

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION OF 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 5, 1985.

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

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B. (Speaker)
His Honour R. E. Brathwaite, (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, (Minister of Education)
Hon. L. B. Brathwaite, (Minister of Housing and Lands)
Mr. J. G. Odle, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)
Mr. B. M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.), M.A., LL.B. (Hons.)
Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social Security, Sport and Community Services)
Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs)
Mr. O. S. Arthur, M.Sc., (Econ.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

Prayers were read by Rev. D. Stapleton.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG and Hon. L. R. TULL entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, February 26, 1985.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of February 26, 1985 be taken as read.

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

PAPERS

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

Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for 9 months ended 31st December, 1984.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Christ Church for the construction of a road known as the Airport to the West Coast Highway.

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at St. Michael for the construction of a road known as the Airport to the West Coast Highway.

A Bill to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1981.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL, a Bill to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1981 was read a first time.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On behalf of the Prime Minister, Sir, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 20, asked by the honourable Member for St. James South, is now ready.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, at this point, I should like to inform the House, in particular my colleagues on the other side, that there may be a few late Papers coming down and if I have to deal with any of them in all of their stages, Sir, which I hope I would have to, I shall

expect the same courtesies and co-operation extended, as shown on the last occasion by my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Michael West.

I should like it to go on record that I was very appreciable of the co-operation which he gave me on our last sitting day.

DEBATE ON WHITE PAPER ON HOUSING
(RESUMED)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 1 continuing.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Speaker, on the last occasion we dealt with this subject, a number of.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member winding up the debate?

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If no other honourable Member wishes to make a contribution, then the Minister may continue to wind up the debate.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: There were a number of contributions to this debate, and while I cannot say that I agree with all that was said, I still feel that in the totality of the discussion, Members made a reasonable contribution.

I want to answer a number of points and queries made by the honourable Members who spoke. The spokesman on Housing was very kind to say that he regarded the Resolution as modest in tone, but what he wanted to convey was not so much the modesty of the tone, but that he felt that the record of the Government in housing was not what he thought it should be. He went on to make a number of statements which were largely reasonable and remarks that you can live with, but he said things that I consider the Government would have to answer.

He mentioned, for example, the number of houses that were built during the Democratic Labour Party's regime, a fifteen year period. I think the number of houses built then were 3 595. What I am trying to research, and the answer might very well come up today, is how many of those houses are generally regarded as welfare houses, how many houses can be regarded as houses reconstructed or houses that were totally repaired. In that information which I hope to come up with, we may be able to get a true picture as to what was done. At the time when the DLP was in power, National Housing constructed units for the Ministry responsible for Welfare. People in Barbados who take a very active interest in public life will recall that there was a serious state of activity in 1975 and particularly in 1976, when

well over half million dollars were spent of the taxpayers' money to build and rehabilitate a number of houses on behalf of the poor; houses that were either built or rehabilitated, or not at all built but probably accounted for in statistics of the National Housing Corporation. In those days, it was a question of looking at figures, and anything which you could put forward as a figure which would cause the number to look respectable, the Government of the day felt that they should go for it.

This Administration has no desire to fool anybody with respect to the building of houses. The thrust of the Government during the past eight and a half years was towards making available to people sites and services at reasonable costs, in order that people could build their own homes or improve on their existing structures, and to assist them generally wherever it is possible. The banks were encouraged during that time — and this is as a result of the Government's directive — to make mortgages available to people to assist them in the ownership of their own homes. A considerable amount of people have benefitted as a result.

Never in the history of this country was there such marked improvement in the building landscape of Barbados as has been seen under the regime of the Barbados Labour Party. When the Democratic Labour Party went out of office it had completely run out of ideas, and was totally bankrupt in putting forward any new policy. Its manifesto in 1976 was woeful in its absence of a positive approach. It was conspicuous by its lack of content and about solutions to the problems which lie ahead. It was because of the Government's thrust in housing that it sought to introduce, and succeeded in doing so, an amendment to the Constitution which makes provision for all of the tenants in the plantation tenancies to become owners of the land, thereby freeing thousands and thousands of lots to the landless people in this country. The Democratic Labour Party never conceived such an approach.
12.30 p.m.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North mentioned the case of a person who is the niece of a deceased person who put her on the lot to live. He said that a son of hers came in from where he was and started to live in a welfare house; that that son has now become, by virtue of succession, the owner of the land that the niece who was there for many years when the son could not be found, and who was given the land by word of mouth which does not count in law by the deceased person, must move. It seems that a system can be so devised so that people who have been living and encouraged to live on the land by the main tenants should not be asked to move. We will look at this, and I would hope that members of the Opposition will have the courage of their convictions when the time comes to stand up and be counted, because the country will be told and the country will know whether they voted with the Government on the amendment.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North read from Hansard the voting of the Opposition with respect to the vote at the time. The Opposition voted on certain aspects of the Bill, but the Opposition did not give its total support, which is clear and obvious. I drew to the attention of an honourable Member that it was not total support. It was critical support of the Government. They voted on the clauses of the Bill, and what was extremely significant is that even on the third reading of the Bill, which is never regarded as a crucial point, the Opposition exercised their vote on the Bill.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member will give way, on a point of elucidation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Two Members are on their feet.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I am not giving way.

What is disturbing is that the honourable Member for St. Philip North was extremely disappointing. On the one hand, he wants a particular solution to the problem, and on the other, he wants another solution to the problem. Right through he was purely luke-warm and and milk and water; nothing more than that. On the one hand he was saying that the plantation Tenancies Freehold Act is a good concept and it is useful to have it implemented. On the other hand, he was saying that, by selling the people the lots, we have now turned and taxed those people sometimes to the extent of twenty times more than the rents which they pay.

There is a world of difference between what you own in fee simple and what you have no title to. If a person buys a piece of land, the person can without any concern for molestation, erect any structure which the person wishes to erect on that land. You can borrow money on the land to do anything you want.

The honourable Member in putting forward the case said that when the old person who might be the tenant becomes the owner of the land, that person is not able to borrow the money. That might be so, but what stops the person from allowing a relative who might be living there — because that is what the honourable Member for St. Philip North said — to have use of the land by vesting the land in the relative if they feel secure in doing so? You cannot stop a property owner from passing on land to anybody whom they wish to pass it on to.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North suggested that there be deferred Land Tax on lands that might be conveyed in a tenantry, but where they may not be proper development. That is an area one might want to look at, and I give the assurance that my Ministry would not be unwilling to look in that direction. 12.40 p.m.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North also dealt with the lots in West Terrace. He said that the West Terrace lots are too small. Some people get the feeling that in this day and age you should continue to have very large house lots. You cannot afford to have very large house lots in this day and age.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North trotted out quite a lot of figures, and I have on file quite a lot of figures which I am prepared to use to dispute quite a number of the figures raised by the honourable Member for St. Philip North. I wish him to know that we have to look at these figures in arriving at a decision. The reason why the cost of properties, as distinct from building, in Barbados is so high is because the land cost itself is terribly expensive. In putting forward his proposition, the honourable Member made a valid point, that we may well want to consider adding the cost of digging a well to the overall cost of the spot so that the spread of repayment might be sufficiently long as to permit the purchaser a better opportunity to pay. That, in my view, is the mechanics of the whole situation and something which can be easily looked at. There can be no problem with that.

With respect to the building of properties and the question of land, it is extremely difficult to come up with a figure. If you are talking about selling land at the commercial price, you have to think in terms of \$4.00 a square foot, and in some cases much higher than that. It is not easy to get it cheaper than that. If you are looking at the people who are in the lower socio-economic group in this country, you must of necessity consider their ability to meet the overall payments if they are getting a loan, or if they are doing starter homes, the continuation of the construction of that property.

I do not know if the honourable Member for St. Philip North is like a lot of people in this country, who believe that they like ostriches must bury their heads in the sand and expose their whole bodies, and has the idea that West Terrace must be kept exclusively for people of a particular social standing. I am not given to that idea, and I am not thinking in terms of any buffer zone, none at all. Many people seem to have that idea. There are a number of people who own homes in West Terrace who are putting forward the idea that low cost housing should not be near to them, and that there must be now a particular standard of house which is not quite equal to that that was recently built, but not as low as that that will be built at a further stage. I want to disabuse your mind of any idea that I am going to be party to any question of believing that in a Christian society we must have the type of distinction which the honourable Member is trying to project.

It is sometimes good to remind the wealthy, the lawyers, the professional people, parliamentarians

principally, that they only have to look as far as a grandfather, a great-grandfather or a grandmother to find a fisherman or an agricultural labourer. When you are gravitating towards a particular social atmosphere, you must think in terms of bringing them along. The big home you live in does not make you the perfect person. The big home you are living in does not make you respectable, it is the character of the person. In very poor homes in this country, where sometimes it is hardly likely that you will find a proper meal, you have honest people, people of integrity, and there are big homes with all the confusion and bad things that you could hope to imagine.

If we are aiming towards a desirable situation in terms of housing, that you must have a small lot that can adequately carry a house and at the same time reasonable curtilage. But, in any event, who today is concerned with working land? I continue to work about one and three quarter acres because I love land, but how many people will do that? There are not many people, so you generally find that the land space around the house becomes an area of concrete, with nothing grown there. There is no need for having a big area of land. People cannot afford it. It is what is affordable. The target area in the society is the lower socio-economic group of people, so you have to make the land available at a cost that would accommodate that group of people.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North referred to the changing of chairmen and managers with a great amount of frequency within the past two years under the administration of the Barbados Labour Party. There is no problem about that. It is not a question of changing managers or chairmen with Ministers. That is not the case. If you have a particular thrust, and if you hope to accomplish something and you consider that there is dead wood in the way, you have to remove it. If you believe that the growth on a tree prevents it from progressing satisfactorily, you remove that growth. I do not consider it to be more than that.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West said that throughout my speech I was trying to condemn my predecessors. Let me take this opportunity for now and all times to put the record straight. We in the Barbados Labour Party are not like centipedes, fighting ourselves or trying to eat the young. There is nothing that the Opposition can say which will divide the ranks of the Barbados Labour Party. I am free to speak as my conscience would dictate.
12.50 p.m.

I come here and although part of a team of people elected to serve this country and to serve in a Government, I have always regarded my principal commit-

ment to the people of St. Andrew, who in their numbers have returned me to this Honourable Chamber. When I speak, I speak with their conscience. I have to be concerned about the taxpayers in this country, and if I find that something is not working satisfactory, I will take the decision to put it right.

All of my colleagues, from Sir Ronald Mapp down, have rendered yeoman services in order to bring about a state of health within the National Housing Corporation. The conditions when we came into office were so bad that they led to a Commission of Enquiry, and it will take all the human energy and resources over a number of decades to put National Housing on the right track. You have to be single-minded. You have to be determined. You have to be prepared to walk the lonely road. You have to accept the fact that people will be hostile to the approaches you make.

I have in my files here a report to do with the National Housing, its income and its expenditure up to the month of January. It is fantastic how with determination, and it has to be determination, people have been able to bring others in line and make them understand and respect the obligations which are imposed upon them in governing a country. I am happy to say that with one or two exceptions, the people in Barbados who live in Government-rented units are now paying their rents reasonably well. It is good and heartening to report that. It was devilishly hard in the past to get them to do it, and with a single-minded and determined effort this was done. If you think on coming into office that a chairman would not be able to carry through the programmes that you had in mind, or that the manager was not sufficiently capable of doing so, it is your duty to let it be known that that is the case.

The honourable Member for St. Michael North mentioned the coolant system and referred to it as a system which was developed in Barbados. That system came here as a result of an American who came to this country and worked with the National Housing Corporation; he had that system implemented. In praising a coolant system, one can also easily praise the system of Ideal Homes. Ideal Homes has a system which is very cost effective in terms of savings.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member must remember that in reply he is only limited to 30 minutes. You have less than one minute to conclude.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I will try to conclude as quickly as I can, but bearing in mind the subject, I hope that Your Honour will give me some kind of latitude.

