
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 – 91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

7th October, 1986

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

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. Weekes, (Speaker)
His Honour J. J. Payne, (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. E. Sandiford, B.A., M.A. (Econ.), J.P.,
(Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education and
Culture and Leader of the House)
Hon. H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B., (Leader
of the Opposition)
Hon. P. M. Greaves, B.A., (Minister of Transport,
Works and Telecommunications)
Hon. Dr. R. C. Haynes, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P.
(Edin.), (Minister of Finance)
Dr. D. G. Blackman, B.A., M.A.
D.A.C. Simmons, Esq., Q.C., LL.M.
O. S. Arthur, Esq., M.Sc., (Econ.)
C. V. Walker, Esq., (Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education and Culture)
L. L. Brathwaite, Esq., J.P.
E. Bourne, Esq.
Dr. E. A. Simmons
Hon. W. W. Hall, (Minister of Employment, Labour
Relations and Community Development)
C. A. Neblett, Esq., B.A., A.C.M.A.
R. L. Morris, Esq., B.A., Cert. Ed.
P.J.M. Miller, Esq.
R. P. Byer, Esq., LL.B., L.E.C.

Prayers were led by the Rev. Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, 30th September, 1986.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the meeting of the House of Assembly for Tuesday, 30th September, 1986, be taken as read and be confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I beg to second that.

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

PAPERS LAID

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development, I am commanded to lay the instruments adopted at the 72nd Session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva in June, 1986.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. P. J. M. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Question:—

To enquire of the Minister of Transport, Works and Telecommunications:—

1. Is the Minister aware that the East-West road of Dunlow Lane is in a state of disrepair and has been in that state for over a year?
2. Is the Minister also aware that the slipper drains on Dunlow Lane need repair?
3. If the answers are in the affirmative, will the Minister please indicate when repairs will be effected?

4. If the answers are in the negative, will the Minister please investigate?

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Mr. R. P. BYER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Questions:—

To enquire of the Attorney General:—

Is the Attorney General aware that in the interest of justice there is a need for the improved functioning of the Magistrates Courts?

If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Attorney General give the House an undertaking that firm and positive action will be taken to introduce measures to speed up the functioning of the said courts?

To enquire of the Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development:—

Will the Minister state whether consideration will be given to the suggestion that a park and playing area for young children be provided as part of the recreational development now taking place at Drax Hall, St. George?

To enquire of the Minister of Housing and Lands:—

Does the Minister know that the restrictions on the disposition of lots purchased under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, 1980–53, are causing hardship to persons who seek to improve their properties in as much as commercial banks are not prepared to accept title rooted in this Act, because of these restrictions?

If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister state whether consideration will be given to the removal of these restrictions?

To enquire of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs:—

Will the Minister state whether the Corporate Affairs section currently administered by the Registration Office is a department of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce or a department of his Ministry?

To enquire of the Minister of Transport, Works and Telecommunications:—

1. Is the Minister aware of the inadequate water supply, including low water pressure, to residents of Drax Hall Jump, St. George?

2. Will the Minister state whether there are any immediate plans to alleviate this situation?

To enquire of the Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development:—

1. Will the Minister state whether there is a policy about the grading of uneven playing fields?
2. In any case, will the Minister state whether consideration will be given to the grading of the playing field at Ellerton, St. George?

To enquire of the Minister of Housing and Lands:—

1. Is the Minister aware that Dash Valley in St. George and Clifton Hall in St. John are designated tenancies under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act 1980–53, and that residents in those said tenancies, who have purchased the freehold of lands of which they are tenants are being refused permission to build by the Chief Town Planner for the reason that those said tenancies are located in Zone 1 water zones?

If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister state what measures will be adopted to alleviate these difficulties, bearing in mind s.22 (1) of the said Act?

To enquire of the Minister of Education and Culture:

Will the Minister state whether it is Government's intention to convert the Old St. Lukes Girls School building located at Upper Brighton, St. George, into a community type centre?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is also another question here by the honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Mr. P. J. M. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following question:

To enquire of the Minister of Transport, Works and Telecommunications:—

1. Is the Minister aware that there are many areas along Baxters Road, Bridgetown where the drains are uncovered and there are no sidewalks and that this constitutes a hazard to pedestrians?
2. If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister indicate when repairs will be done and sidewalks constructed?
3. If the answer is in the negative, will the Minister investigate the matter so that there can be a resolution of the problem?

Hon. W. W. HALL entered the Chamber and took his seat.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

RESOLUTION RE THE LATE FITZ EVESTA PAYNE

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move a Resolution of condolence to the late Fitz Evesta Payne who was the father of the Deputy Speaker of this Honourable Chamber, and the moving of any such Resolution is one which is done with considerable pain and sorrow.

The late Fitz Evesta Payne was born on 5th November, 1909. He was the father of eleven children, and also was privileged to be the grandfather of nine children.

During his lifetime, he toiled in this country not only in the raising of a large family, but also in making a substantial contribution to the economic growth and development of this country.
12.30 p.m.

All of us are aware of the struggles which persons of humble origin have had in this country in order to make a living, and in order to make their contribution as decent and honourable citizens. The fact that Barbados has been able to achieve its level of political stability, economic growth, as well as to maintain a quality of life that is much higher than our resources might indicate, all of those are due in no small measure to the solid citizens who have been produced by this country and who in accordance with their likes have tried to carve a niche for themselves and their family.

Fitz Evesta Payne was part of that struggle and part of that development. He lived in a rural area of Rock Dundo in the parish of St. James and he lived the life of a rural farmer, a small farmer, contributing to the agricultural development of this country as a planter of the main agricultural crop, the cultivation of sugar cane and also other vegetable crops. And out of the resources that he was able to bring together, he was able to support not only his immediate family but part of that larger extended family which used to be the hallmark of the social structure in this country.

I knew him personally because on more than one occasion, indeed on many occasions, we used to collaborate together when I myself toiled as a small farmer in this country. I was not part of the landed gentry which I think was said on the floor of this Honourable Chamber. But as a small farmer myself together with others of my family, we had an economic relationship with the late Fitz Evesta Payne, and he assisted me and other members of my family in the trucking of our sugar cane to the nearby sugar factories.

So in moving this tribute to the life of one who has toiled substantially in this vineyard, I do so not only in a general way but also in a very specific and personal way. The economic life of this country is the poorer for the passing of Fitz Evesta Payne because in that development of our country we are losing yet another of our small farmers who have tended to bear the brunt of the economic development in this country and it is a category of worker who is fast passing away.

In addition to his economic activities, he also was a devoted husband and a dedicated father. Anyone at that time — anyone at this time who has had the task of developing a full quiver and rearing eleven children must be counted among the great economists whom this country have produced, because it is very difficult to raise even a smaller number of children. But with eleven and not only eleven children but to see, ensure, and secure that they have all made and are making substantial contributions to the life of this country is a tribute in no small way to a very dedicated and devoted father.

I need not speak of the conscientious way and the dignified way in which our dear colleague, the honourable Member for St. James North, goes about his professional and political life. That is well known to all of us in this Chamber and it is part of that genetic inheritance that he is so well respected in this Chamber that he occupies the No. 2 position of dignity in this Honourable Chamber as our Deputy Speaker, and it is the quirk of fate no doubt that on that occasion when our Deputy Speaker was about to chair a session of this Chamber that he would have been made unable to carry out that public function through the coincidental death of his father on that occasion.

Fitz Evesta Payne was also the father of our Deputy Solicitor General, another young outstanding Barbadian who continues to make a significant contribution to the administrative life of this country, and there are others as well in the immediate family. One of the children is an air hostess with British Caledonian Airways and there are others both of the immediate family and the extended family who are making their contributions to the development of the social, political, and economic life in this country.
12.40 p.m.

I therefore take note, also, that this is a life which was richly blessed with that kind of commonsense and those virtues on which this country has been built. All eleven children are all still alive and his widow, Miriam Payne was the equal partner in that life of dedication and that life of commitment.

Hon. M. A. KING entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I therefore beg to move the following Resolution of Condolence:-

"WHEREAS the late FITZ EVESTA PAYNE, Esquire, father of the Honourable Member for the constituency of St. James North passed away on Tuesday, September 30, 1986:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House extend our deepest sympathy to the widow of the deceased and to his relatives."

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

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to second the Resolution so eloquently and feelingly moved by my friend, the honourable Member for St. Michael South and to express on behalf of the Opposition and on my own behalf our deepest condolence to the honourable Member for St. James North and to his mother and his other relatives.

I myself did not have the pleasure of knowing personally his late father, Fitz Evesta Payne, but I have had a rather long association with two of his children, the honourable Member for St. James North and his brother, Mr. Carlisle Payne, and I have had the opportunity to observe them both during all these years and like the honourable Member who has spoken, to recognize that the hard work and the qualities which obviously their parents possessed have certainly been handed down to both of these gentlemen and, I am sure, as well to the other children.

An occasion such as this, Mr. Speaker, is a very sad occasion for relatives. It is a difficult occasion as well for friends and others who offer sympathy because no amount of words can, of course, ever bring back a life in being. But I think that the honourable Member can take comfort from the fact that his father has not only exceeded the three score and ten years, but that he has contributed significantly in the manner outlined by the honourable Member for St. Michael South to this country and particularly to his family.

I wish, therefore, to concur in the Resolution of condolence and sympathy, and again to extend on my own personal behalf and on behalf of the Members of the Opposition, and I am sure on behalf of other Members of the House as well our deepest sympathy on this very sad occasion.

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to add my word of condolence and my feeling of sadness on the passing of Mr. Fitz Evesta Payne. Yesterday Monday was a week ago when last I visited him. I paid a special visit on Monday last week and had a long dis-

cussion with him on his bed at the hospital, and there were some very prophetic words which he had to share with myself and those present. Mr. Payne, at that time, looked in the pink of health and it therefore came as a deep shock when last Tuesday morning I was told of his passing.

You can probably guess that Mr. Payne has been a friend of mine and at that time I not only visited Mr. Payne but, unfortunately, his brother-in-law, our representative for St. James North uncle who also at this time is still a patient at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I think that part of his advice that he gave then I should probably share with this House because I think his family too seemed to be concerned about some of the things that were going through his mind during his last days, and one of the very interesting things that he shared with me is typical of the kind of experience that most of us, if not all of us who sit in this House shared as young people in a developing Barbados and the late Mr. Payne had this to say to me. He said "If he had to live his life all over again, one thing he would not do is to beat his children the way he did." I think this is one of the things that weighed heavily on his mind.

I think it is a very interesting comment on today's life and the life that we lived as children where parents thought that the way to correct and make children go forward was by the rod. I think today, as Mr. Payne reflected then about that that maybe we have gone the other way and we have thought about throwing away the rod because I well recall one of the proudest moments in my life some years ago when I first flew Caribbean Airways for the first time on a flight to Barbados I was to encounter the first black hostess that I had ever seen on an airplane and when I asked who this person was and where she was from I was proud to find that she came from the parish where I was born and that individual happens to be the daughter of the late Fitz Payne and I felt proud about that so the rod probably was overdone but it did a lot of good as well.

I in this House would like therefore to send my deepest sympathy to the Payne family and in their deepest moments of grief I share their sympathy with them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: In my own capacity, I would like to share the sentiments of all that has been said in as much as I did not know the late Mr. Payne, but I know in times of bereavement it is a source of comfort to the relatives when one recognizes the contribution that one has made to his country and I would hope that all that they have sown in the past will continue to be fruitful.

I therefore ask that this Resolution of condolence be sent to the family and we shall now observe the passing of this Resolution by one minute's silence.

The House stood for one minute's silence.
12.50 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I am proposing to move the suspension of the usual Standing Orders. This is purely to facilitate the House in the conduct of its business today. For example, there are no replies to questions and so unless we become hamstrung by time limits that may not be applicable, I am begging to move that the following Standing Orders be suspended, and in moving that Resolution for the suspension of Standing Orders, I give the assurance to Members opposite, that this will tend in no way to infringe any of the rights traditionally enjoyed by Members of the Opposition or indeed of Members of the House generally.

I therefore 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. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

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

Order No. 1 was called — To move that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of the island.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. P. BYER in the Chair.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1986-87 NO. 3

HEAD 24 — PENSIONS — \$3,200,000

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Addendum to this Resolution clearly sets out what the problem has been, and it is fairly straightforward.

In the budget of the last Government, not the budget of this Government, certain proposals were put forward in respect of the increase in the cost of living allowance for certain categories of pensioners. I believe that the increase in the allowance was 50 per cent. By an error of calculation, an amount of \$253 380 was approved, which roughly represents one month's expenditure.

I want to stress that this error has nothing to do with this Minister of Finance and nothing to do with this Government. The end result is that we have had an error to the extent of \$3 200 000, and this is what we are seeking to address today.

I believe that today will be an interesting day in that we have many areas of validations, many areas of corrections, but I wish to assure this Honourable House that this administration will correct all the wrongs of the past, and will ensure that things will be done in the correct way in the future.

(Aside)

(Laughter)

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition seems to be a little embarrassed over this matter and I quite understand that.

(Laughter)

(Aside)

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If he does not wish me to talk about it anymore, so be it, but there is just one point I would like to make, that when you look at the spread of these Resolutions and others to come, when we talk about deficits I trust that you will remember and keep a little notebook and add up these various amounts that you will see today and on future days in this Parliament.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words, I beg to move that Head 24 stand part.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the voting of this particular money being sought which really will give full effect to a proposal introduced by the Barbados Labour Party to advance the welfare of the senior citizens of this country.

Mr. Chairman, unfortunately the House is being asked to make a lot of the mistake which has been made, and I really feel I have a responsibility to say that the nature of the error that has been made clearly establishes that there was no intention on the part of the Barbados Labour Party nor any intention on the part of the previous Minister of Finance and Planning to mislead the House or to cite figures which in good faith the Minister knew not to be accurate.

Mr. Chairman, politically there would be no advantage in the Barbados Labour Party doing so, there would be no advantage, Sir, in our providing a \$3 million benefit to the old people in this country and then publicise that benefit as merely amounting to \$¼ million.

There was no political advantage, and I also want to say that even though the Minister of Finance and Planning feels the need to grandstand on this issue, the fact of the matter is that the Minister well knows that it was a technician error, and that we cannot in this country and in any Government reasonably expect that a Minister of Finance and Planning must cross every "T", and dot every "I", do every multiplication, addition, subtraction and division.
1.00 p.m.

All that has happened in this case, Sir, is that there has been an administrative lapse. The former Minister of Finance and Planning asked in good faith to be provided with a cost of a proposal to increase the cost of living allowances to people who had retired before 1976 by 50 per cent. He was given a figure by his civil servants, top civil servants of this country, and all that has happened, Sir, is that the Minister of Finance and Planning was given a figure for one month, when in point of fact he had asked for a figure for twelve. If we are to tire this House on issues concerning the question as to whether as a matter of policy a Minister of Finance and Planning must get down to the routine which must be carried by his public servants, I believe that we will be wasting the time of this House.

But I want to go further I want to join in the call by the Leader of the Opposition for Government to really bring before the House of Assembly issues and legislation that substantially advance the work of the Government, and that will substantially advance and substantially lift the level of issues which we are debating in this Chamber.

Last week, Sir, we were treated to a why don't you let the Chairman rule?

(Aside)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: This is just part of a general effort not to develop new policies but to search back into the past to find ways of discrediting the Barbados Labour Party. And Mr. Chairman, Members of the Government should be careful of throwing stones. Persons in glass houses really should not throw stones. This House has been regaled with errors of calculations, errors of omission, all kinds of errors by Members from the other side. We have had, Sir, statements to this House that tax proposals were meant to be cheap and plentiful, like fish in glut, would cost \$35 million which read into the records of this House. We have had statements by the Minister of Economic Affairs to the effect that the debt service of this country does not include the repayment of capital and that the debt service for this year is \$230 million rather than \$106. If the Minister were to look in the Estimates of Expenditure on page 25, he would see that in point of fact he is misleading the House when he comes with these gross errors of over estimation.

So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have no difficulty supporting this part of the Resolution. The House now understands clearly that despite the grandstanding of the Minister of Finance and Planning that this was not an error that one — it is not a policy error. It is not an error that reasonable minds would attribute to a Minister of Finance and Planning. We accept the responsibility for it because it was committed in our time. It was committed, Sir not under special Ministerial of responsibility and all we are asking the Government to do is that when matters like these which are not necessarily intended to be controversial arise, that let us maintain a good spirit in this House of Assembly rather than try to gain cheap political advantage out of matters which are routine.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I therefore support this Resolution and as I said earlier, we are not going to shift the blame on the technician. It is an error obviously of arithmetic and that we accept full responsibility for it just as we accept full responsibility for bringing to the House of Assembly a 50 per cent of the cost of living allowance to improve the welfare of the old people of this country.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The question that Head 24 — Pensions — stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1986 — 87 No. 4 —
PART II CAPITAL — \$20 265 332
HEAD 73 — MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING

Item (B) was called — To move the passing of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$20 265 332 from the

Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1986-87, Part II - Capital, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1986-87, No. 4 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution deals with I think three Sub-heads and I will first address my comments under Sub-head 10. Again Sir, what we are trying to do here is to regularize an accounting process which was incorrect and it has been brought to my attention by the Accountant General that there is a need to ensure that the correct process is followed in this matter.

As I have previously said, I am not afraid to come to Parliament and correct the errors of the past. I am not doing this in order to make political capital out of it. In point of fact, Sir, it would suit me not to bring this matter to the House at this stage because at the end of the year I will show a deficit of some \$18.4 million far in excess of what one would have anticipated and, therefore — strictly a paper matter — it would reflect in the deficit and therefore when we come to look at the true deficit at the end of the year we will have to subtract this \$18 million.

As the Addendum to the Resolution clearly sets out, the money was transferred directly from the Central Bank to the fund and therefore the transactions would not be reflected in the accounts of the Accountant General. What this Resolution seeks to do is to make sure that the Accountant General's records are in order and what you will have is an expenditure of \$18 million and a receipt of the same amount. So it does not involve any new expenditure on behalf of the Government. But it is important to recognize that this will nevertheless reflect in terms of an overall deficit.

Now Sir, I believe one or two words I should say about the Industrial Credit Fund. This is one of the matters which had been addressed by me in my recent visit to Washington. The Industrial Credit Fund was set up in 1983 within the policy objectives of the past Government to the further development of the industrial process of Barbados. It is evident that because of the depressed state of the economy that the private productive sector of the economy has not been making the fullest use of the funds that were available.

1.10 p.m.

It is noted that there is a significant increase in demand for access to this facility at the moment, and we anticipate that there should be a further draw down this year in the region of, I think, \$8 million as projected at the moment.

So far, Sir, the loans have funded projects in the following areas: In the tourism sector — \$3.7 million; in

the manufacturing sector — \$1.6 million; in agro industry — \$0.6 million and in mining and quarrying — \$0.25 million. They are U.S. dollars.

