
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 22, 1986.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Speaker)
His Honour R. E. Brathwaite, (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Information, Telecommunications and Leader of the House)
Hon. H. B. St. John, Q.C., LL.B., (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning)
Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, (Minister of Education and Culture)
Hon. L. B. Brathwaite, (Minister of Housing and Lands)
J. G. Odle, Esq., B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. V. L. Johnson, M.A., (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. L. R. Tull, Q.C., M.A., (Minister of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs)
Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour and Community Development)
L. L. Sisnett, Esq., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office) (International Transport)
Hon. A. Truss, (Minister of Tourism and the Environment)
O. S. Arthur, Esq., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)
Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, Q.C., LL.M., (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

Prayers were led by Rev. Ivan Harewood.

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

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, April 15, 1986.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, April 15, 1986, be taken as read.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: Last Tuesday I promised that I would carry out an investigation into the facts surrounding a document which was used by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central during the reply to the Budgetary Proposals. I am in the process of completing that investigation, and I hope to so deliver my findings probably in another hour from now. There are certain matters which have just come to hand which I need to look at carefully before making a statement in connection with the matter.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay: the Annual Report of the Public Utilities Board for the year 1985.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

Resolution to approve the regrading of salaries and terms and conditions of staff of Parliament.

Sir, this Resolution deals with the members of the staff of Parliament and their salaries. I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, through your very good offices, and if the House

so accepts, that this Resolution can be dealt with in all its stages today.

Mr. N. K. SIMMONS and the Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM entered the Chamber and took their seats.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, if the Clerk would assist here, Sir, I should have given notice of a Bill under Government Notices, because.....

Mr. SPEAKER: There is always provision for a Minister of the Crown to give notice at any time during the proceedings.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I propose to give notice of a Bill at this point in time. I only draw it to Your Honour's attention because the Clerk had called "First Readings of Bills".

I beg to give notice of the following:

A Bill to provide for the custody and preservation of public archives, public records and other documents.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to provide for the custody and preservation of public archives, public records and other documents, be read a first time.

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Government Business be the instant order of the day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the instant order of the day.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (PART-TIME OFFICERS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1986

Order No. 1 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Civil Establishment (Part-Time Officers) (Amendment) Order, 1986.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Mr. Speaker, this is a simple Resolution asking for the approval by this Honourable House to an amendment to the Civil Establishment Order to continue the process of elevating to permanent posts a number of posts in the Public Service, which posts have been in existence for some time, and upon evaluation have been determined to be posts of such a nature that they should be made permanent.

There are probably two more Orders to come to complete the exercise. I had hoped that we would have been able to have all of the posts in this Order today, but it is not possible.

The Addendum sets out very clearly the various departments and the types of posts. I think they speak for themselves.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) ORDER, 1986

Order No. 2 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) (No. 4) Order, 1986.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Mr. Speaker, this Order deals with the establishment of an additional 115 posts and they include posts in Establishments, and I will comment a little bit on these posts.

As promised, Sir, the Government is undertaking a review of all of the General Orders and Regulations governing posts and employment in the service of the Crown, whether permanent, casual or otherwise. I have found that there is no single document that one can pick up and say that this document contains all of the regulations dealing with terms and conditions of service of all the people who receive money from the Treasury

of Barbados for continuous services in the relationship of master and servant as opposed to contractors.
12.25 p.m.

We also want to do a review of the existing procedures used in the selection of public servants. I feel the time has come that computerizations should be used to ensure that there is a matching of qualifications with vacancies as they occur, that applicants to the Public Service will have their applications assessed in the same way as other applicants, and I believe it is necessary to have an information bank on these matters. Obviously the existing Chief Personnel Officer and the Establishments Division could not possibly ensure this would take place, so we had to create other posts to ensure that this research work, so to speak, could take place. That is the object of the exercise in creating additional posts in Establishments and also in Personnel.

In Transport and Works, Sir, there has been a reorganization, consequent upon a study carried out by Booz Allen Hamilton with Inter-American Development Bank financing, and we are implementing the recommendations of the Booz Allen Hamilton study. We hope that that will result in greater control and efficiency in that area. It relates to strengthening of the staff at the higher level.

The Government Industrial School. The Government appointed a committee to investigate the Government Industrial School in 1980, and we have been progressively trying to implement the recommendations of that committee. We are here now elevating to a permanent status a number of posts which the Government's committee has recommended. We feel that the recommendations are valid, and now that these people have been operating, they have proven that they are beneficial to the administration of the school and we have agreed that we would implement them.

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

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, on this question of the Order, I do not think we wish to make a major speech on this area, but brought to my attention quite recently is a matter which is of grave importance to a small but important sector of the Public Service. I speak, Sir, of the student nurses. There are a number of young women and men, mostly women, who form a cadre of persons from which has come, traditionally, the stock that makes up the nursing service in Barbados. And while it is true that there are nurses who go overseas and become qualified and return to Barbados and join the service, the fact remains that the

vast majority of nurses trained in Barbados worked in Barbados.

From time immemorial the student nurses have played an important role in providing an actual service within, first, the Barbados General Hospital and, subsequently, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and all of the other hospital or nursing or medical operations run by Government around the country, and it has been traditional for the student nurses to receive a stipend. As a matter of fact, as Your Honour no doubt would be aware, nurses were paid an actual salary throughout their training in the old days of the Barbados General Hospital, they were given an actual salary, and they worked as nurses in the hospital right through the four years of their training, until they graduated and became Registered Nurses, and they simply moved from one position in the nursing structure on to what would then be called Staff Nurses. So that Student Nurses have always been paid.

Apparently, some time in 1983 the Ministry of Health, claiming financial difficulty and financial stringency, stopped the payment of student nurses, and my understanding is that the students were then told that they would be given bus tickets and other facilitators to assist them in the carrying out of their responsibilities, but the Government had found itself in a position where, as part of its general cutback, it would have to cease paying student nurses a stipend. They were told, as I understand it, that, as things got better and times improved, an attempt would be made to restore the stipend. It is now in the third year since the stipend was stopped. In fact, far from getting any of the promised perquisites, many of the student nurses have had to withdraw from the programme because of the cost of participation in the programme.

Sir, if, in fact, my information is correct — and my source is such that I have no reason to doubt her — I think that this would be a terrible shame that the Government finds itself in this position, or would have such a policy as to remove a stipend from the student nurses which is not only traditional, but where they actually perform services in the various hospitals of Barbados. The student nurses, as I understand it, are rostered and are part of the staffing of the various institutions in Barbados. I think that, in the circumstances, the Minister responsible for Establishments, if he is unaware that the stipend has been stopped, ought to investigate the matter and restore the stipend as a matter of urgency, and if he is aware that the stipend has stopped, I think he owes it to this Honourable House and to the nation to explain a policy which would, in essence, use the labour of these young people and not even provide them with a stipend, far less a salary.

I think that it is a matter that has been engaging the interest of the Establishments Division, as I understand it,

for some considerable time. But I believe between 1983 and 1986 a long time has elapsed for there to be a clear-cut policy. I certainly cannot accept that they should be without a stipend, and I hope that, as a result of this intervention, some steps will be taken to restore, even if on a different basis, some kind of stipend for those students who are the basis of the continuation of the nursing service, a very excellent service, of which Barbados has been and will continue to be proud.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that justice demands that this matter be treated as a matter of urgency.

Thank you very much.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I give the honourable Member the assurance that I will investigate this matter, but I do recall, Sir, that there has been a difference of opinion for some time in existence in Barbados as to the appropriate form that nursing education should take today. I am sure the honourable Member will appreciate that in this area we in Barbados are trying to produce a quality of nurse that, in today's world, will have international acceptance. My understanding is that the Community College, as part of its Health Sciences programme, is now the agency for teaching nursing education in Barbados, that the traditional British system of apprenticeship training, in which student nurses participated in the physical work at the hospital as part of an apprenticeship programme, has been replaced to a large extent by a programme of instruction in a college atmosphere, and that that programme will be supplemented by a shorter period of physical work in hospitals.

