are talking about hush kits.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker I suspect that you — I did not understand you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I said that we are talking about some hush kits, not Parliament.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But Parliament is being asked to guarantee it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Members seem to forget that they must stick to the substance of the motion that is before the Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, Sir, with respect, it says "Be It Resolved therefore that *Parliament* approve," and I was explaining Parliament in the context of approving. 11.15 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Parliament has to approve the money, but the substance of the debate is about hush kits.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: And I am discussing, with your permission, that where Parliament is being called upon to approve money or a guarantee.....

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the only place that can guarantee money. We are talking about hush kits. I draw the Honourable Member's attention to Standing Order No. 28(2):

"A Member must confine his speech to the subject under discussion, and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto."

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, this Resolution is not about hush kits. This Resolution is about approving the provision by the Government of Barbados of a guarantee in the sum of US \$2 million. That is what it is about, with respect.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, let us deal with the guarantee of the money.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is what I was saying, that Parliament is a place where, if you come to get a guarantee for US \$2 million, you have to bring information. That is the point I am trying to develop.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, you have not reached there.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You, Sir, stood in the way. I am not discussing the hush kits at all, because we are agreed that the hush kits are necessary. It is to debate whether we should guarantee the US\$2 million in the light of the previous guarantee of \$5 million.

Aside

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You see, Sir. There he is standing up. We talk about Parliament. I cannot talk about Parliament. Look, Sir, I see an apparition, as one once said. There could only be an apparition over there talking about Burton Hinds. From outside of Parliament somebody could heckle me.

All of a sudden we have to be passing money and going to the Caribbean Development Bank to borrow money for a little fledgling airline that we have called CARICARGO, that will help us in our export trade, and the great US is passing laws and will not close down their own airlines that do not fulfil the requirements *in toto*, but they are going to make sure that CARICARGO cannot land at Miami unless we have to go and spend another US \$2 million that we do not have. If I had my way, I would recommend to the Minister that if the Aeronautics Board in the United States did not let CARICARGO land, he should insist on similar provisions here in Barbados. But, of course, I will hear now that we have tourism and we have to put up with the noise. We cannot insist on certain standards in Barbados because the tourists will not come. We in this country have certain standards for us and standards to deal with the tourists, but that is another story.

It seems to me, however, that the law that was passed which requires a certain noise level in the United States is being interpreted wrongly, and I would recommend that the shareholders in CARICARGO pursue this matter. They should go and get a definitive interpretation on the law, otherwise we are going to be passing more Resolutions in here for more hush kits. And I go further: the hush kits as perceived by the people who have recommended for CARICARGO the Boeing 707s, mark my word, we are going to hear that these particular hush kits are not effective in doing the job which is required under the law. We are going to hear that.

I think that CARICARGO is a marvellous idea. It was a marvellous idea from the beginning even when it had the little second class aircraft, because it gives to the two countries some measure of autonomy in the exercise of their sovereignty in relation to other countries, and when I see people from the so-called private sector in this country prostrating themselves on the altar of US largesse in Miami and talking a bundle of foolishness and behaving like if they do not come from anywhere, and going up there and allowing second class and third class and ninth rate Americans to treat them like if they do not have any

sense, when I see that sort of thing it makes me want to vomit. Some of them that go up on the free trip to Miami are not worth.....

This has to do with the hush kits, Mr. Speaker. They go up to Miami where they have to have hush kits on the vehicles that carry them up.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hush kits on the persons?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Hush kits on the vehicles that take them up.

Some of them are just not worthy to be called West Indians. They go up and prostrate themselves before a bunch of nincompoops in the United States. One thing I would say for the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V.L. Johnson). Whatever else I might say about him, I am certain that it could not happen to him, because he lived in America, and those of us who lived in that country are not moved by any sycophantic relationship with the United States which requires us to have to grovel every time the Vice President of the United States utters that he is going to do something.