The point that I would like to signal to the private sector is this: that there is money available from this source which can assist in the tourism, or manufacturing or the agro industrial development sectors of the economy and there has been a pretty wide interpretation in terms of the uses of this fund and the World Bank has indicated to me that in respect of the next tranche of, I think, it is U.S. \$10 million as a further loan, which we will be drawing down later on in respect of the Industrial Credit Fund that the parameters will be as wide, if not wider.

Some 32 taxi operators and some 18 fishermen have also benefitted from this and loans have been approved for persons engaged in light manufacturing activities such as handicrafts, bags and so on. So that there is quite a wide range of activity which can benefit from this source of financing and with the clear evidence of a definite response by the private and productive sectors of Barbados to the fiscal and monetary policies of the Government and from the confidence generated by the approach of this Government to the management of the economy, I would like to give every assurance that this Government will be pursuing avenues for funding projects in the private sector.

We are at the moment exploring access to the funds available under the 936 arrangement with Puerto Rico. As you know Congress has now approved that matter and, in addition, I would like to point out that we are talking on a much wider range. We are seeking a much wider range of financing quite outside the area of twin projects and so on. We are looking for significant inputs of equity and otherwise from this possible source of financing.

Generally speaking, Sir, I would say that I am quite happy with the use of this particular facility to date, and I have had a firm indication from the World Bank that further funds would be available. So the important signal really to send out to the private sector in particular is that the money is available for a wide range of productive activities in Barbados, that the word "industrial" is quite widely interpreted and that interpretation is acceptable both to the World Bank and to the previous Government of Barbados and to this Government of Barbados because it is to the overall advantage of the country.

I believe, Sir, that I have covered the relevant areas in respect of that particular subhead, and I think that with those few remarks, I beg to move that this Head 73 do now stand part.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 73, Subhead 10 stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 75 – MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, in moving the passing of Head 75, I would like to explain to the Honourable House that a sum of \$49 100 had been provided in the Estimates 1985/86 for the purchase of a motor car for the Right Honourable Sir William Douglas, Chief Justice.

Now, a new car was bought for the Right Honourable Chief Justice, a Mercedes Benz Model 280 S.C. and the cost of that car was \$61 878 so that there was a shortfall of some \$12 868 in the provision made for the purchase of the car for the Right Honourable the Chief Justice.

1.20 p.m.

Now in the Estimates of Capital Expenditure for the current financial year, an amount of \$50 000 was provided under the abovementioned Head 75 for the purchase of a motor car for the recently appointed fifth Puisne Judge. Now in order to expedite the acquisition of the car for the Chief Justice, funds had been taken from the amount allocated for the purchase of the car for the fifth Puisne Judge with the concurrence of course of the Ministry of Finance and used to make up the shortfall in the amount required for the payment of the car to the Chief Justice; so that the Chief Justice's car then was paid for out of the funds provided for him plus some from funds provided for the car for the fifth Puisne Judge, so that the result was that there was a shortage then in the amount of funds available for the purchase of a motor car for the fifth Puisne Judge.

It is now intended to purchase the additional car for the fifth Puisne Judge, a Model 280E Mercedes Benz, the same as the cars provided for the other Puisne Judges. This motor car is now available in the country at a cost of some \$48 125, so that in order to acquire this car and to meet the cost of the car an additional \$10 989 is now required. This Resolution before the House seeks an additional amount of \$10 989 to supplement the Capital Estimates under Head 75 to meet the purchase of the motor car for the fifth Puisne Judge.

With those few remarks, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 75 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – stand part of the Schedule.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

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

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Head 78 – Ministry of Health and Social Security – was called.

Hon. W. W. HALL: Mr. Chairman, it was once said in this House that I would be a perennial Senator and as such would never be given the opportunity to do this job today. Vic Johnson said so. However, Sir, having spent ten years in this room if not in this Chamber from the point of view that I was in the Senate, I find solace in the fact that I am no longer sitting over there but I am on this side, and this side means Government. I also hope, Sir, that the honourable Member for St. Peter will not believe that I am seeking to gain political points, for I am sure he will not believe that this is a nebulous matter.

This Resolution seeks, as explained in the Addendum, to authorise the supplementary provision of \$1 797 980.39 under Capital Expenditure.

If honourable Members would turn to the Estimates for 1986–87 in the capital vote, Head 78 – Subhead 8 – Housing Welfare, they will note that Cabinet voted some \$2 099 000 for the year 1986–87. I think that everyone is cognizant of the fact that in voting this sum of money for the financial year 1986–87, the Government would therefore have twelve months in which to spend this money.

We also have to look at the role of the Housing Welfare, and we only have to look at the explanatory notes to find out exactly what it entails, and it says in the description:

“The function of this subhead is to assist the indigent and the needy in the following areas as is necessary:—

- (i) repairs to existing houses;
- (ii) replacement of houses which are beyond repair;
- (iii) the provision of welfare houses for the homeless;
- (iv) the resiting of private and welfare houses as might become necessary.”

I think, Sir, that to understand it quite clearly, we have to look very seriously at this capital vote. In April the Ministry of Finance approved the release of \$345 000

to the National Assistance Board for the first quarter, April to June. Some six days later in June, the Ministry again approved the sum of \$345 000 for the same quarter April to June. That is \$690 000. On 25th April, the Minister of Health minuted to the Permanent Secretary that he wanted an increase for the Housing Welfare Fund from April to June and this increase was to the tune of \$950 000 which meant that between April 1 and the end of May, Sir, they drew down \$1.6 million. The entire vote was \$2 099 000.

It is interesting to note, Sir, that at 1st April, they had an overdraft of \$121 900 and commitments of \$63 055 which is a total of \$184 994. That was the overdraft; so when you look at the draw down of \$1 640 000 plus the overdraft of nearly \$185 000, it can be clearly seen that little or no money was left in the then vote. Added to this, Sir, Government committed themselves to \$225 228.10 for materials alone. That is still outstanding so I think we have to pay for them.

Sir, when we assumed office on 4th June and Housing Welfare was assigned to the Ministry of Labour and Community Development, I saw rather early that we were in deep trouble, and so this welfare programme which is so important in this country was brought to a virtual halt. Reluctantly we did this. It meant that the old people in this country for the months of June, July, August and September could not expect that their houses could be done, because there was virtually no money in this vote to do those houses. It meant, Sir, that the artisans were now jobless and there were some 109 houses outstanding that needed to be done. So without any money we had to scale down the activity in the housing welfare programme to such an extent that in April, the then administration spent on carpentry, masonry, electrical work, painting, well digging et cetera, \$689 460.13, and in May they spent \$849 091.51, so that in these two months they spent \$1 539 551.64.
1.30 p.m.

When one adds the commitment of \$1.2 million, Sir, it can be seen that in those two months alone the capital vote was over-spent in the most inexplicable way, Sir. When we realized what the position was, we had a situation where we had to scale down the operation and we spent \$23 000 in June, \$12 000 in July, \$34 000 in August and \$2 000, Sir, in September. It has been said that we should get a Supplementary. But Sir, as you know, we are hearing now and we have not met for some eight weeks and furthermore, Sir, it is important that we get these houses done so this is why we are here now.

I do not believe, Sir, that I have read anywhere where the members of the Barbados Labour Party have denied that this money was spent. What I have seen in

the newspapers — I have seen an article by one Percy Smith who has said that the situation is rather confusing and he is saying that all I did was to put Democratic Labour Party personnel people on the board and things like that. But I am saying, Sir that it is not confusing. The situation is that this money was spent and as far as I am concerned the money was there in the capital vote for the entire year and the mere fact that they have spent it in a mere two months, Sir, I think that there is a great need for concern and I have reported this matter to the Cabinet, Sir, and the Cabinet has decided that there will be an inquiry into this matter. In the next two or three days, Sir, after further consultation with the Attorney General, I will be making an announcement to this effect.

One other letter in the newspaper, Sir, written by Phillip George or George Phillip or George of St. Philip or something so, Sir, people all writing under assumed names

(Asides)

Hon. W. W. HALL: have said, Sir, that as far as they are concerned, they built the houses and they wanted to catch the rainy season. I am telling you, Sir, that having perused the files I noticed that in 1983 when the capital vote was \$1.2 million, the Minister was only able to get \$150 000 out of a \$1.2 million vote during the rainy season and today in 1986 they are saying that there is justification in trying to catch a rainy season, as if the rainy season does not exist in any other year.

Sir, I am saying that during election time the question of need disappeared from the scenario and I believe, Sir, that we must never believe in the dillusion that we must spend more than we have and as a consequence, Sir, I believe that the position taken by the previous administration, Sir, can hardly be explained. I believe, Sir, that we have to look after the old people of this country, the elderly people of this country. It may surprise most of you in this august Chamber, Sir, that 10% of the population in Barbados.....

(Aside)

Hon. W. W. HALL: eleven per cent as my learned colleague said — 11% of the population of Barbados they are in this age group and what is not surprising as I look around the room, Sir, is that in another 20 years nearly all of us will be in it and, therefore

(Aside)

Hon. W. W. HALL: I said that as I look around this room in another 20 years nearly all of us will be in that category and I would like to join company with the Minister of Health when he said yesterday that more Day

Care Centres should be built so that the old people of this country will be properly looked after. I dare say, Sir, that in African societies they make a point of looking after their elderly. They feel that the wisdom of the older folk and their experience is something that must be treasured and they feel, too, that the experiences gained during these hard years is something that the youth can glean something from. And you know, Sir, it is a curious paradox that the Eskimoes leave their old people in the cold to die. We feel in Barbados — in fact, we feel in the Democratic Labour Party that our Housing Welfare Programme must be grounded on a humanistic philosophy, Sir, of social right and social justice, and social development which joins the Democratic Labour Party.

(Aside)

Hon. W. W. HALL: I think that the honourable Member for St. Michael East is going to speak soon. Sir, I think that whenever the honourable Member for St. Michael East speaks he will elaborate on that, Sir, that our position in the Democratic Labour Party is grounded on this philosophy of social right. We do not believe, Sir, that the social welfare programme should be operated on a principle of largesse. We do not feel so, Sir. We feel that that position has gone out of style long ago and, therefore, Sir, we want you to know that the Democratic Labour Party would be looking very seriously at the elderly in this country and we will be making sure that the housing programme, that all the dispensations will be of a matter of need and it will be done with integrity so that we will not find that this programme will form part and parcel of a political game.

Sir, the national assistance will always be necessary, Sir, to help those residual groups that cannot qualify under the National Insurance Scheme. It is non-contributory, Sir, and we find that the stigma that is attached to it whereby people no longer wish to associate themselves with it, Sir, must be gone forever. And I feel that the principles under which the Democratic Labour Party will operate this scheme, Sir, will ensure that people will come and will qualify as a matter of right and social justice rather than one of a poor handout.

I think that it might well be necessary, Sir, to mention that anyone with a modicum of humanism would have understood quite clearly that if they had completely mutilated this capital vote that they would not seek to do the same thing with the current vote and, even though this Resolution has to do with the capital vote, I want everyone of you under the sound of my voice to understand this clearly that they have actually done the same thing with the current vote. Because, Sir, as far as I understand it, you should not carry over a vote at the beginning of the year and that is exactly what was done with the current vote. 1.40 p.m.

Not only was it done to the tune of \$181 000 in the Capital vote, it was done so to the tune of \$471 000.

So much so, Sir, that now we find that while that is done, and given the situation where it was felt that the Board should only know these things when they delve into the situation, we find ourselves with the unfortunate situation with the bank having to write the Board saying that they have an overdraft of nearly \$400 000. Having only paid that last month, Sir, it means that very soon in the new year — I hope not before — we will have to come again to this Honourable House and ask for a bit of money so that we can carry on the programmes that are so necessary.

I believe that there has been a lot of talk on the fact that there were 25 workers who were laid off from the National Assistance Board. I just want to make it quite clear that these 25 workers were never on the list. When we assumed office in June their names were not there, they were not budgeted for. We were told that they were brought on between April and May, but they were actually brought on during the flood, and we are saying that these same workers, even though I am diametrically opposed to the idea of dismissing a worker at a day's notice, that is not true, they were given a week's notice, and the fact of the matter is that while the artisans were sent home since June, these men were there doing nothing for months. I had just to say that so that we would really let this Honourable Chamber know exactly what is the situation.

Sir, I think that those few remarks would allow the honourable Members to understand what is the real position with the National Assistance Board and to understand why it is necessary for us to come at this time for a supplementary.

Therefore, Sir, I would now ask that Head 78 stand part.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I beg to second that and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I understand the problem of the Honourable Minister. They find themselves with little money to deliver the many promises that have been made, so he is seeking to put the blame on the past Government.

Aside

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Now, Sir, let us look at the history of this. The programme for housing welfare, providing proper basic shelter facilities for the poor, the aged, the needy and the indigent was a programme that received its greatest impetus and thrust under the Barbados Labour Party administration. We are trying to find in the debates of 1976 how much money the Democratic Labour Party, then in power, allocated for this type of facility in 1976, but, Sir, I would just remind you.....

Aside

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will come to that. But, Sir, I would just remind you, I know that you are so taken up with the debate as not to remember that Standing Order that asks all Members to be silent when others are speaking, and stop the heckling over there. I know you will protect me as one of a minority, of a very mini minority.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have that assurance, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. In 1976 it was difficult to find any social development policy residing in the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party aimed at the amelioration of conditions for the persons whom I outlined when I first spoke.

I have no compunction in saying that I believe it was about 1979, possibly 1980, the present honourable Member for St. Michael East, who was then a Minister in the Barbados Labour Party administration with responsibility for social welfare and social development, clearly outlined the policy of the party of which he was then a member, and still a member.....

Aside

(Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: I was expelled in July.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am learning for the first time that he has been expelled, Sir, but when he was still a member of the party and as a Minister he did not resign in July, he had to be expelled. He was reluctant to leave. But be that as it may, Sir, and in all seriousness, the real policy for social development and social welfare development started after 1978 when the policy of the Labour Party was explained to the country and put into practical effect.

I believe the debates will show that the same honourable Member was loud in his criticisms of the Democratic Labour Party and the present Prime Minister as a party that had no policy, no philosophy for the advancement of the categories of persons who were indigent, poor, aged, handicapped and homeless and so on.....

(*Aside*: Hon. B. M. TAITT: You are misquoting him.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I misquoted him? I will repeat the words in here one day, Sir, on an appropriate debate. I do not believe that anybody can deny that in the period 1976 to 1986 great strides were made, a lot of money was spent, in the provision of facilities for those persons.

(*Aside*).

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not commenting on misspent or otherwise I am going to call for the inquiry most strongly later on for other reasons.

Now, Sir, in June 1986 in Barbados there were 3,500 applications by persons for their homes to be repaired and so on under the welfare schemes. In November 1984 there were 2,175 applications, and I say in June this year that 2,175 had increased to 3,500. There would therefore be more than an obligation cast on any Government to try and satisfy that demand.

In the 1985-86 Estimates \$2 million was voted; in the Estimates this year \$2.1 million was voted. Among the figures that I gave, there are 419 welfare houses alone of which 192 are in St. Michael. In November 1984 the number of welfare houses was 320. Between November 1984 and May 1986, 101 welfare houses were built and insured under the group policy scheme.
1.50 p.m.

Now, in October, 1985.....

(*Aside*)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am going to leave here one of these days and come over there and cuff you, you know, I am not frightened for you. In October 1985 as part of.....

(*Aside*)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Barrow threatened to kick Lloyd Smith to the moon so what is wrong with if I cuff you.....

(*Aside*)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The highest. Efforts were made to make the public of Barbados more aware of the services that were offered by the National Assistance Board. A circular letter was sent out by the National Assistance Board to a variety of persons in this country and organisations. For example, the Police, the schools, churches, service clubs, health clinics were some of the bodies to whom letters were sent advising of the facilities of the National Assistance Board and the response from these organisations was very good so that there was an increase in the number of referrals from outside bodies, apart from what the welfare officers and the people working in the National Assistance Board would themselves find. There were referrals from these bodies and groups, Sir, and the fact of the greater publicity and the referrals from the bodies mentioned partly accounts for the increase in the waiting list from 2,175 to 3,500.

Now, in the light of this, the then Government was very concerned about the large number of waiters and a deliberate and conscious decision was taken to try and bring relief to as many senior citizens and destitute persons as possible. I am informed that the rainy season and the influence of the elements was a consideration.

I know for a fact that the two newspapers of this island took it upon themselves to run campaigns highlighting homeless cases, bad housing cases and so on, and pressure was put on the Government and on the various representatives obviously, to move speedily to have repairs effected. No one has taken into account all that has been said and written, the impact of house fires in this country on the resources of the National Assistance Board and the welfare services. Now you are in Government, you will know that almost daily there is a house fire in this country and the M.P. responsible for the area is put under immediate pressure to try and ease the plight of those fire victims.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the Welfare Service and the National Assistance Board were focal organisations for the relief of pressure from fire victims and again, where the Housing Authority did not have a house immediately available, it was left to the National Assistance Board to provide for that person. I am so advised and I believe it.

In addition to these matters, Sir, there was a conscious policy by the last Government as far as possible and a policy at variance with the previous policy to take indigent persons out of the District Hospitals, out of the Almshouses and as far as possible accommodate them in their own homes or in circumstances as near as possible to their own ordinary community existence and again, Sir, housing was provided by the National Assistance Board for persons in those circumstances.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has another three minutes to speak.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That is all I have half an hour.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is half an hour.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, consult the Clerk. Do not listen to him).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has three minutes more.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Houses were not only repaired, Sir. They were painted, they were treated against termites, they were relocated, pits were dug. All of this goes into the \$2.1 million.

Asides.

The honourable Minister of Health is shaking his head and saying it is not true. I want the public enquiry. Let the one that writes about free at last come. I want him, the one with the paint. We want a public enquiry, nothing less. Let us get into it now. Do not tell me. Every constituency was serviced. We will get it at the enquiry. Let us have the enquiry.

St. Michael South Central in May 1986 had 20 houses done, the constituency of the honourable Member.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It obviously redounded to your benefit. You are in here. St. Michael Central in May 1986 had 27; St. Michael North West — 19; St. Michael West — 21; St. Michael South — 18 — this is only for the month of May — St. Michael West Central — 16; St. Michael East — 4; St. Michael North East — 9; St. Michael South East — 13; Christ Church West — 13; St. Philip North — 9; St. Philip South — 5; St. John — 7 — But wait, where is St. Thomas? St. Thomas had 13.

(*Aside: Christ Church West Central*)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What West Central? Christ Church West Central? Christ Church West Central had 16. In May

(*Aside*)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No. Let us have the enquiry. Now, I give the figures I hear the figures are wrong. You cannot please them at all, Sir. But all, as far as possible, Sir.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You may wind up now.