12.35 p.m.

In short, having moved from one type of education to another type, a review of the terms and conditions of learning and work did take place. It is most unusual for students who attend the Community College to be paid a stipend by Government. So that in order to ensure that a radical departure did not occur between the students who were studying one discipline, particularly in the Health Sciences Department, and other students, this decision was, no doubt, arrived at. However, if there is, in fact, a special case that could be made out which would make this particular type of student different from any other student in the Health Sciences Faculty or otherwise, then, as I said, a review will unquestionably take place.

But we must be careful, as the honourable Member will appreciate, particularly now as we are going through a change in some of our traditional methods of delivering education and looking at it more in the light of how the North Americans deliver it as opposed to how the British deliver it. Do not let us fool ourselves. There is potential work for people in this area in North America, not in Britain. So, therefore, what we are trying to do is to equate our programme at the Community College with

the type of programme you have in associate institutions and at colleges in the United States, and this, obviously, has affected the traditional relationship and the traditional terms and conditions of appointment of nurses and nursing assistants. That is all I am saying.

We will look into it, but I want to say that it was regarded that these nurses are students like anybody else. They are doing their Associate, or whatever it is called, Certificate in Nursing. They are the same as the surveying students. They are the same as the "A" level students. They are the same as the pharmacists. They are the same as everyone else, and if you pay them, then you have to pay the rest, too. That is all, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I think the honourable Member replied. The point that was being made was not that they should get separate and different treatment from other students *per se*. The point that was being made that because of the peculiar requirements of their training, they actually participate, as part of their practical training, in providing a service in the various health institutions, for which they always used to get a stipend. That is my understanding, and in such circumstances, if in fact this is so, and since they used to be paid in the past, it would stand to reason that those nurses who work side by side with other nurses would wish to get a stipend. That is the point I was making, Sir.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, I understand that. But they are in no different position from young people who are studying medicine, who go around the hospital with the doctors and, in fact, participate in the exercise of helping, particularly after a certain number of years, before they have sat their final examinations and during their internship in the work of the hospital. They are in no different position from the pharmacists who have, as part of their training, to participate in the exercise of the delivery of medicine, the compounding of drugs.

I know that there has been a radical departure in the method of delivery of education. That is the truth. There has been a change by bringing it under the Community College. But, as usual, as I have said repeatedly, in Barbados whenever you change, it is difficult for people to accept that there has not been a distinct departure from the past. All I will say is that I will investigate it, and if it can be demonstrated that they are different, because of the peculiarities of their training, from any other student and you would not land the Government into a position where a pressure group will build up now for surveyors, pharmacists, and the others, we will look at it in that light.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member cannot now speak on this topic.

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

SEVERANCE PAYMENTS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1986

Order No. 3 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Severance Payments Act, Cap. 355A.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Speaker, there has been considerable concern in Barbados over the fact that several employees have suffered as a result of fires and the going out of businesses in Barbados. The National Insurance Fund has also suffered because it has been discovered that several businesses have been destroyed by fire, the documents burnt up or disappeared, or some businesses have closed down and documents are not found. The National Insurance Director and the officers are unable to obtain very vital information in order to help them to compute the quantum of severance to workers.

We feel as a Government that this situation should not be allowed to go on unchecked and that very drastic measures ought to be taken in an effort to eliminate completely this sort of trend. The Government, therefore, has looked at the Severance Payments Act, which as it stands does not provide for the Director, or the National Insurance Board, to recover any money that is outstanding from these employers. We feel that the necessary amendment must be made so that the Act will empower the Director of National Insurance, who acts on behalf of the Board, to make it possible to get persons who owe such establishments money to pay it directly into the Severance Fund. In this way it is hoped that when businesses are destroyed by fire and their insurance companies pay, the first charge should be made by the National Insurance Director.

12.45 p.m.

This amendment will give the National Insurance Director the power to recover any such money from the debtors of those insurance companies, and those persons who owe the businesses that have gone out of operation funds, so that there will not be any difficulty now in satisfying the National Insurance that the money has in fact been paid. We have seen how people have used this ploy in order to avoid paying over the money to the National Insurance Fund, and we have seen how employees have become very frustrated because they have not been able to get their severance payment when such occurrences do arise. This Bill seeks, therefore, to give the powers of garnishment to the National Insurance Director, who will now be able to recover any debt owing to the Severance Fund under the Severance Payments Act.

It is hoped, while dealing with this matter – because we know that the National Insurance Department

from time to time have to await documents coming from employers before they can pay out money, in order to determine the quantum of payment – that employers – I am appealing to them – will make every effort to co-operate and to speed up the submission of those documents to the National Insurance Office so that employees, when they are severed, or whenever the question of severance arises, as a result of arson or any other form, will not be made to suffer.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS (St. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, I just wish to point out to the house that in the Objects and Reasons there is a typographical error in respect of the chapter number. It is printed as 353A. The correct number of the Act is 355A.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make an enquiry as to the status of the Severance Payments Fund of Barbados. As I gathered from the introductory speech by the Minister, this Bill seeks to ensure that due payments are made and that the Director of National Insurance would have a legal instrument available to him to get this money from the employers.

Sir, I am wondering whether there has been any improvement in the status of the Severance Payments Fund. To the best of my knowledge and belief, that fund is broke, and such funds as are available to it now were the result of a loan made from the Unemployment Benefit Fund to the tune, I believe, of some \$14 million not so long ago.

I think this is a very serious situation, and a matter that needs to be looked at very closely indeed, because, in the long run, it is the duty of this Parliament to protect not only the workers but also the integrity of the Social Security system in Barbados. I wonder how this situation could have come about, and whether it is a direct consequence of the large number of bankruptcies which have taken place in Barbados over the years, or whether there is any failure in terms of the overall legal arrangements which would make sure that contributions are made to this fund on a regular basis.

I believe that it is important that the Government of Barbados and those statutory boards wholly-owned by the Government of Barbados should set an example as employers and make sure that they pay their National Insurance contributions in accordance with the laws of Barbados. When lawlessness spreads into Government and into the public sector, then it ill-behoves us to come into this Parliament from time to time and make all sorts of

statements about private individuals who take money from the workers and do not pay it over to the National Insurance Fund. Indeed, Sir, one of the worst examples brought to my attention was the delinquency on the part of the Transport Board of Barbados, which at one stage owed the National Insurance Fund in excess of \$3 million. I do not have the exact figure here with me at the moment, I had it some time ago, but I will find it in a minute.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You said that in the Budget already.)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I know I did, but this is a substantive opportunity here to deal with the matter in greater detail. I want to know whether the Transport Board has met its obligations to the National Insurance Board, since that statement was made by me about two weeks ago. This is what I wish to know, whether it has been paid, and if it is not paid, whether the National Insurance Board is prepared or not to take the Transport Board and the Minister to court to ensure that they meet their lawful obligations under the laws of Barbados. You cannot have one law for the Government and another law for private employers in Barbados. It is totally wrong and it is completely unjust, and it is not fair to the workers in Barbados, because, in many instances, it is the delinquent employers who place an undue burden on the Severance Fund under the National Insurance system. That is where one of the fundamental problems arises, and Government needs to set an example, and all the laws that you can pass in Parliament can be easily by-passed if Government does not set an example in maintaining the integrity of our National and Social Security system in Barbados.

12.55 p.m.

Sir, these are the two main points that I wish to make, and I will urge on the Government, and the Prime Minister in particular, that they should take every step to ensure that statutory bodies comply with the law, that additional steps be taken to restore the solvency of the Severance Payment Fund and to look more carefully into policy positions which might have resulted in a situation where that fund had to go, cap-in-hand, to the Unemployment Benefit Fund for \$14 million.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make it very clear that there will be no let-up by this Government in ensuring that anyone who is legally obligated to pay money pursuant to the laws of Barbados to National Insurance and Social Security, is able to default from their obligations. There will be no exceptions. Absolutely none!