The CBI should be supplying these hush kits. If the CBI was intended to do what they said they intended to do, we should not have to be doing this Resolution now for US \$2 million to put hush kits on a little fledgling airline that we have to carry cargo, no pun intended. They should be saying to Boeing or whoever has the hush kits. 'This will form part of our contribution to the development of the region.' You supply the hush kits and let it form part of the technical assistance, instead of picking up 16 or 17 people and sending them through the Caribbean every six days as consultants. More money has been paid to more US consultants under CBI than for any other group per capita for any other project any time in the history of man, and all of the consultants come from North America. Occasionally, you find somebody getting a five day trip under the aegis of the Caribbean Development Bank from somewhere in Dominica going up.....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is an employee.

Mr. Speaker, it is frustrating when we have to come and seek a Resolution to get US\$2 million.

Mr. Speaker, when I got up to speak on this Resolution, I was very concerned that the Leader of the House had moved this particular item at this hour, because, Sir, I had hoped that I would have been able to deal in its entirety with the history of the need for these hush kits. The history of airline safety and noise levels in the United States is part of an anti-pollution drive it is a matter that could take us into a very long and interesting

debate. But in light of the fact that the Prime Minister has demonstrated an appreciation of where I am going, and that the Minister responsible for Industry is obviously on the same wave length, I am going to stop at this stage. I had hoped that the matter would be of interest. I am very serious, because there are some things which need to be said, and they would better be said if the voices could be in unison, so that those outside of this country will know that we here will not go cap-in-hand begging for anything, merely because we are small. I believe that all politicians in Barbados who hold office must believe that.

Mr. Speaker, the hush kits are yet another imposition by the big giant in the north on the little ones in the south. The hush kits are yet another indication that the words that come out of their mouths are not consonant with the meditation in their hearts. I will rest on that, Mr. Speaker.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, I am sorry for the reporters, the police, the officers of the House and we on this side for the punishment they went through within the last hour or thereabout.

I beg to move, Sir, with those few remarks, that this House do now stand adjourned until 12.00 o'clock noon on Tuesday, December 17, 1985.

I should also like to give the honourable Member full marks for talking so much nonsense at so late a time, Sir.

Laughter.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Speaking on the motion for the adjournment, Sir, I, too, would like to thank the reporters and the House staff for the patience they have displayed, in spite of the behaviour of the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House has a responsibility to this House to see that the Government's business is done, and in that context, it is he, and he alone, who determines what matters would be called, subject to the wishes of this House and Your Honour's guidance. When, therefore, he rises on his feet and puts a

measure, knowing full well that that measure is bound to excite debate, if for no other reason than the manner in which it is put, he has to be guilty of the sins of which he accuses others when he says that an honourable Member spoke nonsense.....

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: That is a fact.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: and another honourable Member says it is a fact, one can only conclude that the combination of the two of them — the mover of the motion and the one who thinks it is a fact — are themselves unmindful of the real reason why they are here. But I am not surprised, Sir.

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Why are you going to curse me? Give me a break.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Neither is aware why he is here, Sir. They came in, and as they came in, they will go out today. One honourable Member has been exposed to Christian philosophy for so long that he has become immuned to it.....

(*Aside:* Hon. L. S. CRAIG: But not corrupt to it.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: and the other has not yet been exposed to it sufficiently to appreciate it. So I am not surprised that the two of them can agree so readily on these matters, punch drunk as they may be at this hour.

(*Aside:* Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: You should be in the US Senate team.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank you, too, Sir, for your patience, your colossal patience in the face of this onslaught on your sensibilities. I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for demonstrating an equanimity throughout the proceedings today which may have been tempered only by your need to bring the Honourable Leader of the House under the ambit of your very wise guidance as he sought to question rulings which he did not understand, Sir.

I thank you for your patience, Mr. Speaker.

The question that the House do now stand adjourned until Tuesday, December 17, 1985 at 12.00 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly at 11.30 p.m.

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