With respect to material, you will find that in a building of 1 730 square feet, the cost of the sub-structure

is 25.7 per cent. The cost of the structure, that is the walls and the partitions is 3.2 per cent. The cost of the roof is 13.9 per cent, the cost of the windows, 2.2 per cent; the cost of the doors, 2.6 per cent; the cost of the floor finishes, 3.9 per cent; the cost of the wall finishings, 8.2 per cent; the cost of the ceiling finishings, 1.9 per cent; sundry fittings, 6.1 per cent; plumbing installation, 7.7 per cent; electrical installation, 10.8 per cent; drainage system, 3.8 per cent and external work 2.8 per cent. This will give you a figure of \$143 887, exclusive of land.

In a house with a floor space of 1 107 square feet, the sub-structure would be 25.7 per cent; the structure, 7.5 per cent; the roof, 13.9 per cent; walls and partitions, 3.2 per cent; windows, 2.5 per cent; doors, 2.6 per cent; floors, 3.9 per cent; wall finishings, 8.2 per cent; ceiling and finishings, 1.3 per cent; fittings and sundries, 6.1 per cent; plumbing installation, 7.7 per cent; electrical installation, 10.8 per cent; drainage, 3.8 per cent; external works, 2.8 per cent.

You will find that a wooden house, the price of which one would expect should be considerably lower, works out at \$79 762. If you take a 600 sq. ft. wall house, the total cost of that would be \$37 379, and if you took a wooden house of a similar space, the cost would be \$38 364.

Asides.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: It does not matter, and that is how the price works out. In other words, it is also known that the actual foreign exchange component in a building is between 27 per cent and 33 per cent.

The Government has been giving the people assistance over the years in terms of making loans available and giving them a number of concessions. People who own chattel houses today and do repairs to those houses are able to get tax credits. There was a time when they got none. This Government provided that for them. This Government has given a considerable amount of concessions to the building industry. It is understood that the Government, and anybody should know, cannot give everything. It creates the climate, and this Government has created that climate whereby provision is made for ownership by people in this country. It is my firm view that given the will, given the determination of the Government to carry out its programme, we will in a very short time be able, if not to bring housing to all, to bring housing to a considerable number of people.

1.00 p.m.

The Opposition said that we did not give a lot of details and they wanted more details in connection with this matter. We are at the moment doing a study on housing, and there will be a housing plan which will

shortly be published, and in the drawing up of this housing plan the Ministry is consulting with all people in Barbados who have to do with housing: engineers, architects, builders, quantity surveyors, land developers, all those types of people. My Ministry is in constant touch with those people to get the necessary information.

It would seem to me as though the Opposition has not clearly conceptualised what a White Paper on any matter is. A White Paper does not seek to spell out the details of anything. It sets out to deal with the policy position of a Government of the day. The details are the mechanics of the matter, which will come to this House in the fullness of time in the National Housing Plan. It will be exhaustive and bulky, and it will take a considerable amount of time for us to go through with this. As a matter of fact, it is not a matter for the House. The policy guidelines are what are necessary for this House.

I would like to advert briefly to the USAID funds, which the honourable Member for St. Philip North dealt with. We agree with him that the monies which now fall under the ambit of the Barbados National Bank should be made available to the banking system so that people who find it difficult to deal with the Barbados National Bank would be able to have the money. I have already put in train action for the amendments to the Bill bringing the USAID matter into operation to be made in order to give opportunity to all banks to participate.

Further, I am happy to report that low disbursements are not as slow as was mentioned. It is true that it was a new system, people were not accustomed to it and the methods employed, and that banks are very tough. But now that people understand, now that the Government has been giving assistance to people with their applications and plans, National Housing and the Ministry of Housing and Lands have been able to remove the irksome problem which small people, small in terms of their ability to articulate, have been encountering with the banks, and with the Town and Country Planning Office. That is an office that is largely reactionary and hide-bound. They have imposed some very tough and difficult conditions, and we have been giving assistance wherever possible in the Ministry in order to iron out the difficulties which beset those people in the plantation and other tenancies with respect to the drawings for submission to the Town and Country Planning Office.

I support the view of the honourable Member for St. Philip North that the fees can be burdensome, especially on people who are now trying to own a home. I will make representation in the right quarters that we may well consider if not totally erasing, at least reducing the cost of plans to people in the tenancies if we want to make,

the programme meaningful. It can only be meaningful in such circumstances.

I wish to let the honourable Member for St. Philip North know that with respect to his suggestion about surveyors surveying the agricultural land, that is already in place. The tenants who are tenants on the land, and even the tenants in terms of working the land on the plantation, have their rights to ownership, and it is pointless not surveying the land. I think it was Mr. Harold Went who had submitted a letter setting out the situation in the tenancies, and he thought that you should have an orderly system of development, and that rather than having a house jutting out here and jutting out there, you should take into account an orderly system whereby roads and water can be put in. I think that in the first splurge of this whole thing the matter could have gone wrong. I think that we may have to go back in the tenancies and look at the whole system and how adjustments can be made in order to make the tenancies what we consider good tenancies.

The USAID funds are moving along. The people who do the assessment of these funds are satisfied that the time is now ripe for the Government to make approaches, if it so wishes, to have a further loan, and the Ministry is looking at that situation. With respect to an upper limit, we do not think we can agree with that, because an upper limit in terms of wages might create a situation where the poor that we aim at might be excluded from this situation.
1.10 p.m.

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

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT CAVE HILL
FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
AND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
AIRPORT TO THE WEST COAST
HIGHWAY

Order No. 4 was called – To move the passing of the Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Cave Hill for the purpose of Housing Development and for the construction of the Airport to the West Coast Highway.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to say much at all on this Resolution. I do not know if it is necessary so to do. Everybody is acquainted with the Airport to West Coast Road and the need for acquisitions.

We have had to purchase land and make provision for the resiting of people. This forms part of what we are actually doing. It is a straightforward Resolution which deals with the acquisition of the land, and I am not aware

that there is any dispute with the owners on this. I am willing to answer any queries on my debate.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, on this acquisition, which is for the construction of the Airport to West Coast Road, there is one aspect which I particularly want to deal with. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, before I go any further, I should enquire of you whether you would entertain debate which deals with the road. I know that your rulings on acquisitions

Mr. SPEAKER: My ruling on this will be to deal with the acquisition of land, the subject matter which is before the House.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This one says for the purpose of building the road, and I am seeking your guidance before I go any further, because there are some aspects concerning what this land is being acquired for which I propose to engage in a debate. But I should not like to run afoul of Your Honour on this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: The subject matter of the Resolution is acquisition of the land at Christ Church....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Christ Church?

Mr. SPEAKER.....for the construction of.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. This is not in Christ Church. This is the one for Cave Hill.

Last week, the Minister said that he could not say when persons would get their money and he made a statement.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Here again, the honourable Member has started off on the wrong foot. The honourable Member is seeking to re-open last week's debate.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I am only referring to it to go into this debate. I am not dealing with that at all. What the Minister said, fortunately or unfortunately, applies equally here, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with what the Minister said last week.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Very well, Sir. I hope that this week the Minister would make a statement in which he will indicate that persons whose land will be acquired under this Resolution will be able to get their money with a certain amount of alacrity. I hope, without re-opening the issue again, that the Minister would follow through on a promise that he has given, that he will see to it that these persons whose lands are acquired

would not have to wait as long as three, five, eight or ten years to get their money. As I understand it, the House is going to be dealing with a series of acquisitions like this one, and the policy with regard to the acquisitions should be made clear.

The purpose of this acquisition is to accommodate a road, according to what it says here, to be known as the Airport to the West Coast Highway. I should like to think that in the construction of this highway, we will not have some of the difficulties which have become obvious in the construction of other highways for which land was acquired. This highway is going to be linked up, as I understand it, with the highway that starts at the harbour — it is now called the Spring Garden — and it is going to be one continuous route through Cave Hill all the way to the airport. The Minister responsible for Transport and Works, within whose hand this land will fall as soon as we have completed the work here today, has made certain comments concerning this Airport to West Coast Highway. That aspect of the Airport to West Coast Highway that is now called the Spring Garden has some lessons in it for us, which we can apply to this new aspect of the highway.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is Spring Garden in this one?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: By inference, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Inference?

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If the honourable Member could show by what statements we can deduce this inference, I will be quite happy to.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. If you look at the section which says, "for Housing Development and for the construction of a road formerly to be known as the Industrial Estates Access Road". Now that road, Sir, as it appears on the plan starts at the harbour, includes Spring Garden.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Which plan?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The plan which has required the acquisition of this land. Mr. Speaker, I must confess, I have great difficulty — I am trying to comply with your ruling — understanding the ruling to mean that, every time the land is to be acquired, one can only discuss the particular land, its acquisition, the price, but one cannot discuss the purpose.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know of that ruling. What I know is that, according to the Standing Orders, we must debate the issues which are primarily before the House, and this Resolution as it appears to me, deals with a

specific area of land. It does not deal with the Spring Garden Access Road.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir, but it deals

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nowhere that I can find where you can connect this Resolution with the Spring Garden Access Road. If the honourable Member wants to discuss the Spring Garden Access Road, there are ways and means of doing it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, bear with me. We are acquiring land for the construction of a road. The acquisition of that land for the construction of a highway means that the basic purpose for acquiring the land is to construct a highway. My understanding is that that highway is to be linked to another part of what will be a single highway.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not my understanding of it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will give way to someone else, Sir. I will not argue.

Mr. SPEAKER: My ruling will be that we will stick to the Resolution before this Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In those circumstances, I shall not waste the House's time, nor yours, Sir. I will give way to someone else.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Speaker, the Second Schedule of this Resolution seeks to acquire a parcel of land of 4 370 square metres, the property of the late Frank Inniss. I happen to know that because of the construction of this new access road, the present entrance to the home of Mrs. Inniss, which now sits on this parcel of land, will no longer be available for her to use. Mrs. Inniss has made frequent representations to the appropriate authorities in connection with the proposed access that she is to have after the acquisition of this land, and she has expressed total dissatisfaction with this new access. To date, the authorities have made no move to meet her halfway in providing alternative access to her home. I would like to draw to the appropriate Ministry's attention the fact that the owner of this particular parcel of land is not at all satisfied with the provisions being made.

1.20 p.m.

Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow falls.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do hope that when the refurbishing of this building is completed, we shall have far better quality of furniture than we have at the moment. I can assure the honourable Member for St.

John that I very much regret what has happened, but it shows the state of the furniture which we as MPs have to endure while we attend to the public's business. I believe the honourable Member is aware of a special committee that is now looking after the refurbishing, and I do hope that they take these things into consideration.

The honourable Member may continue.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was saying that I invite the appropriate Ministry to see if they can make satisfactory arrangements for new access for the owner of this particular parcel of land in the Second Schedule. The owner of that portion of land was even prepared to give it as a grant to the Government if appropriate arrangements could be made for satisfactory access.

The Resolution says it is specifically for housing development. I would like the Minister of Housing to say whether or not it is a fact that in some of these housing developments, in what are called the starter houses, the National Housing Corporation has been laying out in some of these starter houses 28 feet frontage for the houses that are 22 feet wide and having two feet on one side and four feet on the other side. I would like to be assured by the Minister of Housing that this is not true, because if this is a fact, that would be most regrettable, because they would be going out of the regular Town Planning regulations, and they would be going into a situation that will do nothing but lead to a very inconvenient and slum-like situation developing with any units that will be 22 feet wide and have 28 feet frontage. I want to be sure that this is not a fact, and I would take the Minister's assurance on this if he would be so kind.

These are the only two matters which I would like to raise on this particular acquisition. The region is well-known and it poses no problem to me.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Speaker, the road which is the reason for this acquisition passes through many properties from the bottom of the University Drive all the way up to the Haggatt Hall Roundabout. I have forgotten the number of human habitations which will have to be demolished in order to make way for the construction of the road. Many of the house owners have not yet been given any compensation for the land which has been subject to acquisition orders in this House, and many of them, whose houses are of a substantial nature, have not been told precisely when the demolition of the existing structure will take place, or how they are to be compensated for the destruction of their existing dwelling, so that they can make provision

in the way of purchasing land and constructing houses of a similar character to the ones which they are now occupying.