The Severance Payments Act in Barbados at the present moment is the subject of a study, which study has been commissioned after consultation by the relevant unions, and I believe that, through the agency of the UNDP, an officer, highly skilled in severance payments and unemployment insurance, has been commissioned to carry out that study. I cannot give you his name. All I know is that we had meetings with the unions. We agreed on it. UNDP offered to help. They are trying to get someone from the ILO. This suggestion of getting someone from the ILO came from one of the heads of the unions in Barbados. We readily accepted it.

Periodically, the Severance Payment Fund does not have enough money to pay the severance, and that arises for two reasons: severance in a particular area of activity may be heavy in a particular year, or because of the fact that firms which have to pay the severance have not paid the severance out, but the National Insurance Tribunal has awarded the severance and the fund has to pay it and then collect it back.

The laws in relation to that were laws that were passed from the very beginning of severance payment in Barbados, and this is not the first occasion, for the information of the honourable Member, that the Severance Payment Fund had to borrow money to pay severance. It is not the first occasion. I know the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) will be able to tell us that he had to come in here with a Resolution allowing the Treasury, at that time, to advance, too. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the severance payment laws, when there was a 50% reimbursement to the employer, the honourable Member had to reduce the reimbursement.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Look, the honourable Member had to lend money to the Severance Payment Fund to be able to pay severance. Where the employers went? The employers did not have the money, and the law is that an employee is entitled to his severance. If the employer does not pay it, the Severance Payment Fund pays it and then they collect. That is the law. The law is very clear. If the employer does not pay, the worker is not deprived of his severance. That is the position. That is the law, nobody has changed that law, so that when you come in here and you give the public the impression that because the Severance Payment Fund at a particular period of time is not in funds the worker will be deprived, that is not true, and that is the first impression I want to remove. I think it is necessary for us to remove impressions. We like to get at the fundamental truth. That is the first thing.

Secondly, Sir, I want to say that we after a study, have found that our experience is no different from the

experience of anywhere else in the Caribbean or the United Kingdom. There will be employers who periodically will deduct the money and not hand it over. Machinery has been suggested for garnishment. Machinery has been suggested for what is called priority charges on assets. Now, we do have in our law a provision that arrears of severance pay or sums due to the National Insurance are what are called preferential debts, so that if a company goes into receivership, if a company goes into bankruptcy, any money that is owed to the National Insurance, whether by severance or otherwise, comes out before the other general creditors. There are still some conflicts in the law of uncertainty as to whether preferential nature is even greater than a mortgagee, but that is a very high and technical thing, whatever, steps are being taken.

As far as the statutory boards are concerned, this Government has always maintained that statutory boards are the same as any other employer. But I will tell you this, they are more fortunate than other employers, because when a situation reaches the stage where the National Insurance Board takes steps against them, we come in here with a Supplementary Resolution to help them. That is what happens, and it is not only this Government that is doing it. We have to come in here.

Since we have set up our Monitoring Unit, of which I have spoken so many times, we are in a much better position than ever before to determine, by way of monthly returns to the Monitoring Unit, whether the statutory boards are in default of their obligations to the National Insurance in respect of their income tax. We have set up this Monitoring Unit, and one of the functions of that Monitoring Unit is to get monthly returns, or quarterly returns, from these various statutory boards.

Of course, this Government will make sure that steps are taken to ensure that the original intention of the Severance Payments Act remains uncompromised, and that is, that there should be a sufficiency of funds collected to be able to pay the obligations.

I remember, Sir, that early in this severance payment law, some employers used to form family companies — I remember them distinctly — and they used to employ their family, then they used to close down the company and the family used to draw out of the Severance Payment Fund a nice little bonus. I remember that. I can give you instances of it happening. Steps were taken at that time to prevent that kind of thing, but as we go along with our experiences in the severance pay legislation, we will find that it is a battle of wits between the drafters of the severance payment legislation and the ingenuity of employers. As a whole, though, the vast majority — I want to repeat — as a whole, the vast majority of employers in Barbados do hand over their deductions in good time, and we are doing everything in our power to ensure that the general economic climate

in Barbados is such that the claims on severance will be abated.

1.05 p.m.

I am sure that the honourable Member, with his great research capability and access to information, by now would have discovered that the number of receiverships and liquidations in 1985 were far less than they were in 1984.

(Aside: Because there are less companies now.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Not even the honourable Member who made that aside believes that, because if he did believe that he would have lesser intelligence than I believe he has. So that whether we have fewer companies or the companies that we have in existence are stronger, the point is that the temporary position of the Severance Payment Fund is not new, having to borrow money and that it will be refunded.

In any event, severance pay is a non-partisan matter. The union representatives are on the National Insurance Board. The union is strong on the National Insurance Board and we have agreed on the need to investigate the inter-connection between severance pay and unemployment, particularly in what is called "deemed severance," not in real severance. Nobody has ever dealt with that, but there is a thing called "deemed severance," and that and unemployment is the one we have asked this ILO expert to give us the benefit of his experience on, give us the benefit also of a very fundamental point, that in Barbados you pay National Insurance on the basis of a cap proportion of your income, but severance is paid on your actual income. That is something that we need to get expert advice on, because there is a limitation as to the percentage of your income upon which you pay National Insurance, but when you come to pay severance pay, it is paid on your total income, so that the insurability.....

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It is so. Isn't it so? That is what we have been informed.

(Aside: Mr. P. M. GREAVES: It is nearly so.)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is what we have been informed. That is a point that needs to be investigated to see how you can handle that contingency. That is what we have been told, and I will go by the information and by the advice until it is fully investigated and a competent expert in this area tells me that it is not so.

I am told that one of the problems that we have with severance pay is that the severance percentage only

applies to a bit of the income, but the severance payment applies to the totality of the income. That is what I am told. In any event, I want to let the House know that whatever the state of the severance pay, the National Insurance Fund will pay all the severance and the Government stands behind them. And we are not soft on any employer; we are insisting that all employers, whether they be creatures of statute or creatures of man, pay their obligations, and any statutory board that does not pay, the Ministry of Finance is prepared to see that a supplementary is passed and that the statutory board fulfills its obligation. That is the position.

I do not have any information about any particular statutory board at this particular period of time, but that is the general principle involved.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE and Mr. P. M. GREAVES rose.

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

Mr. SPEAKER rose and both honourable Members sat.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is in a sporting mood today.

I wish to speak very briefly on this Bill. I am glad the Prime Minister has clarified certain matters and I am glad, in particular, that he has tried to move the debate from the level to which the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) wanted to bring it, that is, on a basis really of impressions and big headlines rather than a serious consideration of a matter that is of tremendous importance, in my view, to the equity which workers accumulate during their period of working for particular employers.

It is an undoubted fact that the Severance Payment Fund has always honoured the commitment to pay any worker who has been severed the severance payment, even if the employer is unable to do so, because a company has gone into insolvency, bankruptcy or liquidation, or even if the employer has refused to do so, as some employers have done. I am sure there is not one person who can be mentioned by name by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who can state that he has ever suffered, in the sense of being denied severance payment by the employer and the Severance Payment Board refusing to pay that amount of severance. So to give the impression that the fund is broke, conveying the impression that those persons who are the beneficiaries of the fund are therefore at risk, is really only catering to headlines, and I am glad the Prime Minister has put the point in true perspective.

Sir, what has happened with the Severance Payment Fund in Barbados has happened to almost every Severance Payment Fund that I have been able to study in the Commonwealth. I have not studied them outside the Commonwealth. Let me say that, in some respects, the Barbados Severance Payment Fund is the most generous or among the most generous in the world. There are very few severance payment funds that allow at severance something like four weeks for every year of service up to a period of 33 years. That is an extremely generous amount. If you look at Antigua, if you look at Trinidad and Tobago, if you look at Britain, if you look at the Australian states, if you look at Canada, and the Canadian provinces, you will see that that generosity is not applied.