Mr. D.A.C. SIMMONS: I will wind up, Sir. I believe I may be able to speak again too.

The whole country was serviced and all I hear the complaint is that the money was spent in two months, but it is capital and it can be spent at any time of the year. You know that. It can be spent at any time of the year. It was spent early before the rainy season came in July to save the poor old people of this country from the rain falling on them all night, very difficult circumstances.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right, Sir. Thank you. 2.00 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member's time has expired.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, we are going to break for lunch at this stage. The debate will continue after lunch and therefore I beg to move that you do now report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, we are about to break at this stage for lunch, but before moving the suspension, I seek leave of the House to reopen the item "Government Notices".

Mr. SPEAKER: If there is no objection, leave is granted.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

A Bill to provide for the implementation by Barbados of the Agreement for the establishment of a regime for CARICOM enterprises and for related matters.

A Bill to amend the Public Loans (1961) Act and to validate certain actions taken under that Act.

I am also seeking permission to deal with that latter Bill in all its stages at this sitting.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: If the House will permit, the honourable Member has indicated to me that it is his intention to seek leave to deal with the Bill of which notice has just been given. Obviously we would wish if it is in the interest of the public to deal with the matter as expeditiously as possible, but I should certainly want time to consult on the matter, so that I want to indicate to my friend that certainly during the luncheon period provided we can get certain information from the Government, we will be able to indicate the Opposition's view on the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Obviously the honourable Member is out of order, but I think consideration will be given to that.

Laughter

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is why, Mr. Speaker, I began by saying "if the House will permit".

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On motion of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, a Bill to amend the Public Loans (1961) Act and to validate certain actions taken under that Act, was read a first time.

On motion of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, a Bill to provide for the implementation by Barbados of the Agreement for the establishment of a regime for CARICOM enterprises and for related matters was read a first time.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for one hour.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply and to that it shall now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (RESUMED)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Committee resumes. Before we rose for lunch, the honourable Member for St. Michael East had caught my eye.

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the cause of the Resolution which is before this House today is a manifestation of the utter bankruptcy of social policy with respect to the elderly in Barbados from the point of view of the Barbados Labour Party.

Aside

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: In 1978 I became responsible for conceiving — yes conceiving and formulating social policy within this area and broke new grounds, and yes revolutionary grounds in spite of the Barbados Labour Party and not because of the Barbados Labour Party — in spite of. Anyhow, I do not want to dwell on an unpleasant past and the struggles which were absolutely necessary in order to have a new social policy with respect to the aged implemented — unless I have to. If I have to, I will.

Aside

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Man, do not get anxious yet. Well, the fact of the matter is that the social policy with respect to the elderly in Barbados was nothing more than Mottleyism as I found it. A prolong regime existed in which people were handed out mites and pittances, and they were expected to be grateful to their benefactors for these small mercies. What I sought to do in the teeth of great obstruction, particularly from the late departed Prime Minister who had absolutely no interest at all in social policy in the Manichaeian world of the late Prime Minister which became the world of the "yes men" and "nincompoops" within the Barbados Labour Party who blindly ate.....

Aside

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Man, if the cap fits, you draw the string. You will have your say. You will have your say. You can speak. Do not interrupt me. Let me talk. You do not know anything about what I am talking. Because in that situation, Mr. Chairman, it was each man relating to the Prime Minister. There was no collective responsibility. Each man related to the Prime Minister and if the Prime Minister agreed then that was the policy. Don't attempt to come in here and talk foolishness or imply by a spurious indignation that otherwise existed. This is precisely what took place during that period. So that when I implemented a social development programme of which Barbados Labour Party spokesmen are now boasting, it was the late Prime Minister and myself who were fighting it out alone and others remained on the sideline passive and yes cowardly spectators to what was going on.

(Aside)

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Man, you are going to have your say. You can contest anything I say, Forde. You can contest anything I say. You are going to have your I am sorry, Mr. Chairman.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that when I came to the Housing Welfare Programme, such as it existed, bits and pieces of discoloured board were placed on the houses of the elderly. It was I who introduced the programme which required these houses to be painted and which required houses to be repaired in such a manner that they should be wind and water tight and when these programmes were introduced it was said at that time that I was wasting money to paint the houses of the old people. That was the claim that too much money was being spent on welfare housing.

The programme intensified. I fought for and obtained more money, but the quantitative aspect of the Housing Welfare Programme is only one facet of a pro-

gramme which is designed to integrate the elderly within the main stream of the community. Nobody is going to deny that it requires money to carry out a fully developed social programme for the elderly. Nobody is going to deny that. But that is only one facet of it and that is precisely where I part company with the thinking of the Barbados Labour Party, the thinking which preceded me before I became responsible for Community Services in 1978 because I did not believe that the argument about social policy for the elderly is won or lost by saying that I spent more dollars than you did. To reduce the discussion of social policy for the elderly to saying that "A" spent more dollars than "B" is to argue the case for welfarism which I have been diametrically opposed to from the time I became Minister of Community Services. I have spoken at great length when I indicated that the policies with respect to the elderly were not policies that relate to welfarism, but they were policies that were of a social developmental nature and that these two orientations are diametrically opposed.

The argument that is now used by the Barbados Labour Party is strictly welfarism. All that they can be heard to say with respect to the elderly is that we spent more money. That is the quantitative aspect. Okay, you spent more money and you should be commended for it. But money does not make a social development policy.

The programme for the elderly conceived housing welfare as merely one aspect of a social development programme. In order for housing welfare to achieve the objective of integrating the elderly into the social main stream certain other things had to be done. In addition to giving the elderly a comfortable environment in which to live, they had to remain functionable in that environment and that is when I introduced the Home Help Programme again in spite of the opposition from the Barbados Labour Party. You do not know anything about how the Home Help Programme was introduced. You just heard about it! You just heard about it! You know absolutely nothing about what led up to it, how it was conceived, or otherwise, neither you nor anybody else in the Barbados Labour Party! All that you were concerned with, all that the Adams poor law, acolytes and nincompoops were concerned with was how much money would be involved! That is all that you were concerned with!

3.15 p.m.

A quantitative approach to social policy with respect to the aged is poor law Mottleyism to which the Barbados Labour Party is committed. The only period during the Government of the Barbados Labour Party when social developmental questions were raised and actively pursued with respect to the elderly is when your humble servant was in charge, and I say that without being immodest or without being boastful. It is a plain, unvarnished fact. When those people begin to talk about welfare for the elderly and so forth, it must be under-

stood that the Don Blackman epoch is a completely, qualitatively different epoch from the Barbados Labour Party epoch. There was nothing in relation to social policy. Before I came there and after I left there was a steady, inexorable degeneration of the programmes that I left there, and absolutely nothing was done with respect to the programmes which were on the drawing board at the level of conceptualisation, and this is precisely the litmus test as to whether the Government was committed to a dynamic social development programme rather than a static programme of welfarism, to which I remain opposed and which the Barbados Labour Party in defence of squandermania which took place in April and May of this year is trying to propound.

I do not have any problem with the expenditure of the money, provided that it was properly spent, and the inquiry which will be set up will determine whether it was properly spent or not. If the money was properly spent, I have no problem with that. But what I am saying is this: that the expenditure of the money in itself does not a social development policy make, and I will show you why.

When I left the Ministry of Community Services and Health already plans were far advanced to de-institutionalise the hospitals known as geriatric hospitals but which in my view functioned as almshouses for so long as poor people live in there who are indigent. It was a policy that the Barbados Labour Party could not argue against and in order to forestall criticism they wrote it in a Development Plan and a Minister even paid lip service to it.

There is an Alice-in-Wonderland quality to the avowals with respect to the policies of the Barbados Labour Party in this area. To say that you agree with de-institutionalisation is nothing but empty hot air. There was a blueprint left in the Ministry of Health for de-institutionalisation and it was not touched, and it was not touched because the Barbados Labour Party Government was not committed to social development. The only programmes that they continued with were those programmes that they used as handouts, because they felt that these programmes could be used for purposes of political mobilisation. In that they underestimated the intelligence of the people of Barbados.

One of the Ministers some time early in 1981 told me — and this gives you some idea as to their thinking with respect to housing, welfare, home help and such programmes — told me “these programmes are making you too popular, Don, we are going to take away this Ministry from you.” Therefore, it is obvious that the dominant perception within the Barbados Labour Party at the time was of programmes in which people gave away things to others and became popular with those people, with the beneficiaries.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has another two minutes.

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Secondly, by parity of reasoning they felt that if we give away more at election time then people will be even more grateful to their beneficiaries, and that is the alpha and omega of their social policy; nothing more, nothing less, crass welfarism, steeped in episodic attempts to use such programmes for political mobilisation.

I am sorry I was not able to get into all the proposals, Mr. Chairman, because time is running short, but I know I am going to have to come back, and I will come back.

(Applause)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member will come back, but he will not be coming back to the Labour Party. The honourable Member can rest assured on that.

Mr. Chairman, one of the things about politics is that the changing of sides sometimes means in the minds of some people that they forget. The honourable Member is a person for whom I usually have the greatest respect intellectually and otherwise. I do not think he would vouchsafe otherwise, but I think he has to acknowledge sometimes that he is only man and that his memory of events may be shrouded by how he conceives of his own experiences. I think he has to admit that. I have always said to him, as I am going to say in this debate, that if there is one failing that he has is that he never believes that he is wrong, and it is a serious failing. He has tremendous qualities, tremendous intellectual power, but he believes that only he is right and that only his concept of something is right, and that the world begins with him and ends with him. It is very hard to say this to someone who you consider your friend, and particularly to say it in a debate such as this.

I had hoped that we had got past the elections where the honourable Member, having made his decision and got over all of the problems, and paid what he had to pay to the Labour Party, to settle his scores, I did not believe he had any more scores to settle, but obviously that is not so.

Now, Sir, I was in that Cabinet as well and there were discussions on social policy. It is not necessary for me to bring out, even here within the House, the differences that any sensible thinking group of men would articulate if they want to come up with any proper policy, but it is nonsense to make this Committee believe that everybody in the Barbados Labour Party sat down and was actuated by Mottleyism, as he termed it, and

that the only person who intellectually, morally and otherwise had any commitment to poor people or old people in the island was the honourable Member. The honourable member in his very statement in here has obviously landed one of the worst criticisms against his current party, because he said that when he took over in 1978 all that had gone before was pure Mottleyism, the whole social history of Barbados was poor law, all of the parties were poor law, and that the great day began in 1978.

Well, my concept of history is not like that.

(Aside)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Again the honourable Member could give his talk but he cannot finish it. I am not even going to say that he is not interested in poor people, black people, white people, red people nor adopt his poses. That is foolishness, and the honourable Member knows it, and the honourable Member's shouting is not going to move me from letting him have his own criticisms. The honourable Member must understand that, so he has to at least listen sometimes. The honourable Member will have all the judgments he wants, but he must recognise that cowards are people who run away. That is what he must know.
3.25 p.m.

The honourable Member more often than anybody else in Cabinet remained silent except on a few matters and when he was asked to stand up very frequently he never opened his mouth. What is the honourable Member going to talk about?

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member can talk that Adams ran me out of the Cabinet. I left the Cabinet of my own free will. I was not thrown out. The honourable Member is going to try to behave as badly as possible today.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am sorry for you. You have a problem. He has a relational problem.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen! Order! Order!

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: You are not going to run anybody around here. You must understand that you have a brain like anybody else and listen. What are you going to give? Do not continue to fool people that you only have any commonsense about how Barbados is run. Anything that you could have achieved in the Labour Party you had to have the support of some of

your colleagues. How else could you get support? You must understand that. The honourable Member knows this is so and it is not true for the honourable Member to come in here and say that only his brain conceptualised policies and we did nothing about it.

The honourable Member knows the Manifesto of the Party, he knows how sections of the Manifesto were written. The honourable Member knows as well, as the files would disclose, that there were on-going matters within the administration. History does not stop because the clock is dead.

The difference between the honourable Member and me is that if I have anything to tell him I would tell him in front of his face and that goes for anybody in this House from the Right Honourable Prime Minister right down. I would not wait until they are dead in order to plead my case. My statements would be made here during their lifetime.

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member has an Adams complex. I do not have an Adams complex nor do I have a Blackman complex. The honourable Member is going to be very personal.

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Look, you can give blows but you cannot take them. You cannot take it. That is your problem. The same difficulty that you have with us, you are going to have with them if you are not careful.

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He does not have any difficulty with you now. When he was talking about your policies as only masturbating and that sort of junk.... you do not have any policies now.

It is all right for the honourable Member....

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He is not the first person that has turned a political somersault. Some people do it with more grace. Some people do it more gracefully. He is not the first person who has done it but he must not believe that he has to kick down the ladder on which he climbed. He must not believe so.

He can disagree on policies with his former party but he does not have to come in here — he has to take lessons from the honourable Member for St. Lucy now. The honourable Member does not have to come in here and as a result to attack people on what he knows are not founded.

Let me get back to the substance of this matter. The Honourable Minister has spoken in this debate and he has not told us with the money that he has come before this House for what he intends to do with it for the balance of the financial year in any detail.

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He is paying off the Addendum. I want to hear the Honourable Minister speak on the matter.

The Minister of Housing has his responsibility. The point is that if the last honourable Member who had spoken would reflect on the position, the first thing he would reflect and recognize is that the need for assistance in social development and welfare in Barbados is more than successive Governments have catered for. That is the first point he has to recognize.

If the honourable Member had put forward his case that on the basis of when he took up the Ministry successive Governments had not provided enough whether qualitatively or quantitatively for this segment of social policy, I would not have uttered a word in criticism. That is the case that he should have made and, therefore, one can state even now today that there is need for greater provision under this Head and nobody is talking about going around and giving out houses to people in order to buy votes or anything of the sort. Nobody is talking about that.

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: But the honourable Member said that is what happened. The honourable Member and I have discussed on many occasions his own constituency and the honourable Member knew and always said that if he had the opportunity he himself would never lose. He would win not only the seat for the honourable Member for St. Michael West.....

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: You can get as annoyed as you want. At the end of the day you have to get back to reality. Do not let your pride be hurt. Try and get down and realize what we are talking about. When you are harsh on people, you must recognize that they are going to reply to you in kind.

Asides

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I do not care either. You have to recognize that. The honourable Member and I have clashed not now, we have clashed as well before and he has understood and respected my point of view and it would not be the only time we clash. The honourable

Member knows that. He is not going to run me one inch from any where.

But, Sir, the major debate should be, as I understand the debate as to what is necessary to provide for people who are in need in this social category. That is the question. We have debated this question in many areas.

There is a point of view to which I subscribe that you have to move from the position of welfarism — the honourable Member and I have no argument on that. I have always subscribed to that. He cannot come into the House and say that some of us sat down and did not contribute in the area of social policy, absolute nonsense. The honourable Member knows it. That is when I shouted absolute nonsense to him.

The section in the Manifesto that deals with the matter, the honourable Member knows this. He and I sat down and wrote. He did the first draft. The honourable Member knows that and it was approved by the Manifesto Committee. What singly you are talking about? The honourable Member knows it was done in my house and he knows that it was a policy that was approved by the whole party.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am not going to have history record that he is the only person who has any concept of where the country is going. Even the very title "Caring and Sharing" the honourable Member knows that that sub-title was written by me after the approval of those of us who wrote the Manifesto.

Do not come in here and give the House the opinion that nobody had any social conscience other than yourself. I have been the first to come in here and give praise to the honourable Member when he deserved praise. He knows that. The debates are replete with it. Whether he is sitting on this side or that side, even when he changed sides, I have been the first to come in and say that he had a major role in the Home Help Programme, one of the best programmes given in this House. You know that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has another two minutes to wind up.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I will come back because this debate can go on for a long time. He is not putting me off. If honourable Members believe that they are throwing me off, subject to the interruptions I think I may have four minutes.

But let me make the point that the Barbados Labour Party came into power in 1976 intending to

implement the policy which was improved on in the experience in Government to which the honourable Member for St. Michael East made a contribution, but there is no way that I am going to let the records reflect that the party to which I belong had only a concept of welfarism because it is not true.

If the honourable Member would look at some of the Manifestos.....

(*Aside:* Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Which Manifesto?)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He asked which Manifesto. This is already a document of the House, the 1976 Manifesto.
3.35 p.m.

If the honourable Member would look at the 1976 Manifesto, he will see: "Not only will emphasis be placed on increased benefits, but steps will be taken to provide improved services for the elderly. The Party will construct sheltered housing and expand home nursing, while at the same time initiating proposals for home-help and good-neighbour schemes and all other forms of domiciliary and community care."

In the 1976 manifesto we forecast and foreshadowed the home help programme.

Aside

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: but unlike the honourable Member, when I go into a club I am a member of that club until I leave it. I do not believe that every initiative done in the club is due to me.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is the honourable Member's problem. The honourable Member really has a paranoia that somebody is after him. That is his only problem — a serious problem (that he has.) — but the point is that when we won the election of 1976 we won it on a social development policy which is clearly enunciated as part of the history of Barbados.

(*Asides*)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: It is a great pity.

It is a great pity that today I have to differ from two people for whom I have had respect. There is a difference between jocular frivolity — as I have just heard from the honourable Member for St. Michael South who is obviously enjoying himself in the debate — but one has to recognise that regardless of the political divide

between us, if one is being fair one has to concede to both political parties action on the basis and proper policies too on the basis of social developmental policies.

The honourable Member knows that the Labour Party to which I still have the honour to belong has been in the forefront of that social revolution of what we are speaking, and when I get back into the debate, as it is indicated to me that my time is up, I will want to ask the Minister some other hard questions. I wish the Minister will let us know how many houses he intends to deal with during the year. The honourable Member says quantitative. Why is the honourable Member so concerned with the quantitative work in his own constituency? He did not understand it.

(*Aside:* That is a given.)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: It is not a given. How can it be a given?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I join this debate from early out of an interest for some very needy people in the constituency which I have the honour to represent. I am concerned having listened to the Honourable Minister and to the honourable Member for St. Michael East that the people in the constituency who have been languishing for a very long period now for some of the assistance from the social welfare programme have only found themselves in that kind of situation because there are persons who have been responsible for dispensing these funds who have not really had the interest of these people at heart.

The honourable Member for St. Thomas read from a list the number of houses which were repaired or replaced in some of the constituencies. The figures which he has given seem to indicate that in St. Michael North East there were nine houses in one month and eight in another. When I look at the needs in that constituency alone and when I consider that in excess of \$2 million has been spent according to the words of the Honourable Minister, and when you consider, Mr. Chairman, that it has still been overspent to the tune of \$197 754.47 and there is still an additional amount of \$25 975.92 for completion of repairs started, and when you further consider, Mr. Chairman, the number of people — I am speaking primarily of St. Michael North East — who are still waiting for a very long period and do not seem likely to get any assistance based on the amount of money that has been spent and what we have so far received, all I should like to draw to the Honourable Minister's attention, Mr. Chairman, is that whenever all is said and done it is the people and the needy people of a country who

need the assistance which a Head of this sort proposes to give.