The office of the Project Manager is on this level in the west wing of the Parliament Building. I, along with the Member for St. Philip North, have made frequent visits there to try and get some kind of information as to when the people will be compensated for their land and when they are expected to move. The problem, as I understand, is that there are four different agencies dealing with this project. There is a Project Manager, there is the Ministry of Legal Affairs, there is the Ministry of Housing and there is the Land and Surveys Department — and the Ministry of Finance has to approve of everything that is being done. We feel that all of these activities could easily be co-ordinated in the Project Manager's Office by placing one or two or more legally qualified and competent persons in that office. I do not see that the Ministry of Housing needs to be involved at all, except in cases where the Government is moving chattel houses to other sites. But that is a down-the-road kind of consideration, and not one which would prevent the authorities from telling the people when they have to move and paying them for the property which is going to be destroyed. There is no problem, as far as I can understand, in the relocation of existing chattel houses, but there is a considerable problem in the question of compensation for those persons who own substantial dwellings, and who would normally expect to have money available and at their disposal in order to build on alternative sites which they have to acquire. I do not think it is fair to people who are within the pathway of the 'hurricane', if you could call it that, to keep them waiting and waiting, and then one morning they wake up and find that the earth-moving equipment and the bulldozers are at their doors.

There is another matter, of course, which is agitating the minds of many Barbadians. I do not really want to go into that matter now, because it can be considered, in a way, *sub judice*. If it is *sub judice*, I think it was ill-advised of the Minister of Finance early in January to make pronouncements on things which have not been finally decided, and so put other people in a situation of great embarrassment. Many people who have vested interests, people who had expectations, are in a great position of embarrassment. But what has added insult to injury is the sending of the second or third eleven up to Washington to deliberate on matters which are of great importance and matters which are sort of vital to the national interest of Barbados.

1.30 p.m.

I am not making any personal reference at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wonder what the honourable Member is speaking about.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On the acquisition of land for the highway. I am speaking about the way in which we are going about it. We may never get the highway at all, so this Resolution may not be necessary. I am saying if we want the highway, certainly we should send at least the first eleven, or something looking like the first eleven, rather than the second or third eleven. This is not personal at all. I do not know who the eleven people are. I have an idea who the supposed captain elect is going to be, but that lot does not inspire us with a great deal of confidence that we will ever see the highway, so we may be just speaking academically here today, Sir.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS (St. James South): Mr. Speaker, in respect of the acquisition of land for this highway, I believe that certain persons are being temporarily accommodated, and I would like to draw to the attention of the Minister that West Terrace is being used, I believe, to accommodate some of these people. Although the accommodation is good, I believe that the residents of West Terrace are somewhat concerned about the fact that certain facilities are not provided, like curtains, and therefore the people are using any old pieces of cloth and making the area not the most sightly. My friend, the Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur), might confirm this.

I believe that when we are moving people, even temporarily, certain things could be provided for houses to make the houses look more liveable. That is my only concern. I believe that it does create a problem in some of these areas and does not do good at all for the Government's policy in this matter. I thought I should air this, because during my visit there last Saturday a number of people complained.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, what the last speaker has said is certainly revealing to me, that there are people living in West Terrace in houses allocated to them. Actually, all the houses in West Terrace, with the possible exception of one or so, are taken up, although they are not occupied. I am not aware of what he is speaking.

On the other hand, I am not going into the habits or otherwise of people. It is for people like the last speaker to deal with that. What I would like him to do, since it will be within his constituency, or very close to it, would be to go in and train them in the nice habits and what he is accustomed to, and not to come in here and pour scorn on them.

I will check and see, but I know the people are going into Husbands, not into West Terrace. I would have been told whether or not this was the case. I would have to approve such a decision, and I have not done that.

With respect to the point raised by the Right Honourable Member for St. John, I was amazed to hear

the honourable Member talking about having a few lawyers and a project office and what have you in order to do the acquisition. The honourable Member knows very well, because he had a lot to do with the Land Acquisition Act as it now is, that there is only one authority that can implement the Land Acquisition Act, and that is the Ministry of Housing and Lands under the Crown Lands Vesting Act. No project office can acquire. It cannot be done.

If I had done law — and I have not done it, which probably is a good thing — I would have spoken with a different type of authority. It just cannot be done. Only the Ministry of Housing and Lands can initiate those types of proceedings, and further, a number of notices would have to be put in the newspapers of this country and in the *Official Gazette*. Also, the Governor-General gives permission at a particular time to give authority to certain people, and this is mainly the Chief Surveyor, to enter into possession to carry out certain works. That is the way it is done.

A lot of questions have been asked. To deal with the Airport-West Coast Road, there is a Project Unit within the Ministry of Housing and Lands to look after that. It is a legal Project Unit, because it has to relate to the Attorney General's Office. As a matter of fact, the power lies there, and the Right Honourable Member for St. John would know that. The Attorney General has certain powers to do with the Crown Lands Vesting Act. In order for me to sign documents of a certain nature, a certificate must come that I must do that. You cannot put a group of people down there with no relevance to the Attorney General's Office and believe that it can function.

I want to mention, for the benefit of the right honourable gentleman, that we have not yet got fully underway as regards the acquisition. So do not say that we are interfering with anybody's properties, or we are trying to dislocate anybody; the acquisition proceedings will have to be put in place first. That has not yet been done, but I assure the Right Honourable Member that when this happens, with the new legal Project Unit set up by the Ministry of Housing and Lands there will be no such difficulty. We have already taken that decision to ensure that people are met promptly in the payment of their money.

With respect to the units that are being put up at Husbands, I am not aware that there is no space for people to move around. I have not got that information. I have visited there, and, as a matter of fact, I thought there was too much space around.

Aside.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: We have not yet started the starter units. We are looking at plans, and those plans

can be revised. We have not done anything yet. The whole problem is that people are quick to run off with things before there is a conclusion arrived at in respect of these matters.

I do not believe, and I have spelled this out already, in large units. You cannot afford them at this point in time. The cost of putting in roads today is just terrific. Water is very expensive, so is electricity, but it is nothing like putting in roads, and therefore you cannot afford to have massive lots again. Those days have passed, in my view, for ever.

The honourable Member can speak with more authority than me, probably he is running the Ministry, but I am not aware that there is any conclusive decision with respect to the starter homes. We are looking at them. I believe it is a good concept. I am in favour of the starter home, and I believe it is one of the ideas that will get us moving on, but I cannot tell you yet what we have decided on. We have not yet decided on anything.

I do not know if I have answered the questions sufficiently, but those are the best answers I can give. I assure the honourable Members who are concerned about money to be paid to people when their properties are acquired that that will be dealt with promptly with respect to this project, because there is a unit in the Ministry to deal with that.

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

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1985

Order No. 5 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, the original Financial Administration and Audit Act was passed before the country was independent, and before we had a Foreign Service, and we are very fortunate that the Act has been able to be applied to expenditure by overseas Missions until now without any anomalies arising. However, anomalies have now arisen, because it has proved extremely difficult to operate overseas Missions on the basis that an officer who is not the Head of the Mission is to be the accounting officer for the Mission, and hence to have some control over a person who is, administratively, his head. I do not know if these matters arose as long ago as the point in time when the honourable Member for St. Michael West was Consul General in New York, but they have certainly arisen since. It is accordingly decided that the

accounting officer for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should delegate his authority as accounting officer to any given Mission to the Head of Mission.

As the law stands, there appears to be some ambiguity regarding whether an accounting officer may delegate any of his functions to a person who does not hold an established office in the Civil Service. I have read several opinions and have been unable to make up my mind as to which of the opinions should be followed. In fact, the Government has operated on the basis that the accounting officer may so delegate his authority, but to make assurance doubly sure, we are seeking an amendment to the Financial Administration and Audit Bill to remove any possibility of challenge, or of anomaly arising again in the future.

Even at the stage where this Bill was first authorized by the Ministry of Finance and by Cabinet, we still had the words ‘‘authorized representative’’ means any officer including Head of Mission.’ That has now been changed to ‘‘any person’’ I have every confidence that this Bill will deal with the problem that has arisen in respect of the overseas Missions.

I therefore recommend this Bill to the House, Mr. Speaker, and beg to move that it be now read a second time.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second it and reserve my right to speak.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested to hear the Honourable Minister of Finance, the Right Honourable Member for St. Thomas, saying that the Financial Administration and Audit Act has worked up to now without any great difficulty.

I do not believe in hearsay legislation. The Financial Administration and Audit Act is one of those measures by which a certain degree of financial control is exercised over the expenditure of Government funds, and a public officer is usually designated by the Financial Secretary to be accounting officer in any particular Government department, section, or Ministry. The person usually designated by the Financial Secretary to be the accounting officer is usually the Permanent Secretary in the particular department so that you will find that in the Law Courts, the Registrar is deemed to be the accounting officer, and he has the responsibility of making sure that the votes are properly expended, and in a manner voted for by Parliament and not otherwise, as was in our old letters, patents and royal instructions, a provision which has been retained and re-enacted in the Constitution of this country and Order in Council of 1961. The Financial Administration and Audit Act has under it the Financial Administration and Audit Rules.

Whether rightfully or wrongfully, Government from time to time decides to appoint people as Heads of Missions who are not subject to the discipline of the Public Service or any other Service Commission. People have been, and are being taken from the ordinary branch of the Public Service and transported and translated to positions as Heads of Missions. I maintain that a person who is a Head of a Mission is in the same place as a Minister. He is the Minister's delegate when he is in that position. He need not be a public officer at all. He may not even have anything to do with Parliament or the political structure of this country. He could be a person who is residing abroad, and I do not know that it is not possible for him to be a non-national as well.

The whole doctrine of public accountability is being whittled away in various ways. It is being whittled away by the imposition of levies, and as a result of money not being paid into the Consolidated Fund and Parliament not having any over-view over the disposal of these levies, because they are not monies which are voted for by Parliament.

1.50 p.m.

I have heard on one famous occasion no less a personage than the Right Honourable Member for St. Thomas, who is also the Minister of Finance, complain that he was surprised to see work going on in the Bridge Road, because he knew that they did not have any money, and that when he enquired he discovered that somebody in the Ministry had decided to take the money out of the Transport Levy. That is the kind of thing which is going on. That is what the honourable Member said in here, that he was surprised. That is the kind of thing you are getting going on where the Minister of Finance himself does not even have the final word.

Now you have in New York a person who decides that he wants to paddle about in the funds which are voted for the Mission over there, and you have a competent body of officers and the senior person in there is a public officer, who is supposed to be the accounting officer designated. There are two things involved here. When the honourable Member reads the Act, the person who should be doing the designation under the Act is the Financial Secretary, therefore it is not necessary for this Act at all, because the Act itself says that the Financial Secretary can designate any person to be accounting officer. Now we have this situation in which you are asking the person who is designated by the Financial Secretary to be accounting officer to designate somebody who is superior to him to act as Accounting Officer so that he can meddle about with the funds that Parliament has voted, I presume, and he is not satisfied that he is being kept in rigid control. Let us say that the accounting officer says they have only \$300 for cocktail parties and you want to take money to pay substitutes and have a cocktail party. That is the proper function of

an accounting officer. This is a hypothetical case. I do not know that such a thing has occurred yet, but similar things are occurring. I am only giving an illustration.

A well known principle in law, as I do not have to remind Your Honour, is *delegatus non potest delegare*. Here you have a situation in which a public officer is designated as an accounting officer, and we are being asked to pass a measure today whereby the person who is being designated would designate his superior. That has never happened in history, as far as I know. A superior designates a subordinate, not using it in a pejorative sense, to carry out the functions for him. You have never had a situation in which a person in a lower level designates somebody superior to him to do something. What is the purpose? As far as I am concerned, the accounting officer should even restrain Ministers. If you read the Act, you will see where, if the Minister says that he wants something done, and the accounting officer does not think that it should be done, there is procedure where he not only can restrain the Minister, but if the Minister insists on doing it, the accounting officer is enjoined to write a report on the matter and state his position, and submit that position to the Ministry of Finance and, if necessary, to the Public Service Commission.

There will from time to time be people who are not legally trained, who do not have a reputation for financial rectitude — I say it can happen — who may be put at the head of Missions, and yet you are asking an accounting officer to delegate his authority to persons who may be of that kind of persuasion. I am not saying it has happened, I am saying it is possible. But what is even more iniquitous is that the amending Bill, which we are being asked to support today and which we are not going to support — let me serve notice early that as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee I cannot support any measure like this. I do not think it would lead to or maintain financial rectitude — what is more of a paradox about the whole situation is that you are saying that this subordinate officer must name the ambassador or the Head of Mission as the accounting officer, but he remains....