One of the results of the generosity is that from time to time, particularly in times of either economic crisis, or crisis brought on by calamity, either act of God or calamity of man by fire, the fund will not be able to pay automatically if the employer has not been insured for the purpose. Let me, Mr. Speaker, give a graphic example of what could occur. If Barbados has a major hurricane and quite a lot of its building establishments and its businesses are destroyed, and therefore workers are regrettably laid off from work for any significant period of time and the business had to start up again — some do not start up, or they take years to start up — then there will be a tremendous run on the fund, and the fund will not be able, in the absence of Government subsidising the funds from the general revenue to withstand these sort of events.

It is not the first time that that has occurred with the fund, the fund being short of money and having to get money either from the National Insurance Board or from the Treasury. I was in this House when the Democratic Labour Party came down and asked for funds from the Consolidated Fund in order to supplement the Severance Payment Fund because the Fund was broke. I agreed that they had to seek money for that purpose.
1.15 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) says that is not correct. But it is correct!

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: There were two events. There was one when the fund was originally funded, and then there was the other event, when the fund was actually broke and it had to be supplemented by way of loan. On two occasions actually; I am sure the records of the House will bear this out. The purpose was to ensure that the workers were paid, an object or a purpose with which none of us could quarrel at that time. But none of us

sought to give the impression that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central sought to give, as though somebody was tampering with the workers' money in any bad way. I really wanted to clarify that.

Where I think the real problem occurs and I want to give a constructive suggestion here, because we need to have constructive suggestions here — is that people have not been able to obtain insurance cover for contingent severance liability. That is problem number one. Problem number two is the manner in which the contingent severance liability is treated for tax purposes. It is not possible for me then, Sir, to claim against my income tax liability the funding of the annual liability which I have under Severance Payments Act for my employees. I am allowed to deduct the amount which I pay to the Severance Payment Fund on a weekly basis, but neither an individual nor a limited liability company can provide for the contingent liability arising under the severance laws. One must ask whichever committee the Honourable Prime Minister says is studying the matter to give some consideration to this point.

In Canada there are insurance companies — and in some of the states of the United States — which will insure this contingent liability, and the cost of the insurance is a deductible expense in the running of business. There also are laws in some of the Canadian provinces which permit people to treat as a deductible expense the contingent liability accruing under the severance legislation. If this were done, it would increase the solvency of the fund and reduce the likelihood of the sort of problem occurring which has occurred within Barbados. I have spoken previously on this matter, both when I was in Opposition and in Government, making it quite clear that that is the sort of positive, creative suggestion which is needed to prevent the problems which occur from time to time.

The other point that I want to remind the House about, Sir, on the Severance Fund is that statutory boards from time to time have not been prompt in paying their contributions. But, once again, here the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central gives the impression that the Transport Board has deliberately set out to flout the law. I have seen in this House where they have underestimated their liabilities over a period of years and it has been necessary to bring supplementary resolutions for additional funds. This has occurred during the Democratic Labour Party's time as well. All that one wants to do is to make it quite clear that they must monitor their position correctly, but I do not know of one statutory board which has been allowed to escape its liabilities under the Severance Payments Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the next time we have an opportunity to consider the severance payment legislation, it would be in the ways of improving

not only its solvency but improving the very provisions of the Act under which we operate. I know that we have followed the United Kingdom Redundancy Payment Act of 1955 in drafting our legislation. That legislation has given a good deal of problems to the courts in the United Kingdom, far less our courts, in being able to construe and understand their provisions properly. The Canadian provinces have clearer more explicit legislation, easier to administer and easier to understand, in their Employment Standards Act. One can look at the province of Ontario or the province of Manitoba for proper precedence. I should hope that when we are considering revising the legislation we will look at the experience which has occurred in Canada, because I think that, in many respects, it is a proper guide for us, much more so than the United Kingdom Act which we followed in the past.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some little area of confusion here with regards the Severance Payments Act, to which I now want to make some reference. The Severance Payments Act was passed here in this House first of all in 1971, but before it was implemented, it was subsequently amended in 1972 and came into force from the 1st January, 1973. These are dates of which I have very clear recollection. But it was also made effective from, I believe it was the 1st September, 1969. There was a reason for this. During that year, in the latter half of that year, there was a serious fire in Bridgetown. I am referring, Sir, to the Cave Shepherd fire....

(*Aside: Fogarty.*)

Mr. P. M. GREAVES:.....and there was the Fogarty fire, and the Severance Payments Act was made retroactive in order to make provision for those persons who had lost their jobs as a result of those disasters. So that when the Severance Payments Fund began in January 1973 and began with a contribution made by employers based on the workers pay, that Severance Payments Fund had a liability to pay those employees from 1969 who had lost their jobs. So for that reason, Sir, there had to be some funds out of which to pay those persons because their employers frauded up to that time, that is, Cave Shepherd and Fogarty, had made no contributions. So that the fund was saddled with a liability in respect of workers on whose behalf no contribution had been paid. That was the reason why the fund at that time had to seek additional sources of financing — in order to meet the obligations of the Fogarty and Cave Shepherd employers. It was not, Sir, that we had to go running in order to borrow money to meet the obligations of the fund, because at that time we did not have the number of closures or the number of layoffs that we have been experiencing in recent times.

The rebate at that time, Sir, was not 100%, it was merely 50%, and it continued to be a rebate of 50% to the employer until the time when the honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig) was the Minister for Labour.

Aside.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: At that time it was reduced from 50% to 10%. I am not saying that. I am putting the record straight and merely stating that the Prime Minister had said that the Member for St. Michael North had reduced the rebate. That is not the position. It was reduced at the time when the Member for St. James North was Minister of Labour. That is a fact. It was reduced from 50% to 10%, and it was subsequently increased from 10% not so long ago to 25%, at which point it now stands. I just thought I would make those points clear.

Another point, Sir, is that when the Honourable Prime Minister was speaking, he did say that the severance funds payable to the workers who had been severed was paid on total earnings, and my point was made not quite on total earnings but nearly on total earnings, which point he accepted. I made that point, Sir, because it is based on the average of the two last year's earnings and not on the earnings of the worker at the time he was severed; only on his average over the last two years of his employment. That is why I said that it was nearly — a point accepted by the Prime Minister at the time — on his total earnings up to that period of time.
1.25 p.m.

Sir, I want to take issue with the Prime Minister on a matter. The Prime Minister quite rightly says that the Government did not let go any employer who had defaulted in paying his contribution into the fund. But what I would want to know is this, Sir, because I would hope that those are not empty words, how is it that several employers have been allowed to get away with not paying their contributions into the fund? Some places have gone out of business. Miramar is another example, and it happened in the time of this particular Government. Miramar is a noble example of companies, employers like that. The Transport Board is an example. The Transport Board is still in existence, happily, and I believe at some point and time we will have to make good that problem of the Transport Board. But with places like Miramar, and Miramar is an example, why is it that they have been allowed to close down and still owe the fund a substantial amount of money? Miramar is not the only example of that privilege to which I am referring. I hope that the Prime Minister will from now take strong action against those employers who default.

One of the problems, Sir, is in my opinion, the lack of a strong inspectorate. The employers are required to

pay monies into the fund at certain intervals, and it must be known to the inspectorate in the National Insurance Office when employers are not paying in those funds, and they should send inspectors out to those offices in order to discover why it is that those monies are not being sent into the office. I believe that the National Insurance Department will have to strengthen the inspectorate so as to make sure that we do not really have to resort to the strong action that the Prime Minister is talking about, but we would merely have to send out inspectors and bring in the funds that are really and truly due to the fund at any particular time.

Sir, the honourable Prime Minister and the Member for Christ Church West are right. There is no political divide as far as we are concerned on severance pay. That is something we all accept on both sides. That is why we are a little disappointed that the honourable Member for Christ Church West, having acknowledged that there is no divide between us on this particular point, should then take exceptions.....

Asides.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: should then, Sir, have taken the stand he took in regard to what the Member for St. Michael South Central had said, because what the Member for St. Michael South Central has said is that he has brought to the attention of this Parliament, which I think he should have done if he had the facts, certain information, and I have not heard the Minister responsible for the Transport Board deny those facts.