I began by saying I am speaking primarily for those people and I am making a special case because over the last two years I myself wrote a number of letters to the Department of Welfare Housing and have not even had the courtesy of a reply from that department. It only means therefore, Mr. Chairman, that the people of that constituency represented during that period by a member of the Barbados Labour Party did not have as part of their welfare the ear of the Barbados Labour Party, and of the persons who were given the responsibility to dispense those funds.

I would like to ask the Honourable Minister to give me the assurance that some kind of specialised help will be given if he investigates or causes to be investigated the needs of the people of St. Michael North because it is over ten years that very little has taken place in terms of welfare assistance for the people of that constituency, and I feel, Sir, that I am in place to ask the Minister very kindly to look at the plight of the people of St. Michael North East, and if he needs any assistance I will always be there to give him the information which is vital that we can at least feel that we are people too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Applause.)

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition is so nervous and disturbed that he is wondering whether I had got up to wind up, but I did not introduce the matter.

There can be no question that after such an eloquent exposure of the deficiencies and callousness of the Barbados Labour Party in respect of social development matters and in particular in respect of the aged and the indigent, that it must be a great source of concern and embarrassment to those who have to carry the flag in the post 1986 period within this Parliament. However we shall have to keep reminding them of their inefficiencies and deficiencies whilst at the same time we have to try to keep the ship of state moving ahead.

There can be no doubt that this level of expenditure within a two-month period represents one of the worst periods of fiscal indiscipline in the Government of Barbados. I think that it is a tragedy that members on the other side should seek to justify this sort of unsatisfactory control of expenditures in Government, and they should be joining with the Government in supporting the need for an enquiry to find out how this happened and to make sure that it does not happen again.

3.45 p.m.

As Minister of Finance, I have the responsibility to find this money in respect of this vote and in many other

areas around the time of election this year there was a considerable amount of squandermania and clearly a loss of control in the management of Government expenditures.

Now this is a fact. As Resolutions will come to this House, you will see the areas of loss of control and there is clear evidence here of a loss of control. This in a sense, Sir, is a repetition of what happened in 1981 where that loss of control of expenditure motivated by political considerations caused serious fiscal and monetary problems for this country.

However, in due course I will quantitate and let this House know the amount of additional money spent in Barbados not budgeted for and which is directly consequential on squandermania at election time 1986.

Mr. Chairman, let me show you all this talk about social development policy. In 1982–1983 the Government came to Parliament for \$800 000 and spent \$646 000 under this Head. In 1983–1984 it came for \$1.2 million and spent \$1.2 million in 12 months. In 1984–1985 it came for \$1.2 million and spent \$1.2 million in 12 months. As the election period drew near in 1985–1986 it came for \$2 million and then a further Supplementary of \$750 000 and spent \$2 750 000 in a whole year with most of the expenditure in the later part of 1985. In 1986–1987 it came for \$2.99 million and succeeded in that 2–month period of spending \$2.296 million.

Now this is clear factual evidence of what happened and there is no way that you can have an organized programme which can consume money at six times the rate at which it was spent in the previous year and somewhere in the region of about twelve times the rate at which it was spent three years earlier within a 2–month period. Let us not close our eyes. This is a serious matter and it is a matter that I will have to address so long as I am Minister of Finance to make sure that what happened in this country in 1981 and in 1986 should never happen again.

They are the bald facts and there is no point hiding behind words. There is no point hiding behind all sorts of spurious arguments about social development policy of the Barbados Labour Party that suddenly sprang to life just around election time in 1986 because all the facts are against you. The record is there.

What does concern me is another very serious matter — it is another very serious matter — that if you look at the number of houses built and the number of houses repaired during that period, it does suggest to me that not the best use was made of the money for the elderly in Barbados. In my own constituency where I was the beneficiary, so they say, of having twenty houses done, none at my request, I had been trying for five

years to get houses done and all of a sudden in two months twenty houses were done.

Some of the houses — as a matter of fact, there was one particular house where the landlord got the house repaired although the tenant in the house pointed out that it was a rented house and that she intended to move from that particular part of the constituency to another part of the constituency. They did not even know the owners of the houses that were being repaired. Wherever you travel through St. Michael South Central you could see truck-loads of lumber and paints all day being dropped off. Even a case where an inquiry was made to try to find a lady who had deceased sometime ago.....paint all over the place. I really feel that we should on both sides ensure that this does not happen again.

One or two final points I will make and I hope that I would have laid to rest this argument of trying to justify these levels of expenditure at that particular time of year on the basis of any particular approach to a policy in relation to the elderly and the indigent. It was straightforward political expenditure. Let us face the facts. That is what it was and what we have to recognize and I hope that your experiences at the polls will teach you all a lesson and would teach us a lesson that you cannot purchase votes in that way. But what you can do is that you can throw away a lot of public funds by so doing.

Mr. Chairman, when the request came to the Ministry of Finance for support of this particular Resolution I was very disturbed about the matter. I had a thorough investigation done into it. The Ministry was asked to supply all the information. They did a very thorough job of it and I recognized that in the interest of the poor people and the elderly people out there that I will have to come to this House for more money in order that the normal programme can be carried out during this particular year. Indeed, I felt so strongly about it that I was not prepared to give the approval of the Ministry of Finance unless we had detailed documentation of what could have happened. You are talking about spending one hundred per cent of a vote which relates to the repairs of homes in Barbados.

(Aside)

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It does not matter whether it is capital or not. It is an ongoing programme. The type of programme that you are talking about is a vote that is provided to carry out a programme over a 12-month period based on the historical experience of the amount of money which the programme can absorb, and I am saying that it is dishonest to talk whether it is capital, current or otherwise. The fact is that you have a programme that will normally take a 12-month period and the money was spent in a matter of two months. It

is wrong. It is unforgivable. It should never happen again and what we are doing now is providing a level of expenditure which we feel would meet the needs of this particular group of people in the ensuing months of this fiscal year. I think that it is important and it is in the public interest that Members of the House even when you are on the other side must not give support to this kind of fiscal misconduct. That is what it is. It may not be totally outside the ambit of the law on technical grounds. This may well be so, but let us face the facts.
3.55 p.m.

It is not in your interest, it is not in our interest to send the signal out there that you are going to defend this kind of fiscal misconduct. It is wrong, it is fundamentally wrong, and I would urge you all that whereas you may argue on the merits or demerits of a particular emphasis in relation to a social development policy, recognise that at the bottom line dollar bills are involved and these dollar bills should be used as efficiently as possible in order to meet the objectives of your social policy.

I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that if there was a planned use of that \$2 million which has gone down the drain, then what would have happened is that many more elderly people would have got their homes repaired in an orderly and in an efficient manner and it would have been to the greater benefit of the community.

I am sure that you all must be a bit embarrassed about this. You are under no obligation to get up and defend something that you know fundamentally must be wrong, surely it must be wrong. How can you defend it? As Leader of the Opposition I urge you not to try to defend this kind of conduct, not to try for any comfort of this nature.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: If the honourable Member will give way, Sir, let me explain what I am trying to tell the honourable Member, because he does not seem to get it in his head. I have said that none of the Governments has given enough money to deal with the problem which exists. The honourable Member has not addressed that in his reply. The point is that the honourable Member for St. Michael North East got up immediately after me and cited the needs of his own constituency which have not been addressed. There is not one honourable Member around this table who cannot cite at least eighty, if not one hundred cases that need urgent attention, and the case that I am making is that the honourable Member knows that the provision given by the Committee in the House has proved inadequate and will continue to be inadequate unless we address the problem.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, quite clearly the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is not without some delicacy of legal skills and argument. However, if we

could address the point that I was making, it is not a question of whether you are spending too much or too little. The time to argue that is at the Estimates, but once this House has voted the money it is our responsibility to make sure that that money is spent efficiently and with the greatest propriety.

I am not unaware of those types of skills which might be more suitable to the law courts and so on, but they cannot be very effective in this Chamber. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that, because I know now that he understands, now he has heard the facts, that probably he has made an error in trying to defend the behaviour of the past Government. I think he knows he has made a mistake and I am quite sure that the honourable Member for St. Peter would agree with me that if this kind of lack of discipline is repeated throughout Government, that it would make this country unmanageable.

With those few words, Mr. Chairman, I take my seat.

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to make some observations on the proposals. It is quite logical that a topic such as this should bring forth such reactions, and as a matter of fact I recall in my very maiden speech, I made some comment on this money that was mis-spent.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the honourable Member for St. Thomas in putting a case for the then Government say that they had embarked on a programme where they had sent out letters via the police, etc., and I understood him to mean that they were inviting people who were indigent to get involved in the programme of house repairs, etc. What I found difficult to understand, going down the logical road, is that if they had allocated \$2 million for 1985-86 and that \$2 million was spent, and then they embarked on a programme where they deliberately invited people to have their houses repaired, why then did they go back and vote a similar amount of money, and not more money, knowing that they are indigent people. We are all politicians, we are all aware of the old people in our constituencies who are in need, because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition adverted to the fact that we know there are lots of people out there who need these repairs, and if indeed you planned a programme where you were inviting people to come out and have these repairs done, why then did you only vote a similar amount of money for the year 1986-87, and of course spend it in two months?

Now, I want to go on further and say this: It is a fact that one of the reasons this debate has brought forth so much talk, it is precisely because that kind of programme was seen as the kind of programme which would win or lose an election, and I think as the honourable

Member for St. Michael South Central has said, it should teach all of us a lesson, because the people are more intelligent than a lot of us suspect them to be. There were people bragging that they had a million dollars at their disposal to win seats, but that million dollars which went a long way in painting houses and building foot-paths helped them to lose by over a thousand votes.

But what is most painful, Mr. Chairman, only on Saturday I visited the homes of some of the elderly people in the Pine, especially in Smith Avenue, where some of this supposed work that ate up the \$2 million was supposed to have taken place, and I want to relate to you some of the conditions that exist in those old people's homes.

In one house in Smith Avenue the job was so hurriedly done that the old man's kitchen was repaired but there was no step placed at the back of that kitchen where there was a drop of about 5 feet, and that old man had fallen out of that kitchen door at least once and he had to nail it up. In two other houses on the same Smith Avenue the wiring in those houses was ripped out to put in new boarding and the wires in those houses are still clumped together and a lot of them are old wires hanging, and in one house there was a junction box which was cut out from the old piece of rotten wood and nailed up to the new wood, and the junction box was exposed, creating a fire hazard in the homes of these old people.

Everybody who has gone into some of these homes will tell you about the hurried paint jobs that were carried out, and at the corner of Smith Avenue there was one house where the old lady told me that the boards were painted before they were nailed on. This is the kind of care with which the money that was appropriated to repair old people's homes was dealt with. These are the facts of the issue, in one avenue, and none of the jobs were finished. You know why it was in that constituency, Mr. Chairman.

Another aspect of the situation that we must look at very closely is the workers who had to be dismissed. It is not any of their fault that they had to be dismissed, but we know that a lot of youngsters who had never seen a paint brush before, who had never seen a hammer before, were taken on to that programme.....

Aside

Laughter

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: No, it was an election, and these people were given the jobs of painting and repairing houses for the first time. Some of them, because they come from the constituency which I now represent, when they were laid off, came in to me and I told the Minister. I explained to them why they had to be laid off was

because the money was all spent, and those workers are very anxious that the investigation be started too, because those workers, more than anybody else, are aware of the fact that monies were misspent. The workers are not stupid because they saw lumber going to people's houses and in some instances it stayed overnight, and in some instances it left almost immediately; so the workers understand the situation.

Asides

4.05 p.m.

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: But, Mr. Chairman, this is not the only area that we should be concerned about. In my maiden speech I also averted to a situation that is similar to this, and I hope that the Honourable Minister of Health when the time comes, lays the facts bare on this, because there was money allocated to the Polyclinics and some \$347 000 of that money that was allocated to the Polyclinics was diverted to create 109 jobs for people to weed the roads. This is a serious thing and the Minister of Finance alluded to it: that if we have a country where we come to Parliament and vote money for specific reasons and then people for narrow gains take up that money and spend it only to further their own single political advancement, this country will find itself in deep trouble.

Now the honourable representative for St. Peter constantly gets up and talk about you have to come back here because the Budget that you gave was a give-away Budget. The Democratic Labour Party is a party that will come into the House of Assembly and put its proposals with respect to how it will allocate money and put it in the pockets of the poor people.

I will never be associated with a political party that will come and vote money for one reason and then for narrow political gains spend it in another avenue and then when the investigation takes place, we will find out what the situation is.

It seems to me that there are people in this country and particularly, members of the Barbados Labour Party, who feel that the minute you start to put money in the pockets of the people in the street, the economy will collapse, but if you allow people to build banks for \$100 million, and if you allow people to build highways to kill people and the people at the top get the money, the economy will not collapse, and this is the fundamental difference between the thinking of us on this side and you on that side and that is why the honourable Member for St. Michael East is now on this side because his philosophy is more in keeping with this side.

Applause

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: But, Mr. Chairman, I see the Leader of the Opposition get up in the House time and

time again and I want to remind him that the honourable Members of this august Chamber are intelligent people and I do take exception and I do take objection to his constantly getting up as a school master pontificating as to who is right and who is wrong.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. The honourable Member is now going to question my right to exercise within the rules of this House to use what I am going to say. He cannot take objection. The person who must take objection is the Chair. If I operate within the rules of the House, you would have to rule me out of order if I am not within the rules.

Aside

Laughter

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: All I am saying, Mr. Chairman, I want the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to understand that some of us in here have equal and at times, superior intelligence and therefore, I note that this attitude of having to talk down, which incidentally is one of the ploys of the people on that side, because they seem to think that all intelligence rests with a certain group of people.

But, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that I hope that we on this side, will never ever find ourselves in the kind of situation where we will treat our elderly citizens with the absolute contempt because all you need to do, Mr. Chairman, is to go into the houses of the old people themselves, and talk to them and they will explain to you how workers would come a day and paint four boards on the outside and run away and never come back again, and this they come in here and tell you, is a laudable programme for the advancement of the old people.

The old people themselves understood what was happening and, of course, the result is in this Parliament today. The old people understood and I hope that we are serious about our elderly citizens, and I would hope that we never ever in this country allow ourselves to use elderly people as pawns in a game where we ourselves, should be the beneficiary and this proposal that comes before us today, is a living testimony and a bad testimony in our political history.

Applause

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that if in 1986, we are looking at a housing welfare policy which we tend to seem to be projecting as one that is growing, a housing welfare policy for the aged, then I think we really have a great deal of concern about wages policies, education, and in fact, how we in Barbados prepare people in their youth to deal with old

age, because it seems to me that if you pursue the correct policy when people are young and when they are members of the work force in terms of what they earn and if you educate them properly in terms of how they should save and invest their money to look after themselves in old age, that in fact a housing welfare policy can be a policy of a relatively short term.

It does not have to be a policy that goes on forever and ever because, I believe that fundamentally, what we should be concerned about in Barbados is not providing small wooden houses for people when they reach their 60's and 70's to say that we are good social planners, to pat ourselves on the back and say that we are good social planners, but we need to follow policies that would ensure that while these people are still members of the workforce that they can build houses for themselves, the style and type of houses that they want for themselves, that they can best live in comfortably. That is the first thing I want to say.

It seems to me that the people we are talking about now are the people who were born in the 1910's and thereabout, and the people who have now reached their 70's at this time, and the main weakness in the economy in the days when these people went to work at fifteen and sixteen is that they could work for forty years, forty-five years and not be able to build a house and to put aside money for their old age that they could repair that house. That, I think, is what was happening.

There was a bankruptcy of economic policy when money was not filtering down to poor people in this country and that is why the Democratic Labour Party's policy has been far different from the policy of the Barbados Labour Party. These are the derelicts of the Barbados Labour Party earlier regime who are now in a situation with the same Barbados Labour Party not providing an environment in which they could save for the future now have to bail them out by trying to build some small houses for them.

The people who have come through the Democratic Labour Party era are people who have been able to put aside money to build their own homes, to educate their children, who can work and get some money so that they can help them repair their homes in their old age. I am very serious about this. We have to be concerned about the aged. Those who are now in a situation where they cannot provide homes for themselves we have to repair those houses.

4.15 p.m.

I would hope that this policy is not going to be a policy that we foresee extending down into the dim future. I think what is important at this time is that if both parties are interested in housing conditions — housing conditions on the whole, what we need is a real census of housing in this country. I will start with a census of the housing of the aged first of all.

A census of the housing of the aged is necessary, so that if we know that so many houses are to be put there for them, it does not matter which Government does it, the important thing is that we are all committed to making sure that these old people live in housing standards that we would accept as being good enough for ourselves. That is very important.

The Barbados Labour Party administration was not interested in building houses in this country. Their record in the last ten years does not suggest that they were interested in providing houses for the people of this country. They de-emphasised the provision of houses especially for people in the lower income brackets. Middle income housing went on, upper income housing went on, escalated during this period. If you want to see the \$400 000 and \$500 000 houses, you can see them coming up in the last ten years, but there was not enough housing at the bottom level of income earners in this country, and I am saying that that will compound the problem later on because the cost of housing keeps growing, we know that, and therefore some people who are now in the work force and the latter end of the work force may find it difficult in later years to get the type of housing that they will want.

What I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that I believe that housing welfare policy, forgetting who started it and who brought different dimensions to it and so on

Asides.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: I don't mind the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition is all the time sitting down there and telling people to bring up their standards, and he spent 15 minutes talking about the honourable Member for St. Michael East and not one minute on the matter in hand. He was not lashing you; he was addressing a philosophy that you happen to represent.

Laughter.

(Aside)

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: It is not a matter of quantity as the honourable Member for St. Michael East said; it is not a matter of quantity; it is not a matter that you spent so many and so many millions of dollars on houses. That is a simple thing to do. If you have the money you can spend it and if you do not have a philosophy you can spend it wrong too. I can tell you of situations in my own constituency too, as the honourable Member for St. Michael South East said. I know of cases where

young people got their houses repaired, not the indigent, and when the people went to repair the houses they were so ashamed when they carried the furniture and looked in the house and saw carpet on the floor and video inside the houses; but those houses were repaired out of those funds.

I have heard of situations where you could get some bureaucratic corruption, where people in budgeting for the money to be spent on houses upped the amount of money that you were paying to carpenters. If carpenters were averaging \$45 a day, you put in \$70, and you know what happened with the extra? You know where that went. Those are the sorts of things we are concerned about. We are concerned about the mal-practices that can develop in these schemes. The fundamental idea behind the schemes, the philosophy might not be bad.