I am getting a finger wagged at me and I will read the Act. I will read subsection (3) because a finger is being wagged from the other side as though to say this is not what the Act says.

Words in legislation have to be given their common and ordinary meaning in English. This is the new subsection which we are being asked to include in Section 9 of the Act:

"An Accounting Officer" — (I remember that according to the existing Act an accounting officer is somebody who is designated by the Financial Secretary)

— “may, by instrument in writing, delegate to his authorised representative, on such conditions as he determines, any of his functions arising under or by virtue of this Act, but such delegation” — (and this is what I wish to draw your attention to) — “does not relieve an Accounting Officer of his accountability under this Act.”

The accounting officer, let us say Mr. Maycock, who is the accounting officer, delegates to his ambassador his duties under the Act.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: There are two honourable Members on their feet. Will the honourable Member for St. John give way?

The honourable Member has given way.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I regret that my speech and the argument should have been so misunderstood. There is nothing in this Bill which seeks to change the position of the accounting officer. The accounting officer will remain the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but we are just allowing him now to delegate to his authorised representative the powers which the Act already gives him, but we are saying that his authorised representative can be the Head of Mission and not a subordinate officer in the Mission. That is all we are saying. The power now exists to delegate.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Your Permanent Secretary, who normally would nominate a civil servant who is in the office, in London, New York or wherever, as accounting officer. According to what the honourable Member is saying, that person does not delegate to the Head of Mission, but, mind you, the Permanent Secretary has been delegated by the Financial Secretary — my point is still valid — and he as a delegate delegates his function to somebody overseas. Normally in Barbados he does not have to delegate it to anyone, but he delegates his function to somebody overseas. As far as I am concerned, he is still the accounting officer. Now we are making it possible for him to overstep a public officer and delegate somebody who may or may not be a political appointee as Head of Mission. That is simple.

The Act goes on to say that he, a delegate, having designated him, “but such delegation does not relieve an accounting officer of his accountability under this Act.”

Let me give you some information, Sir. A few weeks ago, the accounts for an overseas Mission were four years in arrears. The Permanent Secretary here in Barbados was responsible. Can you imagine a situation where he is here, he delegates his authority to somebody who wants to have a free-for-all with public monies, and he is sitting down

here waiting for the accounts to come into Barbados, and when I, as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, and the other members of the Public Accounts Committee, and the Auditor General, are being told that the Permanent Secretary here is responsible for whatever confusion went on in New York, because it says so clearly. Despite the fact that the Permanent Secretary has delegated his duties as an accounting officer to somebody in New York, he in Barbados is still being held responsible, and I should like to add could go to jail. He could even go to jail because he is accountable. It says so in plain, ordinary English.
2.00 p.m.

I do not see how we can support that kind of thing. I concede the point that Mr. Maycock cannot delegate responsibility. It would have to be the Permanent Secretary who delegates it. But the Permanent Secretary has been appointed by the Financial Secretary. We have always maintained that the only way we can have effective financial control is to have the authority vested in a person such as the Permanent Secretary.

Nobody has given me or the Accountant-General an explanation about why the New York accounts were four years in arrears. A long time ago, the Ministry of Finance should have called the Permanent Secretary to enquire why those accounts were four years in arrears. People come and people go, and by the time you investigate any anomalies that may appear in the accounts, somebody may have gone out of the Service or shifted to somewhere else where he may be unavailable when the Auditor-General tries to perform his functions under the Act.

We do not see the need for this legislation. I have not heard that the Permanent Secretaries have complained that....

Mr. SPEAKER: Can the honourable Member conclude in another seven minutes?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I can conclude my speech in seven seconds, Sir. We are not supporting this.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now gone past the hour of 2.00 p.m. This Sitting therefore stands suspended until 2.45 p.m. today.
2.04 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time.

Question No. 20 was asked by the honourable Member for St. James South who is not in his place, therefore, the question will be laid.

There being no further Questions, it is now Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no matter of Private Members' Business, therefore, we go to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken the House was debating a Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act Cap. 5. We may now proceed on that matter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to understand why the Government has actually brought this amendment to the Financial Administration and Audit Act. I do not see, first of all, why any High Commissioner would want to be an authorized representative, if he is not in fact a public officer. It seems to me, based on my knowledge and experience of this matter, that the High Commissioners themselves should be screaming at the Government, 'Please exclude us from this scheme.'

Ministers of Government are accountable to the people. Ministers are elected. In a few cases, they are selected, those in the Other Place, but even so, the Government as a whole is accountable, generally speaking, to the electorate, and in our system of Government — and I say, thank God for that — the Ministers are precluded from writing cheques in their respective Government departments. Even the Minister of Finance himself, at no time during the course of the Administration, although he is responsible for the disbursement, the safe keeping and the distribution of the total resources of the country by virtue of the office he holds, is he permitted, in this system to put his calligraphy on a piece of paper which says, 'Pay five dollars' or 'Pay five cents.' And I think that is how it should be.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member should be aware that the law states that money should be paid out of the Consolidated Fund only upon the warrant of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member is being a little facetious because that is what the law says. But the honourable Member knows — but then, of course, that Government has done some very strange things, and it may very well be that that particular Minister of

Finance has written a cheque. But I would make bold to say that, unless he has taken complete leave of his senses, that Minister has never written a cheque for the Government of Barbados, because Ministers, by virtue of the system which we have, are not permitted to dabble in the money. The basic reason why public officers, the accounting officers, are held to be the accounting officers is because the public officer is accountable to the Services Commissions. And no matter where he goes within the Service — and we have a clause in the Service — that public officer is amenable to the strictures under the constitution of the Services Commission.

Even if my colleagues on this side could have supported this Bill, I would have great difficulty supporting it. I believe that it violates in principle, a principle which has served this country well, in which the public officers in this country are the people who will take the responsibility for the actual expenditure of funds belonging to the people of the country. While the Minister might have the responsibility, public officers, by virtue partly of their protection under the Constitution, and precisely because of the Constitution, are the ones who actually expend the monies.

I do not think that we should ever pass legislation for a particular circumstance. The whole idea of having a Parliament and parliamentary control, and passing of legislation, is, as far as possible, to make the legislation amenable to all times, to make the legislation amenable to all circumstances. If a particular anomaly should arise, especially so far as it has to do with the expenditure of funds, then that particular anomaly should be settled within the administrative system, and we ought not to be tampering with legislation that has served us well.

I am very certain that I will not be able to vote for this piece of legislation. I am certain that I would have to vote against it, and I think we could go so far as to say that from the moment the Democratic Labour Party returns to office, this legislation, if it is passed in this Honourable House, will have to be rescinded, because it is a very dangerous piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in the history of our country, since Independence, we have had a number of situations in the various Missions overseas, and had not the system we have now been in place, more serious errors could have been made in the expenditure of public funds. Every cent that is collected in Barbados is collected from the people, and the people have a right to be aware of all that is going on, and they have a right to participate in the decision-making at the level where they have sent people to represent them, but they also have a right to be protected from persons who may be drawn into the system, through the whim, fancy or even the concentrated effort of their elected representatives. No ambassador or Head of Mission is usually selected by the people. I have

nothing to say at this time against any of the Heads of Missions anywhere in any of the overseas Missions, so what I say is not a stricture against any Head of Mission anywhere at this point. What I am saying is that, once we pass this legislation, it is open season, and any person, especially a person who is unfamiliar with the methods of spending Government money, will have the right under this law, if he is designated by the Permanent Secretary as the authorized officer, to spend the money as he sees fit.

2.55 p.m.

Let us look at some of the problems which may have led to this piece of legislation. Let us say that we have small Missions in the various places. We have a small Mission in Venezuela, and we have a small Mission, according to this legislation, in Toronto. I think most of the Missions have more than two persons. It seems to me that if you have a public officer and a Head of Mission, and the Head of Mission is a non-civil servant and the public officer in his Mission is not responding to his legitimate direction, it is a simple matter of communicating with his Head Office and having that matter corrected. No Head of Mission who is not a civil servant is accountable to anybody other than the Prime Minister of the country. He is appointed by the Prime Minister, under the Constitution, and he is removed from office by the Prime Minister. If he is not a civil servant, no one else has jurisdiction over him, including Ministers of Foreign Affairs in certain circumstances. I do not believe that I could be party to an amendment which would put expenditure of public funds into the hands of a person who is accountable only to one person, at the most two, both of whom are politicians, and he himself or she herself also likely to be a politician.

As I said, we are not only looking at the immediate situation. When we pass legislation it is for all times, and where you have no checks and balances, you are inviting all kinds of shenanigans.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act was a brilliant piece of legislation designed to put checks and balances on the expenditure of the public monies. As my colleague has said, over the last few years we have been noticing a diminution of the concept of public accountability in the expenditure of funds. I have made reference before to an unconstitutional expenditure of funds, collected through a levy, where a bank, Barbados National Bank, made a loan to a Ministry which seemed to be contrary to this Financial Administration and Audit Act, and which seems contrary to all that is proper in public administration. I recall when the Prime Minister himself, the Minister of Finance, indicated that he was unaware; he had no knowledge on the occasion when that information was revealed in this House. That was a large sum of money, and the circumstances under which that arrangement between the Barbados National Bank and the Ministry of Transport and Works was entered into, I have

subsequently discovered that, in fact, Cabinet was aware of it. I maintain that it was unconstitutional, according to the system we have, although the truth or falsity of that will only be tested if and when it gets to the court.

There has been a tendency to allow principle to give way to expediency. There has been a tendency to use the fact of anomaly, or some inconvenience to some persons somewhere, to get into the road in order for correct and proper disbursement of the people's money. We cannot allow persons who have no accountability to put their hands on the people's money. It may not be this Administration or it may not be the one that comes after it, but some Administration, using this piece of legislation, this subterfuge, will bring us on to the shores of destruction. It is these small incursions into propriety which will lead to the larger breakdown.

Mr. Speaker, with much reluctance I draw to your attention that on two occasions in New York during the last few years, monies have disappeared from the Mission. I am not going to seek to make an issue of it now, because the details have not been vouchsafed to me, but I am certain that, from a parliamentary point of view, those monies are accountable, and we will, in due course, be able to get the answers as to what happened to that money, and we may even get to discover why the information has not been vouchsafed to this Parliament through the legitimate Committee that is entitled to examine it. If that happens, even under the tight system that we have, you can imagine what is possible when we begin to loosen the system.

I do not think that I need to go around and around and over and over. I need only say that I am unable to support this piece of legislation, and I am very happy that my colleagues on this side are unable to support it, and we urge the Government to reconsider it. I urge the Prime Minister to go back to the draft which he said up until recently had the word "officer" as opposed to "person". I think that if he says an "officer," then by definition there are Heads of Missions who are civil servants — they fall within the protective clauses, if you will. I say that fully mindful of the fact that I was a Head of Mission in New York, but on that occasion I was also a civil servant and, therefore, I fell within the rules. As a matter of fact, it is significant that by virtue of having been a civil servant, I think it is fair to say that to this day the Barbados Government owes me a few dollars. I do not think they will ever pay me. I do not think that I will ever be able to make the case, precisely because I left the Civil Service, and am, therefore, in the words of the Bible, "No more worthy to be called one of the boys."

In the same way that Ministers will travel on behalf of the Government, and if they do not account in the proper way, at least during our time, then they will be out-of-pocket, so it should be with ambassadors and High

Commissioners who come into the system by virtue of their political arrangements or political associations. They too should suffer, if suffer is the word; they, too, should have the same difficulties which those who serve in here may have in perhaps more acute form. They cannot have their cake and eat it too. If they wish to have all of the powers and privileges of civil servants, let them become civil servants. Or, conversely, if they wish to be ambassadors and High Commissioners and Consuls General, let them suffer the minor inconveniences of having someone who is junior to them in office, and who by virtue of his post is amenable to the Regulations of the Civil Service, being responsible for the money.

3.05 p.m.

I can only say, as I began, that I am amazed there is any Head of Mission who would wish to have this power. I would have thought that most of them would wish to stay far away from having this responsibility as possible, and I would urge them that, in the face of the Government wishing to thrust it upon them, they should say, 'No, away with you. Let the civil servants handle it, I do not want anything to do with that.' There is nothing more treacherous than being responsible for the money when the time comes for reckoning.

I will say no more except that I am not able to support it and I will vote against it, Sir.