Asides.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Did he say that it was done before. Well, Sir, I am very glad to hear that the supplementary was done. I hope that not only was the supplementary done, but that the money would have then been paid into the Severance Fund.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON (St. Michael West Central): Mr. Speaker, this Bill before the House seeks to answer some of the questions that concern all of us, questions about the ability of some employers to evade their responsibilities to pay in the National Insurance contributions deducted from the wages of their employees. In most cases, I feel that it is not conspiratorial that the contributions are not paid in. I believe that in many cases, and perhaps in most cases, contributions are deducted, but because of improper administrative procedures in the businesses concerned, the funds

Asides.

(*Aside:* Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, talk is cheap.)

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: ...because of improper administrative procedures in the business concerned, the funds get neglected in so far as the paying in aspect of it is concerned.

Sir, with respect to the original deduction to which the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) referred, when the Barbados Labour Party assumed power in 1976, it was possible for an employer to reclaim 50% of the severance contributions that he made to an employee who had been severed. In other words, if an employee was severed and was entitled to a severance payment of \$10 000, the employer, under the old regulation, was able to reclaim 50% of those funds and, therefore, would have made a relatively small contribution towards severance. In effect, Sir, what was happening was that he was benefitting from severing workers, and it was the determination of the Barbados Labour Party to ensure that there was not an incentive for employers to indiscriminately sever their employees, knowing full well that the penalty would be small, that the amounts that the employer could claim under severance was reduced from 50% to 10%. In doing that, we believed that we managed to stabilize what looked to us to be a general trend towards what he might describe as indiscriminate severing of employers.

Sir, if there is need for us to consider severance payment increases in terms of the amount the employer can reclaim, then I believe it should be looked at in a dispassionate way, without becoming too political in the exercise, because National Insurance is part of the Social Security system of our country and, therefore, it ought not to be a matter to be politicized. I think we can put our heads together in this Chamber and find a mechanism that will allow us to ensure that all of our workers are properly handled when it comes time for a company to close down its doors.

Honourable Members have already referred to the fact that no employee in Barbados can suffer if he is severed, because even if the employer goes bankrupt and is not able to make the severance payments, the tribunal in the National Insurance system has a responsibility to ensure that the severance is paid, and then they are under obligation to try to recover that amount from the business. The honourable Member referred to places like Miramar. If a business declares bankruptcy, it should be obvious that, even with the best intentions in the world, there is not a great deal that the Government can do, particularly if its priority of claim was not registered. It is a matter of who gets there first. If the assets are distributed under the bankruptcy proceedings, then obviously the Government will not be in a position to recover the severance payment contribution that it had to make because of the default of the employer.

1.35 p.m.

Sir, there is another matter that we need to consider when we are talking about severance payment in Barbados. The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) in his speech pointed out that Barbados' severance payment provisions are among the best in the world. While I was Minister of Labour I had the opportunity to research the matter — Minister of Labour with responsibility for National Insurance at that time — and I could find no country, developed or developing, that had a severance payment scheme more generous than the one we have here in Barbados, and that is searching far and wide. We compared Barbados with Australia, we compared it with the United Kingdom, we compared it with Canada, we compared it with the United States, which does not have a severance payment provision at all, with a view to determining how Barbados stood *vis-a-vis* those countries, and we have the most generous severance payments provisions — four weeks' pay for every completed year of service up to a total of 33 years. So if a person has been in a company for 25 years, he is entitled to 25 months' payment upon severance — four weeks' pay for every completed year of service; 25 years, 25 months — and that adds up to a fairly substantial sum of money.

I believe that we in Barbados have to recognise that under the severance payment scheme, we have to ensure that all of the actuarial provisions are properly instituted so as not to go and injure the fund when it comes to paying out National Insurance severance. A number of businesses, when they come to the time of winding up, when they are making the workers redundant, do so because of a number of reasons. Some persons do it for spurious reasons, others do it because they are in financial difficulty. If a company is in financial difficulty it cannot pay the severance, and under the present regulations the Severance Payment Fund itself must cover the worker, and therefore we have to ensure, we have to build in the actuarial checks and balances to make sure that the fund is always in a position to meet its obligations and that we do not end up like the United States, with a Social Security programme having to make contributions larger than the fund is able to manage. I believe, Sir, that this Bill is an excellent provision because, unfortunately, there are a number of people out there who still would rather collect the funds from the employees and not pay them into the National Insurance Scheme.

One of the things that we should bear in mind, and I believe one of the reasons why we are all so anxious about the National Insurance Scheme at this point, is that as Barbados grows and as it matures as an industrialised nation, the manual provisions that we had in place for dealing with National Insurance are no longer adequate. It is not possible for a National Insurance Scheme to be operated with clerks, a National Insurance Scheme as sophisticated and as expansive as ours in

Barbados. We have to have our records properly computerised so that persons who perform the clerical functions and who are the inspectors in the field will be able to inspect based upon information that has been provided by the computer. It is not possible for us to sit down and do a manual computation and expect to find defaulters. We have to have all the employers in Barbados on a computer bank so that when they default it is possible for the inspector to pick that information off the computer and go into the field to find out what is happening in the system. So what we are saying in effect is that we need a more sophisticated system, and that is precisely what has happened at the National Insurance Department, because the funds have now been computerised and therefore the scheme is better equipped to carry out the search and to ensure that the funds that are deducted from the workers are paid into the fund as they should do.

I, Sir, commend this Bill and stand ready to give it my support when it finally comes up for the vote.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all honourable Members who made contributions to this debate. I think it should be now regarded as a fact that the time has come when the law relating to the Severance Payments Act should be revised and consolidated, and the Government gives its pledge on this occasion to do just that. As a matter of fact, the Attorney General is already in contact with his counterparts in Canada with a view to acquiring the relevant precedents and pieces of legislation from which we could copy or improve our present Severance Payments Act.

I must respond to one or two questions raised by the honourable Members on the other side. As far as the fund is concerned, when the fund was set up in 1973 it was a very laudable idea, but there were a few things that were not done that should have been done, although we understand the circumstances under which the then Government operated. The fact is that there was no actuarial study conducted, and, as a result, when a few claims were made, two years later on the fund it was broke. So in 1975 the Severance Fund was broke. This Government was not in office, but I hope that honourable Members will take the point that we do not seek to make this into a political matter where the public is given the impression that the fund is broke due to some mal-administration. That is not the case.

What has happened is that we do not have any command over disasters and a number of things that could arise in the country. Let us then suppose that, by an act of God, something had to happen, people would be severed and you would have to turn to, according to the law, the Severance Fund to pay those severed employees. The only thing that is left for Government to

do then is to come to this Chamber and vote the funds in order to pay those severed employees.

This Government has already commissioned someone, an expert in this area, in the actuarial field, and that expert, according to the Prime Minister, is coming from the ILO. The union, which represents the largest groups in Barbados, was consulted on this matter, and it was agreed that an expert from the ILO would be the person responsible for conducting this actuarial study.

I was somewhat surprised to hear the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) and one of his other colleagues. Sometimes politics is a very strange game, because I sat here and I was beginning to wonder why it is that his colleagues on that side took it upon themselves to mention this question of employers not paying in money to the Severance Fund. The honourable Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) was a Director of Turner's Hall, a shareholder in Turner's Hall.

Asides

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Yes, he was a Director. Bruce Procope and Errol Barrow (E. W. Barrow) were Directors, shareholders, and the people who worked there had their money deducted, but it was never paid into the Severance Fund. So if you are talking about people and companies, talk about that.
1.45 p.m.

You see, the honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition, is out, so that is why you took the chance to swipe at him. It goes to show you how disloyal some of you could be. It is ungracious of you to get in here and talk about employees, because you knew full well that the honourable Member was a shareholder in a company that allowed the people's money to be taken from their pockets and never handed it over to the National Insurance Fund.

Aside

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: It is not right. It is not fair to the honourable Member for St. John. You ought to know better. He deserves better treatment. But that is the way you would slay — when someone goes out of the Chamber, I hope he would know now what you all did today.