You see, Barbadians believe in that old saying "beware of the Greeks most when they bring gifts", and that is why they took the gifts that came from the Greeks and then they reacted in a proper way. They understood that these gifts were not the real gifts, so they knew what to do. So we have to be very careful when we come up with these policies even if you are on sound philosophy that they are not open to abuse.

I believe that no one in here can justify, I do not think the Leader of the Opposition will try to justify the spending of all that money in two months; it was purely election strategy. It is an extremely bad example to the country, and I still have all these examples of people who have their houses half-way repaired and waiting now to see when they will get some more board or some paint and so on. It is unnecessary pressure on these individuals. You do not want to be in a house that is half repaired. It is very bad for those people who have to live in these houses.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend to the Barbados Labour Party that they have second thoughts if they want to defend what happened on that occasion. One speaker has already had his say and partially said what he had to say, but I do not believe he is going to defend a policy where you can take the money and go beyond the vote in a short electioneering period just to try to buy votes basically from the populace. That does not in any way suggest to me a respect for the old people whom they claim so much to love.

(Applause)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member who just sat down made some allusions to the construction of houses in the ten-year period 1976 to 1986, and it is a pity that for the record he appeared to distort the facts.

I think it is well-known, and I refer the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central to the Central Bank Report for 1976 reporting on the year 1975 where he will find that in the last year of the Democratic Labour Party's rule 1961-76 they built 169 houses. It is in the Central Bank Report, the blue one. After 1976 there is no doubt that there was a thrust in housing which ran — I am dealing with low income houses — up to 1981, and you will find the whole of Wotton in the honourable Member's constituency was built in that period. The number of houses in Haynesville was doubled in that period. Rosemont, Fernihurst, Bonnetts, Brittons Hill were all built during the time of the Barbados Labour Party, and Kensington Lodge....

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We never reached 800 houses in the public sector in any year, but the Central Bank's Reports are all there to show that in every year after 1978 the mix between public and private housing far exceeded 800. In one year, I believe it was 1979-80

(Aside: What was the mix in 1976?)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You would have to tell us. You were in power then. I will bring the figures at the next meeting. The honourable Minister of Housing is here. There was one year that over 600 public houses were built. I believe it was 1979.

(Aside: There was one year that you all only built 46.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That may well be so, that was in 1981-82 I believe. So it is not true to say that the Barbados Labour Party when in Government did not provide housing for low income persons. The policy of the Barbados Labour Party was to promote home ownership, but with the increase in the cost of building supplies which this Government cannot reduce, not using the conventional methods of house construction, houses which were designed to be sold in the \$30 000 bracket in West Terrace are now with the land costing over \$50 000.
4.25 p.m.

That is not a fault of a policy to provide housing. It is a problem of the cost of the land because if the Government through the National Housing — the National Housing Corporation is funded from the Central Government, and if it costs the National Housing Corporation "X" dollars to put in the roads, the water and the light — the necessary services unless Government is going to take a conscious decision to subsidize housing and forget the economic cost, then the cost of the land

has to be related to the cost of putting in the services to that land, and that is what forces up the cost of the land.

Aside

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, I am not saying that you do not have a different methodology. We will see it. You know.....right. So that even though you were aiming to help the worst off in the community, the cost of the services which is nothing to do with Government — Government has to pay for the cost of services like any other person in the community — forced the price up. And so you find that houses now in West Terrace where the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central cannot deny that there has been a good spread of housing in West Terrace and Oxnards but the cost is too high.

He must know as a trade unionist and he must tell us the cost of houses for the working class in Mangrove built by the Barbados Workers Union and tell me if you can get a house in Mangrove under the BWU scheme for \$18 000 or \$20 000 — no, impossible. Because for as much as we would feel empathy for the working class and as much as the honourable Members who are members of the Barbados Workers Union feel that empathy and would want philosophically and practically to produce houses for the people in the union.....

Aside

(Hon. E. E. GREAVES: The Union is not the Government.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Union is not the Government.....

At this point certain remarks made by the Hon. Member for St. Thomas were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir, I had not become accustomed to the fact that he is now President of the Senate and he has a public office. I congratulate, him, Sir. I would like that included in the record and not struck from the record, that I offer my congratulations in this debate to the President of the Senate, Sir.

Aside

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I was speaking as to belief when I spoke in relation to salaries, Sir, and not the ML car. What is it? It is an ordinary Mercedes Benz, Sir. So what I am saying — the point I was trying to make, Sir, is that even the Union will find that the cost of building is such that they cannot get the houses sold for what they would really want to sell them for. But they have to be realistic about the provision of housing, Sir.

Sir, I have no specific information about the mis-spending of money or where paint was lost or where lumber was dropped and so on. Other Members who have spoken have given instances.

Aside

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: None yet. Others who have spoken have told us of three houses which were badly repaired if repaired at all in Smith Avenue, Sir. Yes, that is one instance. I have nothing like that to put before the House and in view of the Minister's statement that we are going to have an inquiry, I am not going to speculate. I want the inquiry and since this party, the Barbados Labour Party, is accused of not having any social development policy or that it only started in 1978, let us have the inquiry going back from 1978 to 1986. Let us have a full inquiry. I am thankful that the Honourable Minister of Health is agreeing with me.

(Asides)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let us have an inquiry. I do not care how you do it. Yes, I cannot determine it you see. But I am saying that if we are serious let us go back over the years and see how money was spent from 1978 to 1986 in these programmes, how the level

(Asides)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am only saying that when you were in the Opposition you used to call for inquiries.

(Aside)

(Laughter)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, I do not think that we should go back to Mottley because the Honourable Minister of Tourism was once characterised to me as the greatest exponent of Mottleyism and the only politician in Barbados who understood Mottleyism and welfarism.

(Aside: Hon. B. M. TAITT: Yes, that is a fact. I understand it.)

(Laughter)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You are going to practise it. But Sir, I understand the anger of Members in the Government on this matter. I understand their feelings.

(Aside)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Who? Man, do not ever pray for that to happen in here. Do not ever pray for that to happen. Do not ever pray for that to happen.

I have never been frighten for anybody yet, man. Man, stop the game. You making sport or what?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the complaint is that the money was spent in too short a period of time. We have not heard that if five hundred and twenty-nine houses were repaired in the previous year that more than five hundred and twenty-nine were repaired in the 2-month period. We have not heard that. But the inquiry will throw up all of that — yes. The inquiry will throw up that and the honourable Members who are now so self-righteous forget that there was a Hanschell Report about their period in office between 1961 and 1976 and forget that an inquiry found that when they were in office monies allocated for similar use to these were mis-spent and misdirected.

(Aside)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You forget that it was found that well able-bodied people especially young women benefitted under the Labour Welfare Fund and its mis-allocation and mis-spending during your term in office. Go and check.

(Aside)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Who? Man, I told you I do not know of any specific cases other than what I have read about what happened in your time. So if you want one into our time, you are entitled to do it. That is the nature of the political game — to try and pull down the other fellow. Let us see what you find. But the public records of this country will show what was found also when the Democratic Labour Party was last in power.

(Aside)

4.35 p.m.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not know about those things. All these specific instances which are well known to Members I hope will be reported to the Chairman of the Inquiry. I hope they will come and give the evidence, and do not just get around the table and talk about it. Come and tell the Commission what you know about it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has another three minutes to wind up his speech.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am supporting the Resolution, Sir, because in any event, if things had been different there would have been need for a supplementary which answers the point made by the honourable Member.

(Asides)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There has been a certain naivete in this debate that does not do justice to our respective and collective intellects and in the circumstances, Sir, I am going to give way — I think I have made the three points I wanted to make — in favour of the honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I just want to correct the honourable Member for St. Thomas on two points. The first relates to the cost of housing in West Terrace. You will recall that a former parliamentarian in here removed 700 loads of mould from West Terrace to Sion Hill to the tune of \$35,000. The remedial work in West Terrace alone cost \$1.5 million. I am only showing you how the cost of housing can go up without any real thought, so do not come and let us believe that the.....

(Aside)

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: I just want to clear up the point and I want the people in West Terrace to understand why their houses cost so much more than was calculated for in the first place.

Secondly, I think that the Members on the other side are trying to avoid the main issue which is under debate. The main issue, as I understand it, under debate is whether or not the over \$3 million spent.....

(Aside)

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: The Honourable Minister said that he is owing away about \$1 million to various firms and I believe when the Minister comes back he will give you a detailed list of the monies owing.

What he has said is that they have spent about \$2 million so far, in hard cash, but what he is owing away is over \$1 million, and what we are asking you to accept is that the money was badly spent, and no member of the Barbados Labour Party can justify spending over \$3 million in two months. You would be hypocritical if you could come in here and in every constituency we know that houses were supposed to be done which were not done, that houses were done which the people themselves could have done.

These are the points and what we are asking you to believe, and you are saying that if you had come here you would have also yourself come for a supplementary. We accept that, but the conditions under which you are coming for a supplementary are important. Whether or not a previous DLP administration did it, it would have been bad in my opinion. If a Barbados Labour Party administration did it, it was also bad, and we have to accept this. What we are saying is that it must never happen

again in this country, because there are a number of old people for whom that money has been voted that have not seen the money, and there are a number of young people who could have been working today if that money was properly spent, but a lot of money – I believe and I understand as a matter of fact, there are some houses in which the wiring cost \$5,000. We are looking at it in a light-hearted manner, but as my friend from St. Michael East continues to say, we are not dealing in terms of quantity, we want quality for the old people.

I must say this as well. I agree with the Member for St. Michael East that some steps must be taken to get the old people out of the poor houses, because I still see them as poor houses. Let me say this to you as well, and I want to make this point in relation to the Central Bank as well. I notice in the newspaper that there is a piano at the Central Bank for £27,000. I say it is \$81,000. I have got old people at the District Hospitals that when you go in there the stench alone sends you back out. You vomit. I have nurses working at District Hospitals when the old people urinate at night they get wet walking through the wards.

(Aside)

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: But you could laugh and sit there and talk about not visiting the Central Bank. I am not going there because it epitomises to me everything the Barbados Labour Party stood for.

Aside.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: I do not mind she works there, I am telling you how I feel. She did not go down there yesterday, and she did not go either. I am not getting into that.

(Asides)

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: I am talking about my feelings for the old people and your understanding and how you spent money, because you do not care about the poor people of this country. It is not only to think about power, that is all you talk about. We talk about representing people, and I feel very hurt about it. You cannot defend your stance, I thought you would have got up as honest people should get up and say that to spend \$3 million in two months is wrong.

(Asides)

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Of course, we demonstrate it. When we said you should have free secondary education, you all denied it. When we said you should not pay for university education, you all said you should pay for it, so we must conclude on the basis of the evidence before us that you do not care.

Aside

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: And they were wise men too. We have to think about these things. But the other point I want to make is this.

Aside

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Do not get too annoyed, if it hurts you, relax, because the truth hurts. The other point I want to make as far as the honourable Member for St. Thomas is concerned, I do not agree that you should go back to 1978 in any investigation. We want to investigate the spending of the money in the last two months, in April and May of this year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, this has in some respects been a fairly sad debate. The tone has been sad, and it is a pity that perhaps a lot of the judgments and quasi evidence could not have been retained for the Commission which is to come into effect when it comes into effect, but I want to speak in this debate from a position of conscience, and I really want to address my thoughts to the question of where we are going in this country, where the delivery of welfare services or any services are concerned, because in a real sense that is the issue that this Parliament as a Parliament should be addressing itself.

On the matter of conscience, Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe in fiscal discipline and not at all at any stage am I ever going to justify any aspect of fiscal indiscipline in any Government, whether it is a Government with which I am associated or a Government to which I am opposed.

Mr. Chairman, I must say that if any aspects of fiscal indiscipline come out of the Inquiry I would also have to raise my voice against them, because I am a taxpayer in this country and I do not believe my taxes should be spent badly for whatever cause. I also want to say that in relation to the spending of the money, quite frankly, I am not happy and I say this for the record, I am not happy that the money could have been spent in two months, any more than I would have been happy had an allocation to the Housing Welfare Department been spent largely in one constituency. I really want to say that for the record. I would prefer now to be able to say that the monies were not spent in two months. I must say that from a position of conscience, because it is a system to which I would not subscribe normally. If I were in Government and if I were in Opposition I would say that.

Mr. Chairman, I think that this debate has to reach higher levels. We have to begin to discuss what we really

mean by the delivery of services in this country, what are the limits of the responsibilities of the State in relation to the responsibilities of the individual and the family; whether by welfare we mean our just finding the way in Barbados to add and add and add to the number of things that the Government does on behalf of individuals irrespective as to whether there is a specific need or not.
4.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the time has come when we must undertake a very detailed examination in Barbados of the range of public benefits which are being provided by the State and we must ask the first question: Is the range of benefits designed to help the truly needy and the genuinely needy? There are some benefits being provided in Barbados which, in my view, and I am speaking from a position of conscience, which are not designed to provide support for the genuinely needy of the society, and I think we will have to reach a stage in this country where, in relation to certain benefits, we will have to be more discriminating as to what kinds of benefits we expect the public to believe that the Government can deliver and, also, we have to be more discriminating, in my view, as to who are the people who get those benefits and when that debate comes, I will have my own position very strongly to state in that particular matter.

I, for example, Mr. Chairman, cannot help but be conscious that the tremendous backlog — I must say this on the floor of the House of Assembly at the risk of men going on the platforms and saying that Owen Arthur does not like old people. I will say this on the floor of the House of Assembly, that part of the reason why there has been an extension to the backlog of people needing housing welfare is the breakdown of the family as an integral part of our society and our attempt in the notion of developing a welfare society to replace the role of the family by the role of the Government.

There are families in Barbados in which you have people working but because there is a welfare vote there that family is not looking after its own in the way in which it has been accustomed in Barbados in times past.

The need for a Home Help Service is partly related to the breakdown of the family and the extended family and we must come to terms with these things in Barbados because it will prove beyond the limits of any Government in this society to just continue to add and to add and to add to public services without our trying to bring the family back into the provision of welfare because, to my mind, the family unit is a unit which must hold our society together, and I feel fundamentally within me that we are flirting with disaster in Barbados when we believe that the family and the community must not be the focal points to which welfare is provided and dis-

tributed and when we come to believe that it becomes the responsibility of the State.

I feel very strongly that the time must also come in this society when we must move away from this centralized approach to the distribution of so-called welfare and bring communities and community organisations back into Government and back into this particular aspect of national life. I feel that very strongly, Sir.

I quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, cannot see the need for a National Assistance Board. I do not believe that the National Assistance Board is doing anything that cannot be properly executed by a properly structured and constituted Welfare Department, and I really believe that.....

(Aside)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR:.....we are having in Barbados perhaps too much duplication of responsibilities as between various Government Departments and, to my mind, we must look carefully as well at the role of the National Assistance Board as it interfaces with the Welfare Department and if there is any degree of overlap and duplication of responsibilities such that the economies could be effected and there could be a better delivery of services through that interface of responsibilities, I will support it.

But, Mr. Chairman, what I take offence to, what I take umbrage to is the notion that there is in some special way persons or entities within this House and within this society who have a social conscience and others who do not.

I do not believe the notion that within the Barbados Labour Party there is a callow and callousness which says that you do not like old people, or you do not like young children, or you do not like the poor and Members on the other side know that this cannot be the case. It is not the case, that we do not gain as a Parliament, from coming to this Parliament and trying to raise matters as to which party has a social conscience and which party does not have a social conscience, that we may differ in relation to our emphases, in relation to the manner in which we may want to spend money to distribute public benefits, but fundamentally, I think we can agree on both sides of this House that if you were to analyse the evolution, the growth of the two parties, that the real thrust of public policies in this country as expressed in so many different areas, in so many different policy instruments, perhaps, in my view, to the stage where we have now begun to build in Barbados a welfare system that may cripple us eventually, that when we begin to seriously examine these things, the commitment of both parties in this country to the cause of poor people, the indigent, the unemployed, is beyond doubt.

I am saying that let us differ, if we must in relation to how we do it but this nonsense about who like black people and who do not like black people, who like poor people and who do not like poor people is unworthy of the two parties that constitute this House of Assembly.

My contribution to this debate is very, very simple, that I am not happy, I really am not, and I cannot say less, that the monies would have been spent in two months. Explanations can be given. Indeed, the best explanation that can be given is that a programme for a year has been undertaken and that we have not left this administration with the facility that if it wanted to give a different direction to that programme, that the resources are there to support them.

So in conscience, Sir, although I recognize the rationales that can be advanced in relation to the monies having been spent, knowing this within me you can have a situation where the monies could be spent in two months, fundamentally, I will not subscribe to that form of indiscipline anymore so than I would ever subscribe to a situation where a Minister can take a vote that is intended to support activity across the length and breadth of Barbados and spend most of it in his own constituency, and I want to make that point before the House today as well because that is the essence of "Mottleyism" and I will not also subscribe to that.
4.55 p.m.

I feel it behoves us to begin to seriously analyse where we stand, what we mean by welfare, the delivery of services in Barbados. Let us begin to have a constructive discussion as to how we get back the communities into it and so on and so forth. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Asides)

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the speaker who just sat down undertook a penetrating criticism of his own party, and the reason why I could state with absolute confidence that the Barbados Labour Party Government was not committed to the principles of social development is precisely because they refused to implement the blueprint which I left to restructure and revamp the Welfare Department.

One of the proposals which emanated from the speaker who just sat down was that there was a need to restructure the Welfare Department, and this is precisely the blueprint which was left there in September 1983 when I had nothing more to do with the Ministry of Community Services, and it was not touched because the Government of the day was not interested in it. As an illustration of their lack of interest, the next two

Ministers they appointed were men who could not have been accused of having a single thought in their heads about social policy. One Minister, the immediate successor to me, went to the Director of the National Assistance Board and the Director of the Child Care Board and told them "I am not committed to what went on before, you can make any other changes that you like." This is what happened. There is a clear diversion from what went on between 1978 and September 1983 and what went on afterwards until the Barbados Labour Party was unceremoniously and justifiably kicked out of office.

So what you are saying by way of an implicit proposal is bringing coals to Newcastle. You are bringing coals to Newcastle because a social development theorist is committed to ending the dependence of individuals on the State, and it is absolutely necessary to get the Welfare Department which was over-run by the apostles of Mottleyism when Local Government was abolished and who in fact absorbed, indoctrinated and eventually forced many qualified social workers to function in precisely the same way as they did.

What was necessary was to get welfare officers to begin to do social work, to take the cases before them and to solve the problems of the people who are their clients, solve the problems and bring them to a stage of independence within the society, including finding jobs for them and so forth.