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to those who oppose the introduction of this measure which will place in the hands of Heads of Missions the authority over the accounts of Missions. I had the privilege, for a short period of time, of serving as a Head of Mission for Barbados abroad, and never on any occasion did I have the inclination, the wish or the desire to be an accounting officer of a Mission, and I feel that any Head of Mission who is a political officer should not want that responsibility.

It is not necessary for me to state at any length the position stated by my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) about the difference between the positions of political officers and those of public officers. Public officers have their responsibilities, and if they have that responsibility, then it is a responsibility which they must discharge. Political officers, I imagine by the experience and the very nature of the position which they hold, have not got the training in Civil Service accounting which public officers have. When you ask a person who is essentially a political officer to assume responsibility for the accounting of a Mission, a person who may have no experience or aptitude, for that matter, for the accounting of Public Service Departments, you are placing a very heavy responsibility on that officer, and I suggest that the Heads

of Missions who are political officers should shy away from this kind of responsibility being thrust upon them.

When legislation of this kind is contemplated, one may ask oneself the question, what is the mischief which it is desired to cure? What is the problem which has arisen which has necessitated legislation of this kind placing in the hands of Heads of Missions the responsibility to be accounting officers? Some reference was made to the fact that there was some problem with finances in a Mission in North America, and I heard an aside to the effect that that was the reason why the responsibility is now being put on the Heads of Missions. In my view, that is no justification for this departure. If you have a problem with accounting officers who are public servants, the problem is to deal with the accounting officers who are public servants at the level at which those kinds of problems are dealt with. If you have public officers who are inefficient or ineffective as accounting officers, the solution is not to make a political officer the accounting officer, but to ensure that you have a public officer in place in the Mission who is capable and who can effectively do the job which he is required to do.

To cut a long story short, I join with my colleagues on this side in saying that we cannot support a measure of this sort, which is designed to place in the hands of Heads of Missions, who are not public servants, the responsibility as accounting officers of Missions abroad.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Speaker, there is a philosophical difference between the Opposition and the Government in respect of public accounting on funds overseas. I have listened very carefully and there is a combination of misunderstanding of the issue and a lot of misplaced piety.

The Right Honourable Leader of the Opposition obviously misunderstood what this was intended to do. To use a recent American neo-logism, he misspoke himself. He got terribly confused over what this particular Bill is trying to do.

I want to give a brief background to this whole situation. In the Foreign Service of Barbados, there are Heads of Mission who are career people, civil servants, and there are Heads of Mission who are non-career people, people who are appointed by the Government as Heads of Mission for a contractual period. This is a situation that has obtained in the Service almost from its very inception. There were a number of people who were non-career people, non civil servants, who were appointed by the Democratic Labour Party when they were in Government, and there are a number of people who have been appointed by this Government since then.

There is nothing in the rules that requires the Director of Finance and Planning to appoint any

particular Permanent Secretary, but he appoints Permanent Secretaries as accounting officers of the Ministries or departments that fall under them. In the Foreign Service, the Permanent Secretary, as accounting officer, appoints an authorised representative for himself in the offices overseas. He is in Bridgetown, so he cannot oversee on a daily basis the accounting in Ottawa, or London, or Brussels, or Caracas or the like, so he appoints one of the members of staff at that Mission as his authorised representative.

The situation right up to the present is that the Permanent Secretary has been appointing a civil servant on the staff of the particular Mission, or Embassy as his authorised representative. In many cases, the Mission has a civil servant as the Head of Mission, and he appoints that civil servant to be his authorised representative. In some circumstances, the Head of Mission is not a civil servant. He is a non-career officer, and the practice has been to appoint someone junior to himself, who is a civil servant, as the authorised representative of the Permanent Secretary.

3.15 p.m.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King), who has just spoken, said that he had no wish or inclination when he was for a short time, the Head of a Mission, to be the accounting officer of his Mission. The fact is that whether he had a wish or the inclination to be the accounting officer, he could not be, because it is the Permanent Secretary who is the accounting officer, and we have never had any Head of Mission overseas as the accounting officer for the funds spent in his Ministry or Embassy.

I have found that the fact that Heads of Missions are not the authorised representatives for the expenditure of Government funds in the Missions, has, from time to time, caused some difficulty in the offices in which they work. I am not interested in giving power or responsibility to one officer over another to be the authorised representative. I am more concerned about the good running and management of the Government's offices overseas. I can listen to the honourable Members until the dust falls, I remain unconvinced that it is a desirable thing to have a junior officer as an authorised representative in the Mission overseas who can hold the Head of Mission to ransom. And we have examples of that!

Asides

Hon. L. R. TULL: The honourable Member says that the Head of Mission would have to be an idiot. I would have liked the honourable Member, when he was

serving briefly in Washington as Head of Mission, to have had a certain officer I had serving in North America recently as his authorised representative. You would know which God you were serving. He would run rings around you all day and night. He would frustrate every legitimate bit of business you had to do in respect of expenditure on essential things within the vote. And you would ask for his recall, because you believe that the taxpayers of Barbados have nothing better to do every time there is a complaint from a Head of Mission than to pick up vast sums of money to bring people from one part of the world to the other with motor cars, furniture, and their children, which costs tens of thousands of dollars on each occasion. We believe that that is not the answer to the question.

Asides

Hon. L. R. TULL: It may be useful to bring home the Head of Mission, as was done in respect of the honourable Member who is making all the noise now. Maybe that is the answer. You always pick on the junior man, not the Head of Mission.

The Right Honourable Member for St. John did not understand the difference between the accountability of the Permanent Secretary as accounting officer of his Ministry and the authorised representative overseas, and I have heard the honourable Member for St. Michael West raised questions of checks and balances. No cheque is signed in any of our offices overseas by the Head of Mission alone. Cheques must be also signed by a civil servant, so that is a check. All the talk you hear, the emotional nonsense about the Head of Mission spending the money as he pleases, and having a lot of defalcations, is beside the point, because all cheques signed in our Missions overseas also have to be signed by a public officer. That is an important check.

It is also important that I state that we have Government accountants in the offices overseas. When you hear that the Head of Mission is the authorised representative of the accounting officer, this does not mean that he sits down every day and writes cheques and goes through the accounts. He has overall responsibility; that is all. We have accountants in New York, in London, in Brussels and in Washington, civil servants, people who have come through the Civil Service, trained, experienced and skilled accountants who look after the accounts. Hearing the honourable Members on that side speak, you would believe that, as from the passing of this amendment to the Act, all the money, all the vouchers, all the bank books, all the day-to-day paying and receiving of money is going to be done by a Head of Mission, as if he has nothing else to do. There is an accountant in the office and accounting officers in the office, and the cheques that are drawn are usually signed by his public officers.

The Right Honourable Member for St. John, aided and abetted by the honourable Member for St. Michael West, made out that in the New York office in the past few years there have been certain infelicities, or irregularities, or defalcations, whatever you wish to call them. Our looking at the matter showed that there was outright theft, that public officers, not non-career people, not people who were appointed as Heads of Missions by the Prime Minister, but people appointed by the Public Service Commission and who have been working for some time as public officers, carry away the money. I do not know why the honourable Member for St. Michael West talks about not getting any answers. Answers to what? It never came before Parliament. You do not walk into Parliament and say you have an important ministerial statement to make, some clerk in the Accounts Department in New York carried away \$10 000 — no more than we do if somebody carried it away out of the Treasury, or from the Rates and Taxes Office. So to put them in the terms in which the honourable Member put them suggests somehow that something is being kept quiet. This is an open matter.

Asides

Hon. L. R. TULL: But he is a public officer who carries away the money, and the Head of Mission has no control over these people! They can carry away the money and the Head of Mission cannot even call them in and ask them about the money, because they say that the Head of Mission is not a civil servant — he is a political appointee, so-called.

Both of these parties in Government have, in their individual wisdom, appointed outstanding people of integrity in the community to head Missions overseas. You do not pick up anybody at all and make them an ambassador. It has to be somebody in whom you have a certain amount of trust and respect, and somebody who is generally acceptable to the people of Barbados. When you ask people like these to oversee the general administration of funds, not the day-to-day dealings, we are subjected to the kind of ill-informed comment coming from the honourable Members on the other side! I say that it is an unwarranted attack on the integrity of these high officials who serve this country well to make the kind of statements that I have heard from Members on the other side.

One would believe, on hearing them, that there are no sanctions. First of all, the amount of money that is released to each Mission overseas is done on a regular basis. In other words, you do not send all the money for a year over to the Mission overseas. We release money month by month according to the needs as they arise, so they do not deal with large sums of money. In addition to that, these officers are contract officers. They are subject to termination of their contracts at three

months' notice, and, indeed, the Government is in a better position to deal with contract officers, non-career Heads of Missions, than we are to deal with people who are civil servants.

3.25 p.m.

I remember some years ago, when I was in the Ministry of Education, that I called in a messenger at a quarter to three in the afternoon and asked him to deliver a letter to the Clerk of Parliament that he wanted to send off to Canada that very day. When I mentioned it to the messenger he was standing, and when I finished he sat down in the chair next to my desk, without my invitation, and he leaned across my desk and told me "Skipper, I went into town three times already today and the sun is hot, and I am not going back." That is what a messenger in the Public Service told me. When I spoke to the Permanent Secretary, he told me that we will make this complaint to the Public Service Commission, but I would have to sit down and write a long statement and sign it, and I may be summoned before some disciplinary body which was going to cross-examine me over the honesty or otherwise of my statement. That is what happens with public officers. In the case of the Head of Mission who is a political appointee and makes one *faux pas*, he gets notice the very day that we want him to pack his bags and come home. That is the difference. So I do not understand why honourable Members are beating this thing out of recognition.

One of the points raised in the debate is that the Head of Mission who is not a career civil servant may not have had the experience and the background in public accounts or public financing, or whatever is the term they use. This is the same position with a new Permanent Secretary. You appoint a new Permanent Secretary who is, in many cases, a man who has not had that kind of experience. To go further, a civil servant who is working in the Mission overseas and has from time to time been designated an authorised representative himself has never had any exposure to public accounting. I do not think there is anything in that particular argument.

The Right Honourable Member for St. John says that there are civil servants and they can go to gaol. Go to gaol what! Do you mean to tell me that if officers overseas interfere with the funds that the Permanent Secretary in Barbados can go to gaol for fiddling with the funds overseas? That puts an emotive content in an otherwise straightforward and simple matter. I do not really understand what it is, in all seriousness, that the honourable Members on the other side are opposing. It smacks of the inherent conservatism in the other side. They cannot accept anything that is new.

The argument is that, 'I, according to the honourable Member for St. Michael West, was a Head of Mission! He was not head of any Mission; he was Consul-General, and that is not really a Head of a Mission. He was head

of a Consulate 17 years ago or something like that, and he is saying, 'That happened when I was Consul-General 17 years ago, so nothing should change. It should remain the same until 1990 and the year 2000 and 2010.' The honourable Member for St. Michael West was more politician than any other official they have now. He was a politician if ever there was one, but he had control and general supervision of the accounts of his department, and gets up in here today and makes this kind of meretricious argument!

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Senior Assistant Secretary? You should not start me up, you know. I knocked around New York with you in those days, and I may say some things you would not want me to bring out now.

Every time the Opposition wants to impress people that something is real serious, they mention the Constitution. Everything nowadays is unconstitutional. That is the latest fad with the Opposition. To pass legislation to say we are going to give non-career Heads of Mission overall responsibility for the funds in the department is an attack on the Constitution. But the honourable Member for St. Michael West said that these things should be settled within the administrative system. In other words, what the honourable Member is saying is, break the Constitution within the administrative system.

Asides.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Now I am being charged with all sorts of things. The same honourable Member who says it is unconstitutional to have anybody other than

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member would give way on a point of elucidation.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Elucidation of what?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Of what I said. The honourable Member is saying that I said to appoint a person in the terms of this Bill would be unconstitutional. What I said, Sir, as you will recall, was that when the Barbados National Bank made a loan to the Ministry of Transport and Works, in my opinion that was unconstitutional. That is what I said. The honourable Member must not misrepresent what I said.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I do not like to be contentious, but the honourable Member said, to my certain recollection, that public officers should take responsibility for public funds under the Constitution, and that you should not go outside the Constitution to

give Heads of Missions this responsibility for public funds. If he did not say that, I am free and willing to withdraw what I said, but the Record will show that I am right, and he said that these things should be settled within the administrative system. In other words, do what you have to do, but do it within this system that he is talking about. I do not understand that kind of reasoning.