(*Aside: Stop lying for a change.*)

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I am not lying. What am I saying? I want you to take that up, and you can

challenge me anywhere, because I am going to repeat it. I have repeated it on the political platforms in public, and, if it were not so, you would have sued me for slander. But you cannot, because it is true!

Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member for St. Michael North raised the question of reduction of rebates.

Asides

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: The question of rebates. A decision is taken to rebate a higher percentage according to the state of the fund, and there are other considerations because of the economic situation.

I was the first person to criticize some employers who in the past, did not pay over certain deductions to the National Insurance Fund. Let me say that the employers have responded well, and I want to congratulate them for doing so. It is only fair that we say that they have co-operated with the National Insurance Board and they have been making every effort to pay the contributions over to that fund, so we do not have to single out anyone or say now that employers are not co-operating. They are co-operating.

We understand that two years ago, during the economic recession, some employers were experiencing some financial difficulty, and as a result, they used some of the money in order to assist them in carrying on the business. We can understand that; therefore, we were willing to co-operate and to sympathize with them. I must salute them for having responded now, and they are doing everything in their power to make sure that the funds are paid over and that the employees are happy and satisfied.

There was a question: how can you allow employers to owe the fund? We cannot do anything, because it is a matter of people and personalities, and there are several reasons. But, as I said, once these people co-operate, once they understand their responsibility and commitment, once they understand that the workers stand to suffer if they refuse to pass over the money, that is where we feel that we have made our point.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central should not try to make this debate into one of 'the Transport Board did not pay over any money'. There are lots of other persons and lots of other companies. The thing is that the law, as it now stands — the honourable Member on the other side, is an attorney and he is very steeped in those matters — he is very knowledgeable in these matters, he deals with them on a day-to-day basis — makes provision for the severed person to apply to the Minister responsible for Social Security to have his money paid. He does not have to wait until the employer pays,

so the provision is made, and I do not think that it is fair to give the impression that, if the fund does not have sufficient money, severed employees cannot be paid.

I would hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that honourable Members would understand that we are revising the law relating to Severance Payment and we hope that most of these anomalies and problems which now arise will be ironed out and we will have a better Act simplified so that each and every one of us will understand the law relating to severance payment and Severance Fund generally.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: At this point, Sir, I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be now postponed.

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

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

STATEMENT BY HIS HONOUR, THE SPEAKER
RE DOCUMENT USED IN THE HOUSE

Mr. SPEAKER: Before we go on to other business, I said this morning that I would read to the House a statement concerning my investigation about the use of a document. I think I will do it now before we take the luncheon adjournment.

"On Tuesday, April 15, 1986, I promised this Honourable House that I would carry out an investigation into the use of a document in the House by the honourable Member for the constituency of St. Michael South Central during his reply to the Budgetary Proposals made by the Prime Minister and the production or non-production of that document to be made a document of the House.

"Let me at the outset make it absolutely clear that my investigations into this matter are made purely to protect the integrity of this House and to find out whether there has been any dereliction of duty on the part of the officers of this Honourable Chamber.

"As I understand it, the procedure is that when a document is used in a debate, it should be

made a document of the House, that document must be handed to one of the officers of the House whose duty it is to secure that document among the other papers of this Honourable Chamber. The document then becomes the property of the House.

"The Officers of this Honourable House are the three (3) Clerks at the table and the Marshal.

"Sometime during the continuation of the debate on Friday, the 4th April, 1986, and after the use of the document in question, I recalled pointing out to Mr. Roberts, one of the Clerks at the table, that a chart was protruding through the bottom of the desk on the side of the House occupied by the members of the Opposition and I asked him to secure that said chart as it has been made a document of the House. At the same time I requested that he should get me the other document which the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central had used and said he would make it a document of the House.

"The document could not then be traced and I pointed out to him that I had seen a booklet with a design on the back. I thought that I had seen such a document on the Clerk's table and asked that he should hand me the said document which was on the Clerk's table which appeared to be the document I thought I had seen used by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central during his contribution to the debate. The document handed to me turned out to be a copy of the Export Promotion Committee's Annual Report.

"Later in the session when the honourable Member for the constituency of St. Michael North indicated that he was prepared to make quotations from the Central Bank Report for 1985, which had been made a document of the House, there ensued discussion between the honourable Member and myself as to whether or not the document had been made a document of the House.

1.55 p.m.

"It can be clearly seen that since the document could not have been traced, I myself was misled into finding out whether or not that document had been handed over as is the custom.

"In order to arrive at the best evidence in this matter, I visited the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation on Monday 21, April, 1986, as I thought it compulsory to go to an original source for a review of the proceedings.

"At this point I must publicly thank the staff of that institution for the courteous and efficient

manner in which they assisted me in carrying out my investigations.

"At CBC I was able to view the video tape of the proceedings which commenced on Thursday, 3rd April, 1985 at 5.02 p.m. I saw that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central during his speech first quoted from the Barbados Economic Report as well as his prepared notes which is acceptable. This report, that is the Barbados Economic Report, was flagged in many places. Then at about 22 minutes 22 seconds after commencing his reply the honourable Member for Saint Michael South Central said, and I quote, 'Now Sir we were promised a copy of the Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados 1985. We did not get it. I do not know why, but there are some very clear statements in here on our foreign reserves and balance of payments position. These documents are normally laid by Government, but I will have to take the unusual step, Mr. Speaker, of laying the document on behalf of the Government.' "

The honourable Member then used a booklet which was folded over and there can be seen (1) flag hanging from the pages of the booklet. The honourable Member then proceeded to quote from it. With the assistance of the able and competent staff at CBC, I was able to reverse the tape and freeze the individual frames until I could see a well bound booklet with design and colour on the cover. It was not the same document that was later used in this Chamber by the honourable Member for St. Michael North in the debate and subsequently made a document of the House.

"The document used by the honourable Member for St. Michael North, as I have said before, appears to be photocopies of pages stapled together. The document used by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central appears to be a document similar in all respects to the Central Bank Report 1985 which was later laid in this Chamber.

"I later checked with the Clerk of this Honourable House who assured me that at no time was any document presented to the Clerks at the table as had been said by the honourable Member and later repeated in the report to be made a document of the House.

"Following this statement my attention was drawn to the transcript of the proceedings of the House in which the honourable Member later said, and is recorded as saying, and I quote 'Sir, I would like to make this a document of the House and I believe it would be instructive, Sir, if I should draw to your attention what has happened between 1976 and today.' "

He concluded by saying

"I do not think I need to go any further into this aspect of the proceedings in connection with the honourable Member's use of the chart as the House is in possession of that chart mentioned in the debate.

"From my investigations I am well and truly satisfied that the Officers of this Honourable House were never given the disputed document and in my view they are absolved from any blame.

"Our Standing Orders do not specifically deal with the issue at hand but by custom the House usually accepts the words or statements of its Members as true and will act upon them unless the contrary is shown. It is therefore necessary for me to look further and I now refer to Erskine May's Treatise on The Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament, Seventeenth Edition, at pages 431 — 433. Under the caption "Citing Documents not Before the House" it says, *inter alia* "It has also been admitted that a document which has been cited ought to be laid upon the table of the House, if it can be done without injury to the public interests." Also dealing with the "Responsibility for the Laying of Documents", and I quote this because if reference is made to the record made between the honourable Member for St. Michael North and myself, you will see why this passage is relevant. "It is the responsibility of the Government and not of the Chair to see that documents which may be relevant to debates are laid before the House and are available to Members. It is not the Chair to decide what documents are relevant. Only when the Speaker himself has control of a document can he be involved in making it available to the House or a Committee."

"I would therefore think that it is an abuse of the Privileges of this House to say that a document would be made a document of the House and then that document cannot be found.

"Finally I must remind all Members of this House that while I occupy the position of Speaker of this Chamber it is my intention to make sure that all documents of relevance used in this Chamber should always be made documents of the House and they should at all times be presented to the Clerks at the Table, because they help to make the records of the House complete so that in later years when the history of the Chamber is written no false impressions will be left as to what actually took place while we were here."