That is not what a welfare officer now does under a regime of welfarism. What a welfare officer does is clerical work, filling out forms, pushing paper and at the end of it the client of the Welfare Department draws money indefinitely, and I can say without fear of contradiction that there is no commitment on the part of the Barbados Labour Party to any policy except that, otherwise (1) they would not have appointed Bradshaw or O'Brien Trotman to be Ministers of social policy, men who received written instructions from the Prime Minister of the day of what they should do, and in the case of social policy they received no written instructions because the Prime Minister of the day was not interested in social policy. He believed that it was foolishness.

Secondly the programmes which were left there were never carried forward. The blueprint to de-institutionalise the so-called Geriatric Hospital never got off the ground. It got no further than when I left it. The plan to develop day care centres for senior citizens never got off the ground. You need a panoply of social services and social institutions in order to deal first with the indigent elderly as the first phase in the development of a comprehensive plan for the elderly population of Barbados which numbers 11 per cent of the population, and which according to the demographic projections in the next twenty years will be 20 per cent of the

population. You cannot write off so substantial a portion of your population, and you have to begin to plan for them.

Planning in this particular area was anathema to the powers that be in the Barbados Labour Party; it was anathema because it involved initial expenditure which was considered unproductive and wasteful, and all discussion about social policy was considered to be waffling unless it was an aspect of social policy that could be reduced to magnitudes — dollars and cents. The honourable Member for St. Peter does not know anything about this. He has just arrived. He does not know what took place. From time to time he makes utterances from information that he picks up. Do not listen to them and defend their nonsense.

Aside

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: I do not want you to listen to me either, but do not talk nonsense. Do not talk about things of which you know nothing. I know what played out. I know the discussions that took place; I know the obstructions that took place; I know the proposals which were made, so when you come in here talking about restructuring the Welfare Department, that is old hat, and if your party was interested in it the blueprint is there. All it has to do is to implement it. You do not like to hear me say this, but I conceived the blueprint myself. I did it without help from any of them because they were absolutely opposed to it, absolutely opposed to social development of any kind, and within the area of recreation, extra domestic activity, again the Barbados Labour Party Government proved that it was not interested in social development because I was taken to task severely for spending \$20 000 in the construction of the senior citizens centre at St. Barnabas Church. They said it was a waste of money and when a further \$50 000 was requested, it was summarily rejected.

When the Government of the day had the opportunity to blaze a new trail in an area and establish an institution which was the first of its kind in the entire Caribbean, they did everything in their power to ensure that it would not come to fruition. That is how I know they are not committed to a programme of social development. That is how I know they are committed to a programme of welfarism, just giving away things.

Now some time in March 1983, I wrote a ten-page letter to the Minister of Finance setting out in a comprehensive manner the exciting opportunities which were afforded the Government in its new policies with respect to the elderly to move from a situation of geriatric care to a gerontological approach, an approach that embraced the totality of the experience of the elderly within the society.

5.05 p.m.

To this day I have not heard the gentleman breathe about it. I was not favoured with a reply because the ten-page letter was considered to be nonsense because it did not show how dollars and cents could be immediately generated. That is the prevailing mentality that dominated the Barbados Labour Party and that is the mentality that was totally opposed to planning to solve problems, even though within this ten-page letter it was clearly indicated how effective savings could be made within the Ministry of Health by transferring many medical costs from the institutions — the cost of care from the institutions into the community itself.

All of the reports, reports by PAHO, all of the reports done for the Ministry of Health with respect to programmes for the elderly demonstrate clearly how by progressive programmes of social development that are based in the community it is possible to effect considerable monetary savings within the Ministry of Health — not a single word, not a single response.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has another two minutes.

Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: I tried to raise it several times in certain forums within the party and nobody was interested. The people merely yawned. They yawned because there was no interest absolutely in a social development programme. It, therefore, rings extremely false in my ears to hear the spokesman for the Opposition coming in here and boasting about having a social policy that is superior to that of the Democratic Labour Party. It is foolishness — it is foolishness. Such differences were personal differences implemented by me.

It pains you all to hear it, but they were my ideas and they were implemented by me over the obstructions and objections of the reactionaries within the Barbados Labour Party. Those are the facts and I will keep repeating them.

I do not listen to you all come in here talking about social programmes and getting idiots to write in the newspaper about we are spending more than you spent. That is not social policy. That is straightforward welfarism. Any idiot can say that I spent \$5.00 more or \$10.00 more, but that is not a social policy. To say I spent more dollars is not a social policy. I hear it repeated over and over again by spokesmen coming from that side.

I sincerely hope that the Leader of the Opposition does not feel constrained to get up now and repeat the same tiresome nonsense again.

(Laughter)

(Aside)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This debate honourable Members will wind up at 5.17 p.m. The Minister will have to wind up at this stage. He has seven minutes in which to do it.

(Aside)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I have no difficulty with the Minister. I have no difficulty with the Minister winding up, Sir.

(Aside)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I agree. I have no difficulty within the constraints of the time that we have.....

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Yes, given the constraints of the time, I will reserve my reply to the honourable Member who had just spoken for the next occasion we have to debate this matter in this Chamber, Sir. But I do not accept his criticism of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Well, I will allow you to catch my eye on that occasion.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

Hon. W. W. HALL: Sir, we have had a very interesting debate and in winding up, Sir, we only have about five or six minutes. I would like to sort of reply to some of the things that were asked of me. First of all, Sir, the ex-Attorney General — he is the Leader of the Opposition.

(Aside)

Hon. W. W. HALL: Do you want me to sit down? The Leader of the Opposition asked me what I was going to do with the money. Well, the Resolution is asking for \$1.7 million. Let me tell the Leader of the Opposition what I am going to do with the \$1.7 million. \$712 372.68 will be paid to Marshall Trading. Do you know him? From St. Philip. \$712 372.68, and I will tell you this that between April 9 and 21, in twelve days, they ordered stuff for \$400 000 from him.

(Asides)

Hon. W. W. HALL: That is true, Sir. That is what I am going to do with it — \$712 372.68. This is the number. I am going to pay Manning, Wilkinson and Challenor \$248 846.17 incurred.....

(Aside)

Hon. W. W. HALL: Yes, they ordered — the PLO's went out from — I will tell you, Sir, that out of \$1.2 million the Democratic Labour Party is responsible for \$2 660.36 from Lumber Company on June this year. The rest of the \$1.2 million would be incurred and ordered from January to May and will be paid for as soon as I get this Supplementary. So Barbados Lumber Company will be paid \$176 795.25, Sissons Paint will be paid \$65 932.16, Harris Paints \$29 298.84, and Arawak Cement Plant \$984.00, including the \$712 for Marshall Trading will be \$9 042.28 with interest. They have been owing the money so long that they are charging interest on it. So Mr. Chairman, I just want the honourable Member to know that out of the \$1.7 million that \$1.2 million will be spent paying off your debts.

Sir, we also have out of the one hundred and nine houses that were to be completed but with the change of administration there are still fifty-five houses outstanding, Sir. I would think that twenty-five are in St. Michael, fifteen in the South, and fifteen in the North. So we will start with that, Sir. We will start with paying back the money, and then we will complete the houses that have not been completed.

There are many people who have come to my office, and who have told me that lumber was dropped at their place of abode and then someone came the next day and picked it up. We will have to deal with that, Sir, and what is more they are quite prepared to testify at the Inquiry.

(Asides)

Hon. W. W. HALL: Sir, as far as the honourable Member for St. Peter is concerned, he said that he does not believe in spending people's money badly. Well, I tend to concur. He also went as far as to say that he believed the whole thing was because of the breakdown in the family unit. This might well be true, Sir. I go further. I feel that we cannot even afford the luxury of sending young boys and girls to work off the street corners without some measure of orientation whereby the breakdown in the family unit will be discussed very seriously and I think that perhaps this is one of the things that we need to do in Barbados.

The honourable Member for St. Thomas, Sir, said that he was going to vote for it anyhow. So I do not think there is any problem in that. He also said that you could do anything with a capital vote. I do not particularly agree, Sir, because if you do then it means that you are assuming that you are going to have a Supplementary and if you are not planning for a Supplementary it means, Sir, that at the end of the two months when you have exhausted the vote that all of

those artisans who are working will be out of jobs, and then you talk about unemployment. You came in here last week and said that I am the Minister of Unemployment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Minister has another minute to wind up and I will put the question. 5.15 p.m.

Hon. W. W. HALL: Sir, we have to understand that people are living — we are going to get more and more old people simply because of the declining birth rate. We have to understand that people are living longer because of improve care, and then we have the outward migration policies of the fifties and sixties which have contributed to this problem that we now have.

Sir, I do not think that I have to tell the people of Barbados that something is wrong in the state of Denmark. People every day pass Verona. They have been passing there for the last three months, and they seem to know what is going on. The honourable Member for St. Thomas said there will be an Inquiry. He is saying what sort of inquiry he wants, I am saying that Cabinet will decide which type of Inquiry we want and we will let him know within a matter of days.

Sir, I know I only have a minute, I would have liked to say a few more things, but I do believe that I have stated the facts as they have been presented to me. I am not worried too much about opinions nor impressions and I believe that the facts are there for all to see. The people of Barbados when the Inquiry comes along will be anxious to know what has gone wrong, and I will say this, that we in the Democratic Labour Party are not interested in a policy of vulgar, pragmatic well-farism which while it appears really to be concerned with the plight of the people, the plight of the needy, is only an assault on the whole range of social benefits, which include social insurance, severance payments, pensions and education.

Sir, with those few words I move that this Head stand part.

(Aside)

Hon. W. W. HALL: This is only my first, I will deal with it later on.

The question that Head 78 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Resolution for \$20,265,332 do now pass.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1986–87, No. 5
HEAD 19 — MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND
PLANNING — \$39,269

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, this is a relatively straightforward Resolution which seeks to appropriate the sums of \$17,954 under the heading Other Personal Emoluments and \$21,315 under the heading of Rental of Property. I believe, however, the House should be entitled to some details.

An amount of \$146,543 was provided in the Estimates of Expenditure 1986–87 to defray wages of the Building Supervisor, the Maid and the General Worker paid at key scale rates as well as the non-pensionable allowance payable to certain members of staff. This includes the Development Officer, Operations Controller, Senior Systems Analyst, Senior Programmer, Programmer and a Systems Analyst.

As a result of the promotion of two Systems Analysts to Senior Systems Analysts and four Assistant Programmers to Programmers, the funds have become insufficient for this year and hence the increases in Personal Emoluments.

In respect of the rental of property, this Item deals with the rental and lease of computer equipment for Data Processing and the monthly charges payable for the operating system and other software. A new configuration has recently been installed in the Data Processing Department and hence the increased expenditure.

I guess this is about all the information that I have available. It is a straightforward supplementary involving a small sum of money, and I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

Hon. M. A. KING: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of three money Resolutions and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.
5.25 p.m.

On separate motions of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, the Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Order No. 4.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 4 standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance.

**RESOLUTION TO AUTHORISE THE INCREASE OF
THE AMOUNTS WHICH MAY BE BORROWED
BY THE ISSUE OF SAVINGS BONDS**

Order No. 4 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to authorise the increase of the amounts which may be borrowed by the issue of Savings Bonds from \$25.0 million to \$50.0 million.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, in addressing this Resolution, the details are pretty clearly set out in the Addendum to the Resolution.

To date, the nominal value of Savings Bonds issue is \$10 million. Further issues totalling \$7.5 million are planned before the end of this fiscal year with a redemption tranche of \$2.5 million, bringing the nominal value of bonds issued to \$15 million.

It is a declared policy of this Government to make sure that there are adequate opportunities, not only for institutions, but for the public and for the small man to have an opportunity to invest in Government's securities so that they too can participate in the benefits offered at this particular time.

As we know, there is considerable liquidity in the system in Barbados and it is important that these instruments should be put in place as they form an integral part of our monetary strategy which we have announced which is complimentary to the fiscal programme introduced into this country and from which several people have already noted a very favourable response, not only individually, but in terms of the economy.

It may be desirable to issue bonds in excess of the amount for which there is legal authority at the moment, and it is important that we should have these instruments in place.

I would like to make a few observations: Firstly, I would like to point out that the Government is not intending to go out there and borrow \$50 million or raise \$50 million in bonds. It is a limit which we are seeking and it is a limit which we hope would take us through a five-year period of Government, because it has been the practice in the past to ensure that you come to Parliament with limits to avoid every year or so coming back to Parliament again. This is the practice which has developed over the past ten years or so.

Now, I believe, Sir, that as Minister of Finance, I have a duty to respond to certain areas within our financial and economic system. Some time ago, the

Government placed a debenture issue of \$10 million and it was all snapped up by institutions within a matter of a few months. So strong is the confidence in the Government and so favourable is the local capital market and so great is the demand for Government securities.

As a result, many individuals have been very upset because they have not had the opportunity to get any of the debentures. Many have called. I think they have called at the Central Bank, and the Ministry of Finance and they are very concerned that they did not get the opportunity to participate in this exercise.

The Government will make the money available to them. The point is that the money will be well used, and we will ensure that there is a proper balance between the amount of money which is available, which the Government seeks to attract for its own purposes and what is left for the private enterprise. At the moment there is no problem. There is a question of excess liquidity. There is more than enough money in the system to meet the demands of the private sector and meet the demands of the public sector.

I trust that the wisdom both from a monetary point of view and from other points of view of the Government coming to Parliament at this particular time with this measure will be easily appreciated by all, and above all, by the Spokesman for Finance of the Opposition who has repeatedly pointed out only a few months ago when he was on this side "that at a time of excess liquidity that the best thing the Government can do is to intervene in the marketplace and ensure that the money goes into productive use", if I may use his own words.

Thank you very much.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Resolution and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am fascinated with the facility with which the Honourable Minister of Finance and Planning gets up and says that Government is borrowing because there is excess liquidity in the system and then attempts to explain that by reference to a so-called statement by the honourable Member for St. Peter.

The truth of the matter, Sir, is that Government has a need to borrow because of certain trends in the public revenues, and it finds it convenient to borrow, and easy to borrow because there is a coincidence between the shortfall decline in Government revenue and excess liquidity in the system.

The fact is that since May 28, 1986, this Government, which prior to May 28, 1986 did not believe in borrowing, has now borrowed really almost \$200 million.

Aside.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: We have had a situation where in excess of \$137 million have been borrowed abroad from commercial banks, and this says nothing of the amounts that have been borrowed from international lending institutions to support the capital programmes. I seem to recall, Sir, that we had envisioned borrowings of \$62 million over the course of the year to support the capital programme. So in addition to the \$137 million borrowed from the private commercial banks, there is still that element of borrowing from the multilateral lending institutions to the extent that some major capital works, particularly the roads are still being executed.

5.35 p.m.

We have had a fairly heavy issue of Treasury Bills which I know are meant in part to roll over past treasury bills, but which are equally meant to yield an increment in financing available to Government. We have had an increase in the national development bonds issue and now we have an increase — I speak subject to correction — or we are going to have an increase in the savings bonds as well.

I have twice in the past called on the Minister of Finance and Planning to tell us what really is the state of public finances not with a view, Mr. Speaker, to create controversy, but precisely because I am of the view that the extraordinary level of public borrowings this year in the context of a situation where the Government as it says and as shown is reducing capital expenditures by \$40 million, is very much related to the fact that there has been a fall off in revenues.

We have not yet received the Accountant General's report for August, but we are in a position to begin to compare reports for July, and I would have no diffidence in saying to the House that on trend, given the nature of the change in the collection of taxes on income as between June and July, we can be speaking in terms of a dip in Government receipts from that source almost equivalent to \$10 million a month.

When last I spoke to this matter I spoke too narrowly to it from the point of view of Government borrowing to replace revenues which have been foregone. I am now led to the belief as well that the extraordinary amount of foreign borrowing being indulged by this Government this year, foreign borrowing which to date is some \$25 million more than the identified requirements of Government as stipulated by us when we were thinking even then of capital expenditures

exceeding yours by \$50 million, that the extraordinary amount of foreign borrowing must be conceived of as balance of payments support borrowing to shore up a sagging balance of payments caused not only by a fall off in export earnings, but also by an acceleration in domestic spending, and I believe, Sir, that we have to have a twin vision on this matter.

I have not yet seen statements by the Department of Statistics or the Tourist Board in relation to tourist arrivals since May, and I would really like if the Minister of Tourism and Industry could assure me that there is no sagging weakness in our receipts from tourism, but Mr. Speaker, I am really compelled to the view that a Government which cuts down its capital programme which ought to be the main cause of public borrowings in this country, which cuts it down and then has to run up a borrowing bill of over \$200 million in a year is a Government which is facing on the one hand revenue pressures, and on the other hand a Government which is facing balance of payments difficulties.

I do not accept the view, Sir, put by the Minister of Economic Affairs in this House that these borrowings that we have had to date are related to your need to repay the debt left by the Barbados Labour Party. First of all I want to say categorically today, and I am really sorry the Minister of Economic Affairs is not here, he and his London School of Economics experience, that this nonsense about the debt service of Barbados not including amortisation is just a figment of his imagination designed to mislead this House; that our external debt payments will not run anywhere near \$230 million this year or any year in the immediate future, and he knows that; that debt service as set out in our Estimates includes both principal and interest — read page 25 of the Minutes that in any event, as the Central Bank's report for last year tells you, last year we borrowed money in anticipation of the debt increment this year, we did not use the foreign exchange as you know. You cited the Central Bank report saying that the reserves of Barbados were increased by \$83 million because of the borrowings, so we did not use the foreign exchange component of it, and we left you with a local currency account of \$50 million to help this country meet any increment to the foreign exchange problems or your fiscal problems that would accrue from the repayment of debt.

So if you are telling this House that you are borrowing today to meet the debts that we have to pay today, I am saying to you categorically that we in the Barbados Labour Party, have already attended to that, and you cannot therefore justify the borrowings to deal with what has already been attended to.

I have already told the Minister of Economic Affairs that if he wants me to accept that you are going to borrow today to pay debts two years down the line, that

I feel that as a matter of good financial management — and he laughs at it with his London School of Economics air because good advice could never come from anybody within the Caribbean — he must not believe that you can just put money into a general account in the Consolidated Fund and hope that in two years' time the money will be there; that to make sure that it is there you have to create some special account that sterilises it, similar to what we did last year, to make sure that money borrowed last year was available for spending this year. You laugh at these things. With your London School of Economics arrogance, you laugh at these things, and I must repeat to this House that I have no difficulty with Government borrowing money for responsible and productive purposes, but that the trends, Mr. Speaker, are too clear now for us to close our minds to them; that the Minister of Finance must start taking the public of Barbados into his confidence, that last year for example, in July when we were able to raise \$52 million to finance our current expenditures, that this year it is down to \$47 million despite nominal growth in the economy, and that in August the gap between this year and last year is wider and perhaps could be as great as \$10 million despite nominal growth in the economy, and that we have had a situation in July, for example, where Government revenues amounted to \$47 million and Government recurrent expenditure to \$66 million.