If the honourable member feels that I am misrepresenting him, he can get up and say so. I will give way forever, because I want the Record straight.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation: The honourable Member again is misrepresenting what I said. What I said was that if there is a problem between a Head of Mission and a public officer and that there is an anomaly, if you want to solve the anomaly, solve it within the administrative system. That is what I said and the Record will so show.

Hon. L. R. TULL: The honourable Member is saying that non-career Heads of Mission are not civil servants, they should be kept a mile away from public funds, as if there is no sanction if they fool around with Government funds. If they have any improprieties in respect of public funds, they are subject to the same sanctions of the criminal law of Barbados or, if there is no criminal intent, to the civil laws of Barbados. They are not exempt from those.

I will give the analogy of the para-statal organisations. Some of the biggest spenders of public funds in this country are the para-statal organisations, otherwise known as statutory boards. They are not civil servants either, yet they spend vast sums of money, but I have not heard anybody say that, because they are not civil servants, they should not have any dealings with public funds; that there are no sanctions, and if they carry away the money you would not know how to deal with them. I throw that out as an analogy to show the inherent weakness of the case being argued by the Opposition.

The question that the Bill be now read a second time, was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:

AYES: Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS Hon. L. S. CRAIG; Hon. L. R. TULL; Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER; Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM; Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW; Mr. O. S. ARTHUR; Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE; Hon. V. L. JOHNSON; Mr. J. G. ODLE and Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE – 11.

NOES: Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW; Mr. M. A. KING; Mr. B. M. TAITT; Mr. P. M. GREAVES; Mr. N. K. SIMMONS; Mr. L. A. WEEKES and Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN – 7.
3.25 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. L. R. TULL, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 2 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 3 was called.

Hon. L. R. TULL I beg to move, Sir, that Clause 3 do now stand part.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative the House dividing as follows:—

Ayes: Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Hon. L. R. TULL, Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE, Hon. V. L. JOHNSON and Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE — 9.

Noes: Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Mr. M. A. KING, Mr. B. M. TAITT, Mr. P. M. GREAVES, Mr. N. K. SIMMONS, Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN and Mr. L. A. WEEKES — 7.

On the motion of Hon. L. R. TULL, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. L. R. TULL, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I indicated earlier in this sitting that I may have a few matters to introduce. It is at this point, that I should like to introduce them. There are three Resolutions and one Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

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

Resolution to grant the sum of \$3 848 052 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1984–85, Part II — Capital as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1984–85, No. 40, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Resolution to amend the note to Subhead 2 — Grants and Subventions, Head 36 — Ministry of Health.

Resolution to grant the sum of \$5 000 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1984–85, Part I — Current as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1984–85, No. 41, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

A Bill to provide for the control of the sale of beverage containers, the payment of a deposit on beverage containers, a refund for the return of those containers and the final disposal of unused or unusable containers.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, a Bill to provide for the control of the sale of beverage containers, the payment of a deposit on beverage containers, a refund for the return of those containers and the final disposal of unused or unusable containers was read a first time.
3.45 p.m.

PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT ACT, 1985

Order No. 6 was called — To move the Second Reading of a Bill to consolidate and revise the laws relating to the keeping of places of public entertainment and relating to the imposition of taxes on entertainment to which the public is admitted on payment of money.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. We received our Order Papers on Saturday morning. We think that this Bill is of far-reaching implications to a lot of businesses and small people, and households, and I think that this Bill, which was supposed to have been published in the *Gazette* yesterday, has not been given sufficient time for the general public to be aware of its implications. I wonder if the Honourable Leader of the House would consider postponing the discussion on this Bill, since it does not come into effect, I think, until the 1st of April.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Section 10 is deemed to have come into operation on April 18, 1984, which is passed anyhow, and the rest of it comes into effect April 1985. I am merely asking for the general public. We have all read the Bill, even although we received it late, but I do not think that the general public is fully aware of the implications of the Bill. We certainly would like to investigate opinions on the Bill in our various constituencies before we discuss it.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Speaker, it is entirely up to the Leader of the House to determine whether we should agree to put off the debate on this Bill for a while, but I do have to make a point in relation to a point raised by the Right Honourable Member. This Bill rises out of the Budgetary Proposals of 1984, and the honourable Members on that side have been instrumental in working up a certain section in the community that there is something very wrong with coming to Parliament at too late a day with Bills relating to the Budgetary Proposals. When we came to Parliament for the amendment of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act, the members of the Opposition opposed it and voted against it, and incited a lot of people in Barbados against the Government by saying that there is something underhanded about having legislation arising out of the Budgetary Proposals coming up to twelve months late.

They cannot have it both ways, and this is my personal view. It is a hypocritical stance. The Democratic Labour Party introduced a Provisional Collection of Taxes Act to put off the period of time in which they can bring legislation arising out of the Budget. When this Government sought to extend that period by a further few months, they got up and opposed it and made a public issue about it. Now that we come before Parliament with legislation arising out of the 1984 Budgetary Proposals, they are crying for time, they are appealing for light. One week, even twenty-four hours late should not set well in the mouths of the honourable Members on the other side, not when they made such a big song and dance over the amendment we brought to the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act a few months ago.

It is interesting to hear the Right Honourable Member saying, 'We on this side have read it, but this is the sort of thing we should discuss with our constituents,' because that is one of the arguments that I used on this side when I introduced the Bill amending the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act. I said that you have a constituency out there to cater to, whether they are lawyers, accountants, or valuers, when you brought legislation arising out of Budgetary Proposals. I gave the example of the amendment to the Companies Act to accommodate certain Budgetary Proposals. I said that you cannot push us to bring the legislation within three months because we have to talk to the accountants, to the Registrar at the Supreme Court, to the Bar Association, to all the people who might have to make an input before we finally bring the legislation before Parliament. It was voted against by the Opposition. Today, they come in here using the same arguments, that they have read it but they have to have a talk with their constituents, before proceeding, because it affects small people and householders. This is just a case of the chickens coming home to roost.

As I said, it is entirely up to the Leader of the House to determine whether he will grant the postpone-

ment that the honourable Members on the other side are asking for.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member said that this Bill arose out of Budgetary Proposals. All that was said in the Budgetary Proposals was that the Entertainment Tax would be increased to 20 per cent, and amusement parks would have to pay \$5 000 a day. That is all. There was no \$100 000 fine anywhere. There was no discussion about applying to four different authorities.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is now discussing the very Bill that he is asking not to have discussed. I personally believe that this Bill should be postponed for one week. What I take grave objection to is that as Speaker of the House, the documents never came to me until Monday, but I read about them in the *Nation* on Sunday, I think it is time that we know how the papers of the House are being distributed, and I would draw to the Leader's attention this very aspect of this set of papers for this sitting.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I am very interested to hear you say that, but I hope that is not interpreted to mean by anybody that the Government has been delinquent in getting these papers out. I saw my papers on Monday morning on the floor of Marine House. I want to make it absolutely clear that the Government has not defaulted in any way in doing its work. If you, Mr. Speaker, feel to express your experience, I think you better look in-house. Take a careful look in-house, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am dealing with the in-house situation, and I hope that when it comes before the Debates Committee, the Debates Committee will look at exactly what has happened.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I just wish to say in relation to what the Attorney General has said.....

Certain remarks made by the honourable Member for St. Michael West at this stage were ordered to be expunged from the Record by the Speaker.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What I want to say is that the Attorney General, in speaking to a question raised by the Right Honourable Member for St. John, about a particular piece of legislation which was received on a particular day to be debated two days' hence, draws upon another issue which had to do with the imposition of legislation without any chance for Parliament to speak on it over a period of a year, and sought to link the question raised by the honourable Member with arguments that had been put then. Mr. Speaker, the two things are mutually exclusive to persons like yourself and me — objective persons would find those two things mutually exclusive — and I am surprised that the Attorney General would seek to link them together, and if

there were any unsuspecting Members on this side who did not have their thinking caps on, they would really believe that we had somehow suggested in our arguments in the past that bringing legislation late — which is what the honourable Member raised — is similar to this. I am disappointed in the honourable Member, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will now hear the Leader of the House.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I have listened to both honourable gentlemen. The youngsters would say they are talking "bare boo". I think the salient point was made by my colleague. Nothing, with great respect to you, has influenced me to change my decision, neither Members on the other side, because the Attorney General in his very short address made it abundantly clear that you cannot have it both ways.

A song and dance was made in here about how we took one year to bring down something, and about the Constitution. The Member for St. Michael South Central wanted to pull out the roof, everything was retroactive, we did everything wrong. Now today we bring it down early, they need enough time to study it. You have not got to push any more. I am going to have it postponed and do it next Tuesday. This is how I operate with you, because I am quite sure you will still argue the same nonsense that you have argued all the time in relation to this. As a matter of fact, I will even go further. I am going to have a word with the Minister of Information and Culture, hopefully that he would make television and radio available to the Opposition once a night, at least for one hour. I want them to get all the exposure that is necessary in this country.

Aside.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You challenge what? You are not even in this, you are like some clown. You cannot fool him, he was around too long. He is not with you. I have told you that privately, and I will tell you on the floor of the House — he is not with you. He went to school with a Great Dane and not you. That is the answer to it.

Sir, I withdraw Order No. 6.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: At this point I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for 15 minutes for a short tea break.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 4.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without

division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.
4.00 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

THE INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1985

Order No. 7 was called — To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Income Tax Act.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to amend the Income Tax Act to give effect to the last Budgetary Proposals, and the opportunity is also being taken to make certain amendments relating to the higher levels of National Insurance benefits, on which statements of policy may have been made from time to time, as these measures were inadvertently omitted from previous amendments.

I believe that it is as true in 1985 as it was in 1920, when Income Tax was first introduced into this country, that Income Tax is a very complex subject, and I do not want to repeat what I said in the Budget. Equally, I do not want to anticipate what may be said in Committee, so I would draw the attention of honourable Members to the Budgetary Proposals, and to a large extent I will reserve comments on the individual clauses of the Bill for the Committee stage when it comes up.

The Budget, of course, was passed by the House, as far as I recall virtually passed without division. Maybe the amendment was divided on, but the ultimate budgetary Resolution, as I recall it, was passed unamended, so I take it the House has approved the principles which are set out in the Bill.

To draw attention very briefly to some of the clauses, Clause 2 seeks to amend Section 8 of the Income Tax Act to widen the spread of assessable income. It is being widened to capture items such as royalties and the higher levels of National Insurance benefits other than cash grants or disablement benefits.

Clause 3 amends Section 9 of the principal Act to raise the limit of exemption of interest earned on savings deposits in the Barbados National Bank. Also, the amount of income from national development housing bonds and savings bonds is being raised to \$50 000 from \$25 000.

Clause 4 amends Section 19 to give assistance to co-operative societies and indeed to political parties.

Clauses 5, 6 and 7 relate to the initial allowance of the capital cost of converting a building to provide units for rental.

Clauses 8 and 9 deal with matters that were not specifically raised in the Budget, miscellaneous rules and the calculation of assessable income — royalties relating to the use of intangible property in Barbados, and also income in respect of personal services rendered in Barbados by a non-resident. This is the consultants' clause. Difficulties have arisen in respect of that. People come down here, they ostensibly do not work for money here and they are not resident here, and they seek to escape taxation altogether.

Clauses 10 and 11 deal with insurance companies. There is a new formula for taxing insurance companies. We have had to give some relief in respect of this.

Clauses 12 to 18 make a number of changes as announced in the Budget. Life insurance premiums, settlements to individuals, various matters such as those for people's education abroad, and the allowances for people over the age of 65, all of these need to have changes made. There are also changes in the premium taxes. These are all individual items that I think it would be otiose to go over at second reading stage.

Clause 27 deals with the Shipping Incentives Act. This, so far as I recall, was not in the Budget, but this is needed by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue in order to deal with his right to inspect the books of approved shipping companies. It is just making legislation conform with other legislation relating to offshore companies.
4.25 p.m.

In all the circumstances, and bearing in mind the relative complexity of some of the points which may be raised, I would prefer to deal with this matter *seriatim*, as honourable Members may permit me.

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

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

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

On motion of Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1-8 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 9 was called.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, would you please recommit clause 8?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, please recommit Clause 8.