That is the end of my statement.

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER RE USE OF 1985 CENTRAL BANK REPORT BY DR. R. C. HAYNES (MEMBER FOR ST. MICHAEL SOUTH CENTRAL)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make the following statement:

Letchworth Press Ltd.

"Mr. Speaker

On Tuesday 15th April, 1985 I informed the House that I had ordered an investigation in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, the Central Bank and Letchworth Press Ltd, the relevant printery with a view to eliciting information on the circumstances by which a copy of the 1985 Report of the Central Bank could have come into the possession of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central before it was laid in the House as required by law.

"The Investigation has been completed and the findings are as follows:

- (i) No leak of this document occurred in the Ministry of Finance and Planning.
- (ii) In a letter of April 21, 1986 the Governor of the Central Bank has informed me that Mr. Mark Maynard, a contractor of the Central Bank had been given a copy of the Report in the normal course of events for checking as a person concerned with the artistic composition of the document. This contractor when called upon to account for this copy during the course of the investigation delivered a copy of the Report to an officer of the Bank on April 3, 1986. At this point of time the Central Bank could account for all of the copies which it had retained and there was nothing to suggest that the copy delivered by Mr. Maynard was not in truth and in fact the copy that had been delivered to him by the Central Bank as the artist involved in the production.

2.05 p.m.

"However, on the 17th April, 1986 two days after the 15th April when I announced the enquiry, Mr. Maynard went to the Central Bank, he was accompanied by his priest and in the presence of the said priest confessed to an officer in the Bank, that he had given his original copy to one Mr. Harry

Russell and that he had not been able to recover the said copy from Mr. Russell. Mr. Maynard also said"

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN:

"..... that he had obtained another copy of the document from Letchworth Press Ltd. by going to Letchworth Press, identifying himself as the Report's designer and saying that he needed a copy for urgent checking. Having obtained this copy in the manner described he handed it over to the Central Bank, a little after 8 on the evening of April 3, 1986. Mr. Shearn, the Managing Director of Letchworth Press, has confirmed to Central Bank that Mr. Maynard did in fact obtain a copy from Letchworth Press in the circumstances described above. Mr. Maynard also informed the Central Bank that he has not, up to the time of the confession recovered the copy he handed to Mr. Russell.

"I have been assured by the Governor of the Central Bank that all of these matters will engage the attention of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank at an early date and that positive recommendations will be made to prevent a recurrence of the incident as outlined above."

Thank you, Sir.

Asides.

(*Aside:* Hon. A. TRUSS: Cannot trust you all with the Government, you gine tief, too.)

(*Aside:* Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Where Truss got his from?)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Sir, that this sitting be now suspended for lunch until 3.00 p.m. today.

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

The question that the sitting be now suspended until 3.00 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.
2.10 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. Shall we proceed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Earlier in this sitting we had postponed the measure which we were doing for further consideration. We propose to resume at this point in time, Sir.

SEVERANCE PAYMENTS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1986 (RESUMED)

Order No. 3 was called – To move further consideration of the Bill to amend the Severance Payments Act.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Mr. J. G. ODLE, 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 and 2 inclusive were called and passed.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I had pointed on the Second Reading that the Objects and Reasons needed to be amended to read "355" instead of "353" and I so move, Sir.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I must inform the honourable Member that the typographical error has been corrected.

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

On separate motions of Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1986

Order No. 4 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the National Insurance and Social Security Act, Cap. 47.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Sir, this Bill is a companion Bill to the last.

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

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

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

On the motion of Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, 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 and 2 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.
3.05 p.m.

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

BANKING (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1986

Order No. 5 was called – To move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Banking Act, Cap. 322.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): I beg to move, Sir, that this Bill be now read a second time. It is a very simple Bill and it relates to a revision that was set out in the Budget two years ago, the Budget before the last, and it deals with the branches of banks that have head offices abroad on their Barbados operations alone.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I second it, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, 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 and 2 were called and passed.

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

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS ACT, 1986

Order No. 6 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend certain enactments to transfer functions now performed by the Registrar of the Supreme Court and the Registrar of Co-operatives and Friendly Societies to the Registrar of Corporate Affairs.

Hon. L. R. TULL (St. George South): Mr. Speaker, a number of functions are being transferred from various departments of Government to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs. As a result, there is a need for a Bill that rationalizes this particular action. This is as a result of a decision taken by Cabinet. A separate department of Corporate Affairs, is being set up, and will be headed by a Registrar of Corporate Affairs, who will operate under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The direct responsibility for administering a number of pieces of legislation will fall under that Ministry. There are things like the Companies Act, the Registration of Business Act, the Limited Partnership Act, Patents, Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Copyright.

It is also a decision of the Government that co-operatives be brought into the new department, and that the administration of certain bits of legislation also fall to the Corporate Affairs Department. Specifically Sir, the Co-operatives Society Act, the Friendly Societies Act, the Building Societies Act, and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act.

In addition, Sir, it has also been agreed that the following legislation should also fall under the Registrar of Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property: the Property Transfer Act, in respect of the adjudication of transfer shares, the Registration of Newspapers Act, the Bill of Sale Act, the Insurance Act, Trade Unions Act, Charities Act and the Trustee Act.

This Bill, Sir, the Miscellaneous Amendments Bill of 1986, will, therefore, amend the various enactments that I have specified in the Schedule of the Bill to transfer all these functions to the new department.

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

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

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

On the motion of Hon. L. R. TULL, 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 and 2 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Earlier in the day, Mr. Speaker, I had informed this Honourable Chamber that I propose, with agreement of the other side, although I did not seek any — I suggest that you take whatever steps that you had taken on the last occasion — to deal with the matter relating to salaries of the staff of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I propose to do this matter, Sir.

Order No. 7, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Leave is being sought to do Order No. 7, which is a matter which was brought before the Chamber this morning. Are there any objections of the matter being dealt with today?

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, Sir, because the staff of Parliament has been waiting for a considerable period of time, we on this side will have no objection to the process. But we have objections to the methodology and the manner of the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House is consistently behaving in a manner that is not in the highest traditions of this House. I do not think that this side is unapproachable. I do not believe that Your Honour wants to be drawn into these matters in the way which the Leader of the House seeks to do.

We have no objection, Sir.

3.15 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no objection to the matter being dealt with. The honourable Member may now proceed with the matter.

THE REGRADING OF SALARIES AND TERMS OF CONDITIONS OF THE STAFF OF PARLIAMENT

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to bring the staff of Parliament.....

Asides

Mr. SPEAKER: There is a Standing Order which says that the Member speaking must be heard in silence. I would therefore like the honourable Members to comply with the Standing Orders of the Chamber. I know we are in the hunting season, but let the hunting fry be kept until afterwards by both sides.

Thank you.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, Sir.

This seeks to implement revised conditions for the staff of Parliament. They were arrived at after consideration of a number of proposals that have been put by the representatives of the workers to the Debates Committee, which in turn put them to the Ministry of Finance, and which in turn accepted, with small modifications, relatively speaking, the proposals.

They do provide, in my opinion, for a regrading of some of the posts, the creation of a new post and also to make provision for certain staff of the Leader of the Opposition to be employed gratuity-wise on the same terms and conditions as the personal staff of the office of Prime Minister. That is an anomaly that should have been fixed up previously. It was agreed and a commitment was made on the floor of this House that, once it was requested, it would be dealt with.

Basically, Sir, we think that the post of Clerk is deserving of a grading of S.3.2. It is to be a full time post, it will be advertised, and that is the salary scale, \$50 232 to \$56 400. We also have provided, the most important, for a Senior Reporter. It is a new post and will be Z.6-1, and we have increased the number of Reporters in the House to five, so we will now have six people — this is all in anticipation of the reforms that we hope to have in Parliament and we have also made provision for Typists.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Sir, in rising to second this Resolution, I think it would be demonstrating to all and sundry that if there is one thing on which both sides of the House can agree, it is the quality of service that is provided by the staff of

Parliament, and also the need for us to ensure that there is general satisfaction all around.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly happy that the Reportorial Staff of Parliament will finally reflect what we had said in another place is the correct posture that we ought to adopt. We think that now the Reportorial Staff of Parliament will be able to function at an even more efficient level than they have in the past.