I recognise, Mr. Speaker, that those months tend to be the tight financial months for Government, but that we have a situation in point of fact now where our revenues are going backwards and that these borrowings — I must make that point over and over and over again — are designed to take the place of revenue foregone.

You all will make a political joke out of it, that I do not like to see money put in people's pockets. The honourable Member for St. Michael South East makes a joke out of it. The Prime Minister makes a joke out of it.

I believe in financial discipline. The hard experience, the bitter experience of most developing countries and all developing countries within this region is that the problems of economic management and the problems of economic development over the long term, both the short term considerations of management and the long term considerations of development are always compromised by irresponsible fiscal behaviour whether it is in the nature of excessive expenditures or irresponsible taxation adjustments.

5.45 p.m.

We have the experience of other countries in the Caribbean where you have had for a time only the notion that you can yield taxes, maintain public services without something giving, and we know the kind of manoeuvres that those countries have had to go through.

When I, Mr. Speaker, keep referring again and again to this situation, it is purely on account of my fear of our groping for short-term popular solutions at the risk of putting this country in a financial position that will eventually cause us to go to draconian forms of indirect taxes — and I am going to watch for that carefully — as well as to put us into a position where we have to borrow massive amounts to support the balance of payments.

And I am very conscious of the fact that there have been times in the past when we have had to have balance of payments support loans as you have had this year. There have been balance of payments support loans stretching back as far as 1974 when in the wake of the oil crisis the Democratic Labour Party Government borrowed from Trinidad and we repaid the loan, of course, without a murmur. There have been balance of payments loans in 1980 but most of those balance of payments support loans, Sir, were caused by shortfalls generally in export earnings. We are now putting ourselves in a position in my view, and you can differ — you can laugh at me but I will continue to make the point — that we are putting ourselves in a position where we have to borrow from balance of payments support loans not only because of the operation of the factor of the past, that is shortfalls in export earnings, and I want to hear the Minister reply on the performance of the tourist industry. I want to hear about the tourist arrivals. But we are putting ourselves in a position where there becomes a need for balance of payments support loans to deal with a twin problem, shortfall in export earnings coincided with an increase in domestic spending and an increase in domestic imports, and this situation worries me.

And I, therefore, Sir, while I have no objection to the honourable Minister putting before the public of Barbados instruments that would allow them to have avenues for investment, I must warn the Minister of the potential contradictions that can ensue in the pursuit of his economic policies. That if the people take the tax concessions and save, then you do not get back the taxes, and if they take it and spend then it goes through the balance of payments that you could find yourself unless you manage this situation, very, very carefully between a rock and a very hard place, and you must make up your mind as to what really are your emphases. Because within this party there seems to be a lack of a unity as to where the real emphasis should be, whether the emphasis should be on domestic spending because we are hearing as well, Sir, spending money, buy local, and so on as a public relations approach as well as we are simultaneously hearing advice — save it, and you are going to find yourself in a hard place, Sir.

So that the Resolution to raise some monies through savings bonds is really part of an effort by the Government not just to stimulate savings, Sir — there are a lot of avenues in Barbados already to stimulate savings. You are creating an additional one, but this really is another in that long and continuing drama — a series of additional measures meeting by meeting brought to the House late as well, Mr. Chairman. Because last week in this House of Assembly we were told that in the course of the day we would be debating a Resolution to increase the County Bank loan from U.S.\$30 million to U.S.\$40 million, so \$20 million more in borrowings went through the House just smoothly at the last moment as if the Government from week to week is not sure exactly as to what is its financial policy that they have to bring these instruments to the House late. You have twenty-four Members. Let somebody help the Minister of Finance if the Minister of Finance finds it impossible to carry this load on his own shoulder.

Sir, I can support the Resolution in the spirit that it is truly intended to open the avenue for Barbadians to have more instruments to save, but the trends are beginning to unfold, Sir — over \$200 million borrowed, a drop in current revenues for the hard months of this year as compared to next year — and the honourable Member for St. Michael West in addition to being a fine baritone is now also to become a soothsayer. He tells us not for long.

(Laughter)

(Aside)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Leave me alone. Leave me alone. I am tired getting ridiculed by you guys. I want to hear about the tourist arrivals.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Address the Chair.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: So that Mr. Speaker, Sir, this forms part of a continuing drama of borrowing both at home and abroad, and I would really be failing as the spokesman of the Opposition were I not to bring to attention that we have already this year borrowed in excess of \$137 million abroad when we said that it will only require \$114 million to finance a capital programme of \$190 million while yours is \$148 million together with the projects financing you are getting from the World Bank together with the massive increase in the Treasury Bill issue. It all points to a situation where we are now, Sir, putting ourselves deeper and deeper into a death trap.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I really had hoped that this debate would not have been necessary because the Minister of Finance in introducing the measure was careful to point out that he was taking the step of arranging for the bond issue level to be raised. He made the specific statement. Indeed, I believe he wanted to make sure that the representatives who carry the information outside of this Chamber would not make an error, and I heard him specifically say slowly that he was not by this measure borrowing any money. He was merely raising the ceiling because it is standard for us to raise the ceiling at this time and he said that it would be to carry us through five years.

I believe he spoke in English, Sir, and I do not believe there is any need for simultaneous translation and so I believe the honourable Members on that side would have heard the same thing that I heard. But the honourable Member for St. Peter has this capacity to hear things which he wishes to hear so he can speak to the things to which he wishes to speak. So he wishes to address the issue of borrowing and he subjects this Honourable Chamber to a mini dissertation on the dangers of borrowing.

I submit that he is a worthy teacher in the field and we can listen to him with a certain amount of understanding because he has had a wide experience in the field of borrowing.

(Laughter)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: This honourable gentleman, Sir, can tell us with impunity that unless we run the ship with a meticulousness we are going to run into trouble. That is a brilliant statement because it is true.

5.55 p.m.

If subsequently we are successful, he can say we have been successful because we took his warning early. If subsequently we are not successful, he will be able to say "I warned them and they would not listen to me, look what has happened to them" He walks the narrow lane in the middle of the road.

Let me remind the honourable Member that when he was sitting at the feet of his master, the then Minister of Finance, another tune was heard to emanate from his lips, not in terms of principle, because he has always said he is a careful economist and he believes in discipline, but when his master of the time — I withdraw master, Sir — when the then Minister of Finance I will not do him the dishonour of saying he was his master, because I recall when he was proposing him as a candidate he said at that time certain words

(Aside)

(Laughter)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You would rather I do not say that. Very well, Sir, the record is there and I will invite my colleagues to go and read the record. The point I am making, though, is that the honourable Member for St. Peter has always said he is a careful economist. Sir, the basic principle of what he is saying is not something to be questioned. If he would pardon the expression and take it in the spirit in which it is said, what he said is economic mundane material.

(Aside)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Precisely, as he is saying, which ought always to be followed by prudent Governments. The fact is that the Barbados Labour Party Government — and I wish him to hear this — had the question of revenues in a certain situation because they paid attention to increasing like an old woman counting sheep their revenues, and so they taxed the people unmercifully so that they could point to the rising revenues. It is true. If you add and keep adding and keep adding how much you take the revenues are bound to go up.

Now, Sir, if a Daniel

(Aside)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No it is not foolishness. You listen. If a Daniel comes to judgment and decides to take a chance, if this Government decides that the people have been taxed to the point — and I am going to deal with the borrowings of your Government in a moment — but if the people have been taxed and we decide that we are going to.....

(Asides)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: in the middle of a year — the election was May 28 which is the end of May, the beginning of June — if this Government decided at the time it did, poised in the middle of the calendar year, that it is going to give the people the tax concessions which it promised, it stands to reason in a system that has PAYE deduction at source, that the actual revenues that would be deducted from the people's money and put into the Treasury must by definition show a diminution. It is no genius for us to say that the revenues are lower, of course on paper they are lower.

(Asides)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: In fact they are lower. Revenues going into the Government till as of now will appear — they can only appear on paper, because that is how you print, on paper — they will appear and they are lower, so we have to discuss these revenues in December, we have to discuss these revenues in February.

The honourable Member himself knows, and that is why he makes the glancing references to the tourism receipts, because the honourable Member knows that how the Treasury will look, how the figures will look, will be a manifestation of what kind of arrivals we have in tourism, because that is one of the generators. The honourable Member knows that and that is why he is asking if I have the figures on tourism. Eat your heart out. Wait.

(Aside)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I know you wish to know. The reason you wish to know is because you used to have a Ministry of Tourism that every month used to be trotting out figures trying to give people the impression that blood is thicker than water, used to be telling people how we did better this year than we did last year, and then within weeks after that or months after that the hoteliers were crying. What we are going to do is to produce the information. It is there. You can go to the Statistical Department, but we are not going to brag about them, because we are not going to use a trend in a given month to tell the Minister of Finance that we have a trend. We are going to use quarterly analyses to determine what is important to us.

I will say in passing that you need not worry about the tourism arrivals at this point. That is all I have to say about that. I have spoken to the Minister of Finance about the arrivals. Suffice it to say that a new spirit has come in the area of tourism, that the people who are involved in the industry itself have a feeling of higher hope.

Aside.

Laughter.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am not prepared to discuss your particular hotel and you may have a problem. I am saying that in the Ministry.....

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: All I can say to you is that the spirit which I am finding out there is a spirit that I am hopeful with. I am not going to get involved in any discussion of special figures. What I am discussing here is that the honourable Member tries to give the impression by talking about \$200 million borrowed in the short time that the Minister of Finance came into Government and immediately said "let us go out and borrow some money." The honourable Member, if he is going to talk about those figures, has a responsibility to this House to explain, as it has already been explained to this House and to the country, that a substantial number of those so-called

overseas borrowings were commitments which were made by the honourable Member and his party.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Well, subtract. If you can subtract, subtract your commitment and then accuse the Minister of what is his. We left \$258 million and you borrowed into \$1 billion. You are authorised to talk about borrowing from that level, you cannot come talking about borrowing as if you had run a house that is tight. You borrowed until you could not find anybody to borrow from.

Laughter.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You come in here talking about borrowing? We have been in Government for three months. We are in the process of cleaning up the mess that you left behind, we are in the process of trying to put the fiscal position of this country on a firm footing again, while giving the people of this country a hope to go out and work. We are in the process of trying to find methods and ways for the people of this country to find new aspirations, and you come in here talking to us about borrowing. You can attack us on a number of things, but do not start on borrowing.

The \$90 million road that you are building is among the worst pieces of infliction on a small developing country that has ever happened anywhere about anything at any time.

I just came from Grand Bahama Island in the Bahamas. They have a country and they have an island that was built in thirty years, thirty years ago. They have highways. This is an island ninety miles long and seven miles wide. They have dual carriageway highways. When you go down these highways, in the middle of them they have greenery. Wherever you go it seems as if you can drive in peace. What we are creating in Barbados is a death trap. You talk about a debt trap? We are creating a death trap. Ninety million dollars we are going to be spending and of that \$90 million, \$60 million you push down houses and pull in piece here and pull in piece there to put a road down the middle of Barbados. We had to borrow the money for that. That money was borrowed, and the honourable Member comes in here to get bonds.

Barbadians who wish to invest money, Barbadians who have liquidity, banks that are giving 2% and 1½%....

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Do not talk about the controlled rate of interest, that is for people who do not understand. The rate of interest is controlled by the

amount of money that is available. It is a supply and demand situation. You know that. Stop misleading the people. The interest rate will go up in relation to how much money is available and it will come down just like any other price. You know that; tell him.
6.05 p.m.

(Asides)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Why do I have to go in with this mundane thing, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER: May I have some order?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I hear the honourable Member, and I know he is capable of doing it saying "raise the level of debate", and while raising the level of the debate looking through the flaps that you are walking up to see who is down below and hitting off and hitting a header down in the water all the time. They should not do it. Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have a high level debate, let us have a high level debate. Do not mislead the people.

The reason why we have to get the bonds is because the Government can offer the people long term savings at a higher level. If I had to choose, as is happening in the United States now, people would rather buy bonds than put their money into C.Ds or other methods because the bonds will yield better. Is that a fact or not? So do not let us talk about bonds in the same context as we talk about going to the capital market.

It is so embarrassing when I sit in an enclave like this and hear trite material being.....

(Asides)

(Laughter)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. B. M. TAITT: T-R-I-T-E material pouring forth and I know the honourable Member can do better.

Asides

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The record will show that I did not say that.

The fact is, Sir, that we need in Barbados to discuss the monetary situation and our fiscal policies in a level where first we educate the public as to what exactly is involved. I think that in some respects the newspapers may be at fault because the kinds of feature articles which could explain this kind of issue to the public have been in relatively short supply. The number has been in short supply and, perhaps, we need to have a little more of this

kind of information so that debates of this kind would be much more meaningful to those persons who only hear of capital markets and other economic terms and believe that you have to be some special genius in order to understand what exactly is going on.

The fact is that even if we had borrowed \$200 million in the three months, the honourable Member would know that it is a little too early to examine the trend. I noticed how careful his language was as he was discussing what he could begin to perceive. We understand the technique but I am saying, it is too early. Wait until another three months and if you want to lick in our bags, lick it in, but do not come three months prematurely, and try to give people the impression that the Minister of Finance is not handling the economy in a meticulous way.

It is clear that the Minister of Finance has been taking stock.

Asides

Hon. B. M. TAITT: This has nothing to do with You think this is the time when the honourable Member was in the Labour Party when you all used to go in the Cabinet and have these big rows? We do not have that kind of behaviour.

Asides

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Well, that is where you are to have the big rows, at the Annual Conference. We have a Democratic Annual Conference, you see. When you have an Annual Conference you cannot have a big row.

Asides

(Laughter)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I do not know why they do not leave me. Why they do not leave me alone? We have big rows at our Annual Conference because that is what Annual Conferences are for.

The British Labour Party just had their Annual Conference and the whole Press just say how marvellous it has been because this is the first time they have had a conference without a row. Now, the Labour Party who said.....

Asides

Hon. B. M. TAITT: But he is a card carrying member so he has as much freedom as I have in my party. Now, on the contrary, in your party you do not have card carrying members and the card carrying members you have do not know that they are card carrying members. You have the Minister now telling people to go out and infiltrate and the

poor people do not know who he means, what he means. He has one Philip George writing letters every day. He is confusing the population, changing his name, writing the same letter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that part of the Resolution?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Beg your pardon, Sir.

Laughter.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I was saying. What we need to do, therefore...

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, it seems as if everybody in here knows who writes those letters except you and me.

The fact is that we have to put our financial discussions on a more serious footing. We think that...

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: For the records, he says he will withdraw it.

Sir, what I am saying is that I think it is a little too early for the Ministry of Finance to be regaled in the manner in which the honourable Member attempted to do so and I think.....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: After Christmas we can have a discussion.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I will not sit down while he is talking about a pitiful lie. The point I am making is such a serious point that I do not wish the debate to go off with any idea that we are begging for time.

We are saying that reasonable, honest, dedicated Parliamentarians would not come in here during the first three months of an administration, when the administration is cleaning up the mess that is left behind by its predecessor and come in here and talk in the terms that my friend, the honourable Member for St. Peter attempted to talk this evening. That is the only point I am making. If you must.....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: With the other gentleman in the chair at that time, we were lucky that we got to say something furthermore what we said about you.

The fact is that when we come into this Chamber and we talk about finances and we talk about a bond issue, we do not expect that to be elevated into the kind of discussion that was attempted. That is the point I am making.

Thank you.

Applause.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does any other Member want to speak? I will ask the Honourable Minister to close the debate.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, from time to time I must say that I am a little disappointed in the contributions made by the chief spokesman for finance on the other side.

Week after week we are presenting the same theoretical argument that if you cut revenue, particularly in the area of direct taxes, and you stimulate domestic demand, particularly in an open economy, that you are likely to put pressure on your external position. That is correct. It is equally correct that that situation be exacerbated if your exports are declining at the same time. That is correct.

It is also correct and this is first-form material, that you will end up with a balance of payments problem. That is also correct but, unfortunately, within that theoretical framework, I believe that the honourable Member has a duty to go a little beyond that.

He talks about a fall-off in revenue from direct taxation in the month in which the proposals were introduced and in the subsequent month. Yes, there has been a fall-off in direct taxation and it is intended to be. It is an integral part of our fiscal and economic policies.

The point is that with the evident increase in investment in Barbados, the evident increase in the levels of economic activity that is taking place in this country and from what I saw today, probably a stabilisation in the rate of decline in our exports, that what is going to happen, and we have always said this, that in due course, through the feedback mechanisms later on in the year that we will recover significantly from the loss in revenue. 6.15 p.m.

We have said that we consider it fundamental for the future development of this country to stimulate economic activity in Barbados to cut direct taxation. Yes,

we have cut it. We came to Parliament. We did not do it illegally; we came to Parliament and the situation is that.

Secondly what is of considerable interest is that so far there has been no evidence of any increased levels of imports, no increased spending of foreign exchange on imports up to the latest information that I have available to me, but we have to be careful when you make statements that can create some instability or some destabilisation like the silly statement made that the Government was going to pay people's income tax refunds by bonds and so on. That statement was totally untrue and created a lot of problems.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You could not have called me the day before because I was in Venezuela for about a week. That is yet another lie if he said so. I was in Venezuela and came back here on the Sunday night. I was not even in Barbados, so it would be totally untrue if he said so. That would be a total lie.

However, through the investment mechanisms and through the expansion of the economy, it looks as though there is going to be an element of economic growth in Barbados this year. All the figures are looking that way.

Now the honourable Member puts out a figure and says that we borrowed \$200 million this year. The honourable Member is an economist and he has been in the Ministry of Finance, and the tragedy is that people are likely to believe him and you will see a headline "Government borrows \$200 million to finance its four months in office".

What are the facts, Sir? The facts are as follows: Government's borrowings on the domestic market have been limited to \$10 million in debentures and in terms of Treasury Bills. The net increase in Treasury Bills so far in Barbados has been about \$18 million, so that is \$28 million on the local scene. In terms of foreign borrowing we have just made the Yen loan. The domestic component of that loan arrived in Barbados on October 2. As far as I know about Bds. \$5 million of that money has been used to date, therefore \$28 million and \$5 million are \$33 million. I am telling you this about the Yen and one of the reasons why we have had to borrow more, is because as a consequence of your borrowing in the Japanese market when you did and with the appreciation of the Yen, we have made a paper loss of about US\$10 million to US\$12 million on your first loan.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is a fact you have lost about US\$10 million to US\$12 million, and I am in a position now where whilst there was a lot of

foolish speculation as to whether we had difficulties in raising the money in Japan or not, I used my own discretion and I can tell you.....