The question that Clause 8 be recommitted was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): I wonder if the Prime Minister can explain in a little more detail Clause 8(2)(ii).

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It says "Section 16(2) of the principal Act is repealed and the following is substituted:(ii) amounts received from an office in Barbados or from employment exercised therein under a contract of employment whether made within or outside Barbados."

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It seems to me that there is some difficulty. If a contract is made outside of Barbados, let us say, a person is not normally resident in Barbados, as I understand this amendment, some persons who are not normally resident in Barbados will be captured in the Income Tax net. That is my understanding of the punitive effects of this amendment.

A person has a contract outside of Barbados which requires some activity in Barbados but which is only nominal work; the contract terms call for payment outside of Barbados and there is no remuneration passing to the person in Barbados while the person is in Barbados; then he comes down for a period of time working on the contract, his expenses are being met, the contract was made outside of Barbados, the payments are being made outside of Barbados — how does the Prime Minister propose to have the Commissioner of Income Tax in Barbados collect the tax from that person? There is no withholding, there is no payment in Barbados. I do not see how you would be able to capture that income with this clause. I wonder if the Prime Minister can explain?

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The honourable Member has put his finger on the difficulty, but the fact that it is a difficulty does not mean that we should not try to legislate in cases where there might not be too much in the way of difficulty.

The essence is that from time to time, consultancies and other professional services are rendered in Barbados by persons from abroad. Sometimes the money is paid abroad. Indeed, some of it is received in Barbados. Sometimes it has a foreign source, and the greatest difficulty is

where a foreigner pays a foreigner to do work in Barbados. It may well be that even these words will not catch all such, because it may be that somebody may perform services relating to Barbados and hardly ever come to Barbados, and it cannot be imagined that our legislation is going to be held by any foreign court or tax legislation to have extra territorial application.

What you do get is a local firm of accountants bringing in an accountant from outside to do consultancy. The money that that local firm pays perhaps to the foreign firm, or to another firm which then pays the consultant concerned, is sought to be allowed as an expense against the local company's earnings, and, therefore, we find ourselves giving a local company an allowance for taxation where the person who is the beneficiary of the expenditure escapes. This is probably the area where the greatest use of this section will turn out to be.

It is only fair to say that there has been, as far as I recall, litigation about this, and this is a particular loophole that is being sought to be closed. Sometimes the loopholes are really quite blatant. People come down here and they work and they say they get no income in Barbados for doing the work. We have closed the loopholes in immigration because we say that a man has to have a work permit, whether or not he gets paid for doing the work that he does in Barbados. Voluntary work is work for the purpose of the Immigration Act, but that is a bludgeon that is not easy for the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to use. He needs specific words, and these are the specific words.

No doubt just as some Barbadians are able to earn money abroad, perhaps on the rental of a house abroad, that the Commissioner of Inland Revenue does not know anything about, or a deposit abroad, on which they receive interest and the Commissioner of Inland Revenue does not know anything about it — all of these areas are areas that are difficult to cover. I know, for example, that if you put money on fixed deposits in Britain, a bank will give you a form to sign, and once you state you are a non-resident, you can forbid the bank to give information to the Inland Revenue of any country. People think it is only in the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands that you have that. It is, to my knowledge, that in London you can forbid banks to give any information, not only to the British Commissioner of Inland Revenue, but to any Commissioner of Inland Revenue, and the banks positively encourage them to do it.

All of these make life difficult for the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, but it does not mean that he should not have the power to collect in all these circumstances. I hope that that answers the honourable Member's queries.

I beg to move that Clause 8 stand part.

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

4.35 p.m.

Clauses 9 to 16 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 17 was called.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to move that Clause 17 stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On Clause 17, I want to raise a technical point with the Attorney General more than the Minister of Finance. Section 17(v)(ii) reads:

"Where the child has attained the age of 16 years but had not attained the age of 25 years....."

I think you want to re-write that. It is theoretically impossible for a child to attain the age of 25. I understand the import of the legislation, but I really do not think, apart from one or two distinguished Members of the Barbados Labour Party, that you can say where a child has reached the age of 16. I think you mean a person. You had better say "person".

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 17, with the amendment mentioned by the honourable Member, "person" in respect of the first part of (ii), stand part. In other words "child" remains in the part at the bottom which says "child for".

I beg to move that Clause 17 as amended stand part.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before you put the Clause, can I just see where the Act makes reference to person as an individual.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to move that section 17, as amended, read "person" in the first line of (ii) stand part.

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

Clause 17 was passed.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 17 be recommitted.

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 17 be postponed for further consideration.

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

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

Clauses 18 to 21 inclusive were called and passed.
4.45 p.m.

Clauses 21 to 24 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 25, as amended, was called and passed.

The new Clauses 26 to 27 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 28 was called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, we had postponed Clause 17, and I propose to move that Clause 17 do now stand part.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendments and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (PART-TIME OFFICERS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1985

Order No. 2 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Civil Establishment (Part-time Officers) (Amendment) Order, 1985.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): This is merely another instalment in salaries revision relating to certain medical officers who are part-time officers. I think these doctors may includes those who, in the fullness of time, will be phased out under the National Health Service. In the interim, they should have a raise in pay.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1985

Order No. 3 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) Order, 1985.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): The same arguments apply to this Order as apply to the previous one, Sir.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to second, Sir.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, earlier in the day, I gave notice of three Resolutions, which my colleagues on the other side have agreed to do this evening.

I beg to move, Sir, that with the leave of the House, we do these Resolutions now, the three Resolutions which came down on a supplementary notice paper.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections, the honourable Member can proceed on these Resolutions.

Order No. 8 was called – To move that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the services 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 1984–85, No. 40 – \$3 848 052

Head 73 – Ministry of Finance and Planning – was called and passed.

Head 76 – Ministry of Education – was called.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Sir, that Head 76 do now stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, with regard to Subhead 7, Westbury, I find that it is absolutely necessary that I draw to the attention of the Minister, and indeed to the attention of this Honourable House, that in the process of the implementation of this project, there has been a deplorable situation which has

occurred in that compound at Westbury School, which you will recall was at first the subject of a question which I brought to this Honourable House. It appears that the arrangements made during the construction for re-development of the Westbury School was, to say the least, far short of the standards which honourable Members in this House would expect, especially bearing in mind that it is a school for infants. For some considerable time — some say seven weeks, some say five weeks — I really cannot tell you with exactitude how many weeks — the little children that now go to what is called the Westbury Infants School have had to endure without the benefit of water toilets, and they had a situation where, I believe, according to what the parents have told me, twelve toilets for those little children were without water all during the time when the question of the gastroenteritis was raging in Barbados, and it is now to my certain knowledge that at least one of the teachers at that school contracted gastroenteritis and had to be treated for it.

They tell me that that disease is passed on through droplets, but they say they cannot rule out that it is contracted initially through the faeces, insanitary conditions, and the failure to maintain personal hygiene habits. When you are dealing with little children and you have water toilets which are incapable of being flushed for two or three days, that is a problem. When it goes on for one week, two weeks or three weeks, that is a disgrace. I draw it to the attention of this Honourable House, if for no other reason than to invite the Minister to ensure that in the future, if we have any projects which must be started during the school term while the children are at school, elaborate steps are taken to ensure that this kind of condition and situation which could lead to epidemic does not occur.

I go further. The honourable Member and Minister of Education is the parliamentary representative for the constituency in which this school exists — it is right next door to my constituency — and therefore I make the presumption that a number of the children that go to that school come from the honourable Member's constituency, and I say, as a matter of fact, that a substantial number come from my constituency. I feel that it is contemptuous of those people, of the parents and of the children, to allow that kind of situation to exist for as long as it did. And what is more, there was a callous attitude in the Ministry of Education, from what I can gather, when the matter was reported by parents. They wanted to know if the children, as I understand it, could not make out. For five weeks, Sir? Little children? And having people going out and catching a bucket of water and coming to flush twelve toilets all day long in a school with 400 little children? I think it is disgraceful.

I do not wish to belabour the point, but I feel that since this matter has arisen on the floor of this House, it is my duty to draw it to the attention of this House,

and to hope that we will not see that kind of situation occurring in Barbados again. I do not desire, unless the Minister wishes more information, to go any further on it.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (City of Bridgetown): Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) has indeed made his point and should sit down. His point is full of hearsay, and that is what comes in here — rumour!

The whole problem with the honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party is that they did nothing about schools in 15 years. Ten schools are in the first World Bank project, another ten are being planned in the second World Bank project. All of the other schools before the Westbury have had to put up with the inconvenience of having an expansion or a new wing built. When it was happening out in the Alleyne in St. Andrew, and in St. Joseph and in St. George, you did not hear a thing. But the honourable Member has been trying to make mischief at the Westbury School.

He came in here and asked a Parliamentary Question and it was proved that the allegations he made were groundless, but he comes in here with them again. Over a long weekend, Saturday and Sunday, and we closed the Westbury School for two days in the week, Monday and Tuesday, this change-over in the sewerage system could be effected. But we are going to hear a long, sad story in here about buckets of water. He has nothing else to come in here and say. Now he has gone in the toilet! There is absolutely no truth in it.

He is now an expert on gastroenteritis, and we are going to hear that he knows for a fact that a teacher caught gastroenteritis out of the toilet situation at Westbury School. It is really disgusting. It is really just too disgusting that that is the level at which we are debating in here!

You just let me tell you that I am fully aware that the Westbury Infants School is in my constituency and that it is next door to yours. And let me tell you further that the parents of the children are overjoyed that their children are at least going to have civilized and proper conditions under which they will learn from day to day. At long last, they are going to have proper toilets, and a suitable number of toilets. They are going to have a building where the roof does not cave in on the teachers as they teach. They are going to have hard courts and a proper playing area. They are going to be barricaded from a dangerous and busy main thoroughfare, and will not any longer have to gain entry to the school from that thoroughfare. Children and parents and teachers alike are glad for it, and are prepared to put up with minor inconvenience.

We have done everything in our power to minimize the inconvenience at that school. Westbury is not the only school where construction work is going on under the World Bank Project, during term time; almost every school has had to endure that. We try to plan it so that the bulk of the work takes place during the vacation, but such extensive work has gone on at Westbury that it was not possible to do that, and when it was put to the staff there, they were prepared to put up with it because they wanted the improvement. That is what you need to talk about. You need to get up and tell your constituents that they should be glad and grateful, and so should you, for the improved conditions they are going to enjoy at the Westbury School. Every precaution was taken, and it was put in the Press that the school would be closed for two school days following onto a weekend, so that they would have four days to do what had to be done. The old toilets had to be demolished for a new building to be built in their place.

All that has passed now, but all of a sudden now it is going to be raised in here as a major issue! It is, in fact, a non-issue, and the people are very glad that they are getting a new addition to the school and new and decent sanitary conditions that they never enjoyed under the Democratic Labour Party Government.
5.05 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am disappointed that the honourable Member for the City can find nothing else to say in the circumstances than to hark back to what the Democratic Labour Party did or did not do. I am disappointed, and she gets up in here in what can only be described as arrogance, and talks about it was at other schools.

The question is not whether there was inconvenience, and I say that I am speaking the truth, and if she says there is no truth in it, then she does not know. She did not know. It went on for over five weeks. Are you telling me that five weeks with little children without a toilet is not an issue? It is an issue for me. It is an issue in my constituency, if not in yours.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You can talk until you turn blue. If the children do not have a toilet, that is an issue for me.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You have some nerve!

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. This display, for the benefit of the Press box and the Gallery, is nothing new coming from the honourable Member for

St. Michael West. It is untrue that the children at the Westbury School.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I say you are.....

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am on my feet making a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! Order, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is absolutely untrue.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If the Rules of the House permitted, I would certainly invite the Committee down to Westbury School this afternoon.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: And then we would all see what the truth is. All of that he is talking about is in the past tense. It is absolutely untrue that the children of the Westbury Infants Schools were without toilets for five weeks. That is absolutely untrue!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Then everybody whose child goes there tells lies every day. The only person who is telling the truth is the Minister. I invite the Minister to go down and ask the people, go and ask the teachers.