We think that in all the circumstances, bearing in mind the conditions under which they have had to work, that the Staff of Parliament, generally, in Barbados can hold its head high as having been comparable with almost any parliamentary staff anywhere, and indeed superior to most in all the circumstances. There are times when we, as Members of Parliament, lean on them unnecessarily, or perhaps necessarily, Sir, but we cause them some inconvenience, and we think that this Resolution should indicate to all the members of the Staff of Parliament that, in the final analysis, we regard their efforts very, very highly and we thank them for the way in which they behave.

Mr. Speaker, I know that Your Honour is unable to participate in debate in Parliament, but I think it should be put on the record that the acquisition of the post of Sergeant-at-Arms has been almost single-handedly your own effort. I think that, with due respect to the rules and the customs of Parliament, it should be recorded that Your Honour, in your capacity as the Leader of parliamentary affairs in this country, took every step and caused there to be no stone unturned — you left no stone unturned — to ensure that this Parliament would go in the direction which Your Honour so carefully and meticulously have mapped out, especially after observing parliamentary practice in some other Commonwealth countries.

I think the members of the Debates Committee can take pride in the fact — and that I should say, for the members of the public, comprises Members from both sides of the House — those who attend regularly and those who do not attend so regularly, that when the history of Parliament is written, they would have continued the tradition of moving in the right direction.

I myself am a little chagrined that Cabinet does not always agree with everything recommended by the Debates Committee, and I look forward to the day when parliamentary affairs will be seen as a matter not to be touched by the Cabinet, but a matter left entirely to the Committee responsible for parliamentary affairs. I believe that when the Debates Committee has made a recommendation, it ought to become a tradition of this Parliament that the recommendation be adhered to by the Cabinet of the day.

One recognises that there are certain difficulties in that kind of approach, but I still believe that a parliamentary committee, that is to say, the Debates Committee,

is no different from the parliamentary committee which in truth and in essence the Cabinet is. The Cabinet is nothing more in the final analysis than a committee of this Parliament, and I am one of those who believe that no committee of Parliament is superior to any other committee of Parliament, and I look forward to the day when the traditions of this Honourable Chamber will be such that when Your Honour — that is, the Speaker of the day, in his capacity as Chairman of the Debates Committee — makes a recommendation to a Cabinet, that that Cabinet will recognise the parliamentary position as coming from Parliament and act upon it as a matter of course.

It is in that context that I have great pleasure in seconding this Resolution and commending the proposals in this Resolution to all honourable Members in this House.

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER re COST OF OPPOSITION'S PROPOSALS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Sir, there is one final thing I want to deal with. I did not want to hold up the House just before lunch when Your Honour made your statement, and I made one statement relating to one matter. There is one other statement that I have to make, Sir, just for the edification, a ministerial statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member may now proceed.
3.25 p.m.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker:—

“During the course of the Budget Debate in this House of Assembly, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, Chief Spokesman for the Opposition on financial matters, informed the House of Assembly of certain proposals relating to changes in taxation in Barbados. As the Debate progressed, a number of statements were made by Members of the other side as to the cost to the revenue of the said proposals.

“Subsequently considerable confusion arose at to the meaning of the proposals, particularly with respect to the adjustments to the Income Tax rate for income of \$15 000. On the 11th day of April, a special release was published by the Democratic Labour Party in both the Advocate-News and the Nation relating to the proposals. Both in the debate and in the articles referred to above a costing of \$35 million was given as the cost of the approximate loss of revenue to Government. In

order to ensure that the public of Barbados is aware of the cost of the tax proposals, I instructed the relevant officers in the Ministry of Finance and Planning to prepare for the information of the public a statement on the financial impact of the proposals as set out in the said release. The proposals as set out in the said release have now been costed and the results of the findings of the officials are as follows:—

1. Income Tax concessions 1, 2 and 3 of the said release — \$56 million
2. Cost of Concessions for proposals 4–10 — \$2 million
3. Corporation Tax as set out in the said release — \$12.7 million
4. Tourism — Reduction in fees for visitors driving permits — \$694 000
5. Reduction in property transfer tax — \$1.3 million
6. Reduction in Hotel and Restaurant Sales Tax \$6.4 million
7. Transportation — Reduction in taxes and fees for minibus and taxi operators — \$807 000
8. Reduction in petroleum product prices — \$11.8 million
9. Reduction in Customs Duties on Food and Drug Imports — \$17.7 million

A TOTAL REVENUE LOSS OF — \$109.4 million

Sir, this information is being presented in order to ensure that whatever debates takes place in Barbados with respect to the merits or the demerits of the proposals of both sides, the debates take place against a background of as factual an estimate of the financial implications.

Public Service, Sir — just in the interest of the public.....”

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of today's sitting and of Government Business.

I beg to move, Mr. Speaker, that this House do now stand adjourned until May 12, 1986 at 12 o'clock noon.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Oh, yes, Sir, I wish to have a word on the question of the adjournment.

As Your Honour is fully aware, this sitting today has been interesting. We have seen at least two ministerial statements. We have had the benefit of Your Honour's very erudite and scholastic insight with regard to certain matters in this House, and, Sir, as we come to adjourn this House, which could very well be the final adjournment.

(Aside: Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: How do you know that?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We heard a statement. Now, the rules of this House do not permit us to debate that statement, but I would say, Sir, that never in my life have I ever seen such a one-sided equation. This is.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is now debating the statement.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is suddenly debating the statement. The honourable Member knows the rules full well, that if you are speaking on the adjournment of the House, if you want to go into any matters, you must have given notice at the relevant time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is correct.

I am going on to say that the next time this House will meet — I am on good ground now — it will be the duty of the Opposition, in order to inform the rest of the country about the basis on which proper debate should take place, to bring information to this House, or elsewhere, in which we will show how information ought really to be disseminated in a community.

We will demonstrate when we next meet, Sir, that we, on this side, will present an equation in which we will show not only the cost. . . .

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is debating the statement.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am only indicating to Your Honour when we next meet what is likely to happen.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, oh. You cannot anticipate Parliament.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I am telling you what we will do

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member knows full well that he is restricted to certain things when speaking on an adjournment.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, and more is the pity that I am not able to talk about a number of things which would enlighten this House in relation to the matters. . . .

Mr. SPEAKER: At this point in time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: At this time.....

(*Aside:* Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Do not get into this. Stay out.)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: My colleague is suggesting, therefore, that we are going to enlighten the population when we hit the road. In those circumstances, let me accept the adjournment..... Until May 12?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, Sir, may I take this opportunity, since it is unlikely that we will be coming back.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Unlikely?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not hear the other word.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know, Sir. It is unlikely that we would be.....

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was saying it is unlikely that we will be addressing Your Honour from this side, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the honourable Member feels that he would not be coming back.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I can assure this Honourable House that I shall be back.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But certainly, Sir, I would hope that Your Honour would not wish to sit in that position.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will be back, I know.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, Sir, since you are one of the few honourable Members on that side..... I beg your pardon. I withdraw that.

Since Your Honour will be back, and all of my colleagues on this side, together with a few more, will be carrying the ball, may I take this opportunity to wish the few over there who will not be back.....

Laughter

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Anyhow, Sir, we accept the motion until May 12.....

Mr. SPEAKER: If the honourable Member has now concluded his speech....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I have not concluded. He wishes now to get up..... You know there is no responses to the.....

Mr. SPEAKER: But there is a certain amount of tolerance given.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I would just like to amend the motion. It should be May 13, not 12 May. I apologize to the House.

I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, May 13, 1986, at 12 o'clock noon.

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

The question that the House do now stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 13, 1986 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

3.35 p.m.

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