This honourable lady has a way of determined.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us get off this matter. We will now switch to a discussion of truth, veracity of argument. Do not let us get involved in that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Your point is well taken, Sir, but she said it is not true and she says my display is for the Press. I really do not care if the Press writes it or not. I am saying to her as Minister of Education that she has a responsibility.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The point is made.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Let me finish, Mr. Chairman, I will soon be finished.

She has a responsibility as a representative, she has a responsibility to me as a Minister, but if I come into this House, or any other honourable Member comes into this House, and draws to her attention information which we know to be true, she gets up and says it is not true and talks about the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Chairman, let me tell you something. She says that I have gone into the toilet. That is what they sent me in here to do. If representing them requires me to go into the toilet, I will join her in the toilet any time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This is Westbury.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is Westbury, because it was filthy for five weeks. Let her go and find out. I will stake my reputation on it.

(A VOICE: You do not have any).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You would know who has reputation and who does not have. The honourable Members over there are experts at reputation, and when the honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) says I do not have any reputation, he would know. He is bound to know. He has reputation though, Sir. That honourable Member has a fantastic reputation, for which I salute him.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not see any reputations on this paper. The paper is a bit too hard. Get the softer paper.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Precisely! We were going on very well.

I really think that the Honourable Minister should show a little humility. It would help. A little humility is all anybody ever asks of her from time to time; every now and again a little humility in the exercise of her job. If she did not have the information, if she does not know what happened, I will accept that. I asked her a question before she came in here with a circular answer, and now she is standing up telling me that I am always bringing news in here. That is my job. Facts, that is what they were.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I repeat it is not a fact that 400 children at the Infant Westbury School were without toilets for five weeks, not in my constituency. Good God, there was an outbreak of cholera in this country! Do you not have any common sense? Do you expect anybody to believe that nonsense? You will not stop tear-mongering and terrorising people.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When I said they had gastroenteritis, you came in here and told me.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Chairman, these matters really do raise questions of what honourable Members should say or should not say in the House. I was always made to understand that the rules of privilege, which protect us from actions for defamation in here, carried with them certain responsibilities, and those responsibilities are to be careful about what you say.

You cannot ask a question unless you are prepared to substantiate to His Honour the Speaker any facts you recite in the question. We have had the recent example

where an honourable Member made an allegation about a cocaine factory at Sandy Lane. Not only was he unable to substantiate it in here, but unless I am mistaken, he has written a letter to the newspaper, which is very nearly in breach of privilege, because he has repeated what he said in the newspaper and suggested, in that he said that the police know it well and they used to report it daily to the Deputy Prime Minister, and he has not quoted the remainder of the debate.....

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

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:.....which made it clear that he is outstandingly untruthful.

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

Rt. Hon. J.M.G.M. ADAMS: And now the same thing is coming up again.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order: I draw to Your Honour's attention, for what it is worth, that we are discussing Head 76, which is to deal with Westbury, and if the honourable Member wishes to discuss another matter, he should do it under substantive Resolution. If not, I would have to be given the privilege of responding to what he says.

He is getting up and saying that I lied, which is not true. That is what he just said by inference. I will not allow him or anybody else to do that. He wants now to have what I said in a newspaper in a letter refuted by what he says in the House of Assembly.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Point taken.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I will not proceed with that any more. It was already refuted by the Commissioner of Police, the Deputy Prime Minister and the whole House, so I will not go into it any more. But how can we have somebody come in here and shout at a Minister and say 400 children were without a toilet for five weeks, and go on and on and repeat it? You see, I am not criticising the Press. The Press in Barbados is, in fact, very respectful. The Press normally would hesitate to publish these words: "Mr. Branford Taitt is a liar." I am not referring to anybody in the House, obviously.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Just as they would hardly say, "Mr. Tom Adams is a bigger liar." They would hardly say that.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: They are hesitant about saying these things, and therefore when things are said, they are published in the Press as if they were worthy of belief.

One newspaper is currently charged before the Press Council with repeating things said by the honourable

Member for Christ Church West Central as if they were true. We really must have some discipline, I submit, in here — I mean Maurice King, yes — in respect of allegations that we make.

I personally believe that, if the Minister of Education looks at the attendance record of the Westbury Junior School, she will probably find that it is affected by what the honourable Member has said, that people whose children have made no complaint will still want to keep home the children because they believe what the honourable Member has said.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member, by inference, is suggesting that I have lied to the House. The honourable Member must know that the union representing the teachers had eventually to get involved in the issue. I do not like what he is doing. Let them go and ask the people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order. Westbury.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: If somebody is wrong and strong, what can you do, Sir? I begged the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and he has not uttered any more untruths or tendentious statements since the drug debate. I told him he was letting himself down. I will tell the honourable Member for St. Michael West he is letting himself down, too. Leave it to the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. You have a lot of people behind you — that is what I say to him. Do not spoil it by trying to get into somebody else's hat. Play your own game.
5.15 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The honourable Member has sat down. I just want to say finally that the Prime Minister is not in a position to tell me how to play my game in my constituency. I had a branch meeting on Sunday.....

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Wait, you are saying.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am talking about West Terrace.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is the honourable Member saying that he had a branch meeting?.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The parents came and said to me.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, on both sides of the House.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Put that on the platform).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do you think because you say, "Put that on the platform," that that would influence the Press not to write it? It is a simple matter. The nation knew it for a long time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member — please. Order, please.

The question that Head 76 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984-85 — No. 41

HEAD 36 — MINISTRY OF HEALTH \$5 000

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Head 36 stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): I would merely say under Head 36 that on the last occasion when I sought to discuss this in this House at a rational level, when I asked questions of the Ministers concerning gastroenteritis, the honourable Member for the City said I was trying to terrorize the community, and all I had said was that there were 29 cases one day. The very next day the Minister responsible for Health came out and said that there had been 631 cases in the month of January, and there were over 400 cases the month before. You see, it is sometimes very necessary in what the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams) calls "playing the game", to speak certain statements in the House, because that is the only place you can speak them.

I am very glad to see that the Ministry of Health is now taking the proper precautions. They have informed the country on the possibilities. They have helped the country not to be alarmed at the outbreak, and I see now that they are putting bits and pieces of information to assist the country to prevent further outbreaks of gastroenteritis.

I do not know that if anyone can believe that if I or any honourable Member live in Barbados, we can have any delight in coming to the House to raise questions about an epidemic. No one, except the Minister of Health, knows who is going to get it and who is not going to get it! No one, except the Minister of Health, knows who is going to die from it, or who is not going to die from it!

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, he certainly pronounced upon it. If he does not know it, it would not be the first thing that he did not know that he pronounced upon.

But he has pronounced upon it with a certain degree of knowledge, aplomb, and, in the words of the Prime Minister "complete ignorance".

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You did not say that he was completely ignorant. I beg your pardon — just grossly ignorant!

(Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Did I say so?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know, but I know you have said it about other persons.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make the point that there is another very serious disease which, up until recently, has been out of Barbados. I am told from a very reliable source that we now have had some semblance for our first case. I am not going to name the disease for fear that I be accused of terrorizing the community.

(Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: Do you have the disease?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If I had the disease you would know.

Mr. Chairman, why she does not leave me alone?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is that I am inviting the Government to have an open Government. I am inviting the Ministry of Health to take the population into its confidence about these diseases, especially these diseases which cause the population to panic. It is better to tell the population the truth than for them to discover bits and pieces by getting slip-pages of information.

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Why do you not say what the disease is?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: My colleague, the Shadow Minister of Health, will deal with that. I cannot bother with you all.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES (St. Michael North West): Mr. Chairman, I, like my colleague, do not want to be an alarmist, but diseases that spread very rapidly sometimes need to be seriously looked at. At the present moment worldwide, there is a disease which has caused much unpleasantness, and certainly the scientists and the medical researchers are finding difficulty in controlling it. I need not refrain myself from saying the truth. It is a very serious disease, and we do not have to wait until it is here.

The point is that we are part of a wider community, particularly with tourism, and moreso as we have visiting warships and some of these personnel would from time to time give blood. They become blood donors, and we are aware of the fact that blood transfusion has been mentioned as one of the dangerous means through which AIDS can be transmitted. I am only making the Ministry aware that we ought not to wait until something has reached proportions and I would even go further and say that it is alleged that there are some cases in Trinidad. Trinidad is only about 200 miles away from Barbados, and we have this frequent intermingling of people. Even at the Garrison this week we are going to have a number of Trinidad personnel.

I am not trying to alarm anybody, but certainly I feel that we should take the cue in trying to follow-up modern research and make sure that particularly blood donors are properly screened; and whatever technical advice or assistance we can get, we ought to do it immediately. This disease is not an isolated disease based on a colour or race. It is a sort of universal disease; and the Ministry of Health, just as I suggested to them in a Press Release, ought to implement hygiene awareness during the gastroenteritis programme. I have noticed that recently we have had the T.V. programmes and we have everybody trying to do their best to control it. We may not eliminate it, but certainly we can control it, and I am suggesting that since this disease is a well-known disease and it has been affecting a number of people, the Ministry of Health should use every bit of information it can get in order to assist in at least, to some extent, preventing untold harm to the people in Barbados.
5.25 p.m.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Chairman, I did not want to say anything on this debate. I heard the profound manner in which the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) talked about some new disease that is coming into Barbados, and how he would mention it. But when he looked back, he saw the Shadow Minister, who is a person who speaks with restraint, is always very sure about what he is saying and does it in a very nice manner. I must say that for him. I do not find him to be fighting to get something over in any smart way.

I really was looking forward to an expose of something that was grave and was going to cause us, as of now, to run and take shelter from this awful catastrophe that is going to overtake the country. I do not know why the honourable Member for St. Michael West likes to indulge in this alarmist attitude. It is either drugs, gastroenteritis or something else that he cannot name. We must now desist from this type of approach.

We all know that AIDS is about. We all know that Barbados is a tourist centre; we all know that there are

people in this country who do a trade which seems to be part of the tourist business here, in which people come from abroad and have certain indulgences. And there are men whom I see around with the foreign people moving about very freely. One expects that in such situations you can get diseases being transferred.

I remember that when I was in the Ministry of Health some time ago, I discussed with the doctors the possibility of making certain diseases not necessarily notifiable, but having a doctor register the cases, for example, cases of gonorrhea and things like that, for the protection of the total community. It was not a question of actually betraying the patient/doctor relationship. We did not want the doctor to use names. The Honourable Member for the City, before me and since my time, has mentioned this on the floor of the House, that she thought the time had come when we should know the numbers and the doctors should provide this information so that we would have an idea as to what was developing within the country

Each and every one of us owes it to ourselves. We are not insulated from any problems, or any disaster or any disease which would affect the community. Therefore, if we know something, let us come and say it. Do not get in here and say we know something which is going to happen and then hide the information.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, if the honourable Member would give way; I never said I know something which would happen. But since the honourable Member wants me to raise the question, can the honourable Member state, or can his Government now state for us categorically, that there is no case of AIDS in Barbados? Would he now state that for us? Let us know what the position is. Is there or is there not a case of AIDS in Barbados?

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I am not aware and I have not seen them in the notifiable diseases, and to me it would be notifiable. The honourable Member who sits behind me, and who is the spokesman for health has not got up here in the alarmist way like the honourable Member for St. Michael West to say that there are cases like that. That is your practice. You cannot help doing it. You will do it every time. You are not doing yourself any good, or the country any good, in the way in which you get up. I will not be sitting down.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did well to let the country know about gastroenteritis. That is how they knew about gastroenteritis.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member must take his seat. Order, please!

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: You were hiding it.)

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Tell me where it came from. The doctors themselves were not aware of what was even happening. You are an alarmist about drugs, you are an alarmist about epidemics and everything else you can think about, but I want to tell you that this type of approach to fool people and create confusion in the society will do no good for you. In the end, you and people like yourself will be exposed for what you really are and the public will not want to hear you. That is the point I want to make.

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

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE EXPLANATORY NOTE TO SUBHEAD 2 – GRANTS AND SUBVENTIONS OF HEAD 36 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Order 1 (c) was called – To move the passing of a Resolution that the Explanatory Note to Subhead 2 – Grants and Subventions of Head 36 – Ministry of Health, be amended by including the words "Barbados Red Cross Society 5,000" after the words "Barbados Registered Nurses Association."

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

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

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

On motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of three Resolutions in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On 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.

THE ADJOURNMENT

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

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, March 12, 1985, at 12 o'clock noon.

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

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

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