Mr. SPEAKER: For the benefit of honourable Members, I am sure you are aware of Standing Order No. 28(6). Let the honourable Member continue.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I can tell this House that we have had no problems in the Japanese market. We have succeeded where other larger countries have failed, and thirdly I would say that the reason why I delayed going to Japan to sign for that loan was because I wanted to pick the optimum time in terms of the exchange rate. But it does mean this, that although we have borrowed the money, the present situation is such that we may not be able to use the Yen totally as yet, because in view of the fact that we have suffered that exchange loss, we have to make sure that we have enough Yen in the pot, so to speak, when the repayments come up next year and the year beyond, so that at least we can repay in Yen; so although we have borrowed that amount of Yen, it does not mean we are going to be using it. You can buy Yen at the time but when you have to repay it you have to repay it at the current exchange rates once you convert it into US dollars, and that is what you all did.

Aside

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The issue is this: that even with the Yen loan, we are keeping a proportion of Yen. We have had the best advice available to us, we have experts outside who are helping us in this and we are going even further; we are even going to be "parking" some of the Yen in a special account so as to ensure that we do not encounter the same exchange losses in the future on the one hand, and secondly we are going even further; once we get into these divergencies of loans, we will probably be seeking some form of insurance either in the form of the purchase of caps or otherwise to protect us against the interest risks and against the exchange risks. So of the whole Japanese loan of \$58 million you are talking about, we have spent \$5 million. We are now at \$33 million.

In terms now of the Euro dollar loan, we intended to borrow \$30 million, but the market responded so positively to the efforts of the Barbados Government that in point of fact instead of raising \$30 million we were offered US\$46 million and we decided to take \$46 million. I have not signed for that loan yet and not one cent has come in. A Resolution has gone through Parliament, the money is available, so it is totally untrue. The total amount of borrowed money that this Government has used to date adds up to \$33 million.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You see, you have to deal with the honourable Member because he makes statements, and I believe that he knows better. He knows that of that \$137 million that you have in foreign exchange borrowings, first of all, the first call on that money would be to repay the foreign debt and the interest on that debt this year including debt to the IMF, including debt to the International bodies like the World Bank and including the commercial foreign debt. That is the first charge. Once we have paid that debt, the remainder would then help to finance your capital programme along with your official borrowings, and it is quite possible, I cannot tell you for sure, that a substantial amount of that money would carry forward into a position into the next financial year. It all depends on the performance of the tourist season, but what is equally important and I want honourable Members to listen very carefully, is that the Barbados Labour Party, because of the circumstances in which they found themselves since 1981, left this country with a very serious bunching of external debt between 1986 and 1990 rising to over \$200 million in 1990 which will have to be the first charge on our external earnings or borrowings.

6.25 p.m.

This Government has two choices. The Government, can either take an official position and say we are a new Government. We go to the people who have loaned us the money and say, "look we have a serious bunching of debt over the next four years as a new administration, let us sit down and talk about rescheduling of the debt, an official rescheduling of the debt." That is one option. That is one way of doing it. There is another way of doing it, that is to continue the policy that they started in 1985, that is to borrow to meet your borrowings and to replace debt. We have decided to do it this way because this is a time of prevailing low interest rates and one of the reasons why we are doing this is because the debt is rolling over. There is no accumulation of debt as a consequence of this policy. So it is quite wrong and it is quite incorrect to go out there and tell people that we are borrowing \$200 million when I can stand here on the floor of the House and tell you that the total amount of borrowed money that we have used up in this country is \$33 million since we have come into power. Now I go further and I say this, Sir, \$33 million.

Aside.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I go further and say this. The honourable Member makes a big point about the fact that we say that we are reducing our capital programme to \$150 million and yet we are borrowing the money.

Aside.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Wait a minute. Just one second. The point is as you know that with capital programmes we are doing our best to curtail the expenditure. We hope to be able to come in around \$150 million, but we have to provide for the excesses of the past administration.

Now when the honourable Member says that they left \$50 million in a sterilize account which contributed to and helped our external position, that is not correct. The external component of the \$50 million had already been used up. That is a fact. The external component of the \$15 million was not available to us. What was available to us was the \$50 million in the sterilize account which simply went to meet outstanding debts committed before we came into office. Every cent was paid out. You may recall that I told the House already that when we took over office that the Government's overdraft was in excess of \$70 million with \$44.6 million in outstandings and you have \$50 million in a sterilize account. Well, do a little arithmetic and see where the \$50 million went. It is simple and straightforward.

So there is no point saying that the \$50 million could have gone either to finance any aspect of our domestic programme since we came into office or any element of our external programme. It was totally committed. What simply happened is as far as I can see that the Government was involved with elections at that time and they did not get down to the business of paying off their debts around election time and the \$50 million went towards that — debts that you committed. It is a matter of record of this House. The fact that you had an overdraft, over \$70.1 million and your outstandings of \$44.6 million, and you have \$50 million in a sterilize account. Where do you think I got the money to pay it off from, to reduce the overdraft by \$6 million and pay off the \$44 million? That is where the money went. So that we have been financing our programme since we came into office and the total amount of borrowed funds we have used is \$33 million.

Aside.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sorry, we have one in the bank. Where? Which bank?

(Aside)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I shall not permit the constant misuse of Standing Order 33(6). Every Member has an opportunity to speak.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The other problem, Sir, is that as a consequence of the Government having to look at the capital programme and seeking to reduce the wasteful expenditure involved in that programme then, of course, that would impinge on foreign capital inflows and, therefore, the \$62 million that he is talking

about would be substantially less during this particular fiscal year because we are hoping to cut back on some of these programmes that are not of a productive nature.

And so I believe that we have done everything that we possibly can. I can tell you this: that our external position is secure and that there will be a balance of payment surplus in Barbados at the end of this year, and that our foreign reserves position would be healthy, and there would be no question of any foreign reserves problems, and that in addition that there would be the greatest security of the Barbados currency.

So all the things which the honourable Member for St. Peter said would happen by December, none of those things will happen. I can tell you what is happening is that in the hotel sector, in the manufacturing sector, in housing, in real estate and generally in the Barbados economy, there is a definite evidence of a pick-up in economic activity in Barbados. Whether you like it or not, that is the case. So that is the current situation.

So that I honestly and sincerely would hope — now when I was in Opposition, I was very careful in the kind of statements that I made — and I want to make this final point. Nobody would believe that it was the past Government, the Barbados Labour Party Government who sought a \$10 billion Yen placement which would have yielded \$116 million. Also it was that administration that approached the County Bank for \$25 million which would be Bds. \$50 million, a total of \$166 million. They intended to borrow that they had *in programme*, \$144 million, was the proceeds of the Yen loan at the time plus the County Bank loan. So they were planning to borrow \$166 million. We have borrowed \$137 million to finance their debt. That is the hurtful thing. The hurtful thing is that when you go to borrow this money you know that you are doing two things: You are meeting firstly your debt obligations and, secondly, then you are making sure as they have done that there will be no significant problems either internally or externally particularly externally and to finance their capital programme.

The roll-over of the debt I consider to be a judicious policy for the reasons I have stated — (1) the low interest rates in that you can convert money at a higher interest rate to a lower interest rate, and also we are having an adequate stretching out of the debt. It is not only being rolled over, we are getting the benefit of lower interest rates and we are stretching out the debt, and we are not misusing the money.

Before I sit down, I want to repeat again and again and again that it would be totally wrong to say that we borrowed \$200 million, that the total amount of borrowed money that this Government has utilized in Barbados both on capital and on current account is \$33 million. That is the situation — \$33 million. All the rest

of the money I told you we have had to proceed with the Yen loan at the right time in order to make sure that we recover some of that US\$25 million that will go down the drain as a consequence of that earlier loan you made on the Japanese market.

I hope that at long last that I have laid to rest these fears that you are trying to create in the minds of the people of Barbados. There is no problem in the country and everything is perfectly alright. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

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

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, earlier in today's sitting permission was granted by the House for us to deal with a Bill to amend the Public Loan (1961) Act and to validate certain actions taken under that Act. 6.35 p.m.

I propose, Sir, subject to the approval of the House, to proceed with the second reading and other readings of that Bill at this stage, and this will be the last item of Government Business for today's sitting. The Order is Order No. 5.

ORDER NO. 5 – A BILL TO AMEND THE PUBLIC LOANS (1961) ACT

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to amend the Public Loans (1961) Act in order to prescribe a new limit for loans that may be raised under that Act and to validate certain loans that were purported to be raised in contravention of the limit specified in the Act.

Now, Sir, the Bill was circulated today, and I have indicated to Members on the other side the reasons why I think we should get it done as soon as possible.

Basically, what we are seeking to do is to validate certain matters relating to the Public Loans (1961) Act and we are setting a new limit. I think I have explained to Members already what it is all about. We have set no particular limit for the balance of the year, of course it depends on market conditions. We cannot go past this limit, but certainly judging by the average for the past five years, it looks like somewhere in the region of \$15 million to \$20 million a year or so, depending on market conditions and depending on demands of Government and the investment climate.

If the Opposition wishes me to go through this in detail, I will. I have already discussed it. For the benefit of other Members on our side who would not have had the opportunity, basically what has happened is one of

those things that happens from time to time in Government, that the limit for loans in the form of debentures was somewhere in the region of \$150 million in 1981. It was the intention of the past Government, as I understand it, in 1981 to increase the limit to accommodate further Government debentures. The legislation was prepared but was not introduced into Parliament. There appeared to be a misunderstanding where in 1981 a communication was sent to the Central Bank to the effect that the legislation had been passed. The net result of that is that further issues of debentures have been made, and what this Bill seeks to do is to validate what took place during the period 1981 to now and to increase the limit as well.

The honourable Member wishes to say that I compounded the error. That is the present position, it is a straightforward matter of validation. I do not think it is anything that any holder of Government debentures should be in any way concerned about. We in Barbados have a political tradition where we honour the debts of our predecessors and there is continuity in Government, so there is no need for any concern. This is purely an administrative matter that requires legislative correction.

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

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I just want to ensure that there is a proper understanding of this. I listened very carefully when the Minister was persuaded to make a speech, though short, for the benefit of the Press and the Members on his own side.

(Aside)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He was careful to state that this matter had its origin in 1981 and so it rested in the belief that any little irregularity happened during the time of the Barbados Labour Party Government, the Democratic Labour Party Government is now called upon to put it right, and that no irregularity occurred during the time of the Democratic Labour Party Government since May 28 this year.

I believe, because there have been issues of debentures since they have been in power, that it would only be fair to say that if we are now correcting and validating irregularities neither party was holier than thou. We are even Stevens, we both made some mistakes, but it did not come across so just now, we did not get the whole truth. Just like earlier tonight I heard some talk – I am not reflecting on any debate, I am not reflecting at all, Sir – but since this Bill has to do with loans and the raising of money, I believe that the Minister responsible for Finance has a duty to explain to those of us who are not as practised in the art of

public finance as he, and who need some guidance, how much money his Government has not spent, but has committed itself to borrowing under the Special Loans Act, Public Loans Act, all the Acts by the issue of Treasury Bills, by the issue of Government debentures, by the issue of savings bonds, how much money it has committed itself to borrow locally and externally, not \$33 million that it may have received.

(*Aside:* Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Parliamentary Question).

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Parliamentary Question? We are in a debate, Sir, and I need some clarification on this Public Loans Act. I want to know how much money we are borrowing, not \$33 million that we may have drawn down. Drawn down and being liable for are two different things, and when we have come in here Tuesday after Tuesday

(*Aside:* Hon. B. M. TAITT: There has not been many a Tuesday).

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There has not been many a Tuesday, that is true, Sir; about four before we went on holiday and two we have been dealing with loans, we have been seeing in the newspapers debentures. Only Sunday morning I think I saw a Treasury Bill to the tune of \$60 million. I do not know what it is. If it is a roll-over you have a duty as the Minister with public responsibility to tell the public that it is a roll-over, but if you leave the public to speculate that it is not a roll-over but you are borrowing because it is a short-fall on your Government revenues, you cannot quarrel then. If you do not give them the information, they are free to speculate.
6.45 p.m.

All I am doing is to invite the Minister to be free and frank with us and not to engage in linguistic or intellectual gymnastics in the belief that you will befuddle us. You will fool yourself and the people out there but tell us the truth, how much you have committed the Government to.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will ask the details about when you are drawing down if you want that in a question, but I want to know. You have gone to the Natwest group of banks. You have gone to the Japanese market and you were not obliged to go. The Lord who giveth and taketh away said he was not in favour of your going and you disobeyed him and went and took the one against whom he inveighed with you to show him that you had no respect for him. I am sorry that he is not here today.

Asides.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You see, Sir, the warning that the late Fitz Evesta Payne gave and said that if he had to live his life over again he would give himself and direct himself in the future not to beat his children so much. His father, the Honourable Minister's father, did not do that with him. You were not a beast of burden or you were not hard ears otherwise you would have got a lot of lashes but I will live to hear the honourable Member for St. John give him some more verbal lashes for his public disobedience.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But you went out there and you borrowed the equivalent of Bds. \$57 million.

This side, unlike you when you were first in Opposition, venture to suggest, in your absence, that part of these borrowings should be hived away in a suspense account so that you could draw on them in the future.

The honourable Member for St. John, in his usual style in relation to the honourable Member for St. Peter, tried to ridicule him. No, Sir. He tried to humiliate him, and said that he never heard anything about taking foreign money and putting it in a suspense account and all of that.

(*Aside:* When?)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Last week. But I was glad to hear the Honourable Minister of Finance show more prudence than the honourable Parliamentary Secretary, the Minister of Finance.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I know that he has to refer things. I was getting confused with the status and I have corrected myself, whether the Minister is really in truth and in fact Parliamentary Secretary in the other Ministry but he is really....

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Man, Cameron Tudor made sport at my godfather, Dr. Cummins and called him Nurse Cummins.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not being mischievous, Sir. They are accusing me of being mischievous. That is the furthestest thing from my mind, Mr. Speaker.

But the Honourable Minister of Finance has shown greater prudence and a greater sense of financial management than the erstwhile Minister of Finance.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The former. He is now Minister of Economic Affairs. I mean the Right honourable gentleman who is not in his seat today.

Now, Sir, I hope the Honourable Minister will take the opportunity this evening also to clarify the public disquiet that there is as to whether the Treasury was broke as he said it was.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The only public disquiet that I am talking about is that sense of instability that the man in the street has to know which Minister he ought to believe, which of the two, the one responsible for Economic Affairs or the one responsible for Finance. It is a question of credibility. I am not saying that anybody is a liar, Sir. You know I would never say that. It is a question of credibility.

Here after, in fact June 15, the Minister of Finance said that the Treasury was bare. We left it in a terrible state and a couple of Sundays ago, I believe the second day of the DLP Annual Conference, the Honourable Prime Minister is saying, nothing like that. It is foolishness. He is seeming to be publicly at variance with the Prime Minister.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am told that it is a matter of interpretation and if it is a matter of interpretation, I am prepared to let it rest.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I, but not the public because the public will really get the impression that the two of them do not know.....

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No. I represent 6 700 voters in St. Thomas.

(Aside: 24 to 3)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It was 17 to 7 in 1976. It is now 5 to 7. But I really would counsel the Minister of Finance to let us know what is the true situation with the debt. We know that it is the Labour Party that was not afraid to borrow money. We were not afraid to borrow. We are not criticising the Government for borrowing. We have not refused to support the Government in any of its measures brought to this House to borrow money.

We always felt you were wrong headed when you talked about collapsing all of the capital programmes in 1982 and cut back on borrowing. We are saying we understand you have to borrow, but what we are asking you to do is to at least level with us, level with the public as to what you are committing us for so that we will know that you borrow externally in hard currencies which, incidentally, are going to prop up the balance of payments and foreign reserves. It is neither here nor there. We understand that that is one of the purposes of the borrowings. You do not have to hide it. We know about it. We did it. We expect you to do it. You are following our economic policies very faithfully on the debt management, but all we ask you is to give us the full facts.

Asides

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I know this is about law. It is law.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member finished?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, Sir. I am going to finish now. I know you want to get home. There is no dinner tonight. All of us want to get home. I am going to relieve us all now, Sir, provided the Minister will give a full reply.
6.55 p.m.

There is no problem with this because we are all familiar with the principle that Parliament can do anything other than make a man a woman and a woman a man physiologically, but in terms of legal theory the validating of these things is not a problem for Parliament, so we are not going to give any problem with supporting this, and we are with the Government, but I want to make this very clear finally. I understand the restraint with which the Minister introduced the Bill.

Let it be clearly understood that nobody in the Opposition wishes the public to lose confidence in the integrity of Barbados as a place and a country, and so we are not going to make any capital of this if we think it will shake public confidence, and we give that assurance, but we ask in return for some openness, frankness and candour on the level of borrowing committed since May 28, 1986. I am obliged, Sir.

Hon. Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, there are a few questions raised by the honourable Member for St. Thomas who clearly was enjoying a bit of politics rather than dealing with financial or economic matters. Now as far as I am aware the form in which advertisement for tenders for Treasury Bills appear in the two newspapers is exactly the same as it has been since I saw advertisements for Treasury Bill, and that is probably over twenty to thirty years. There has been no change in that.

On the question of being able to determine whether an issue involves any increase in the debt, there are multiple sources of the same information. It does not have to be published in the newspaper. You can find the information inside there. There are all sorts of documents in Barbados where the information is readily available. If I have to put in the *Nation* and the *Advocate* whenever Treasury Bill are being rolled over that this is a new issue or a part of this is a new issue, it does not make any sense. This is exactly the same format that has been there. There are several other sources of the same information all of which are public documents.

In terms of the suspense account which the honourable Member for St. Thomas was trying to suggest that there is a difference between myself and the Prime Minister in relation to that, I think that it is important to distinguish that we are talking about different accounts. What the Prime Minister was not particularly happy about was the suggestion of a suspense account in the Central Bank of Barbados. This was a mechanism that you used last year when you set up a sterilised account. That is one mechanism. What I am talking about, and I am quite sure he would agree with, in view of the problems I referred to in relation to exchange rates, is to park some money in a hard currency fund which would be a hedge against interest rates, exchange rates and other problems, and draw it down according to need; so there is no difference of opinion there.

On the question of an empty Treasury, again there is no difference of opinion. It depends on whether you have a static view of the situation or a dynamic view of the situation. It is as simple and straightforward as that. In economic and financial terms there is no question of a difference of opinion; it depends on how you relate to the situation either in static or dynamic terms. So again there are no differences.

I think I have answered all the relevant questions. I have already indicated to you the levels of borrowings in my main speech, and I have told you how much I have used — \$33 million — so at this point, Mr. Speaker, I think I have answered all the relevant questions and beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On motion of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R. P. BYER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive were called and passed.

On motion of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, that brings us to the end of Government Business for today, and my understanding is that there is no other business to be transacted on this day.

I believe that there is some work still going on to the Chamber of the Honourable House and it has been indicated to me that if we met next week Members might be inconvenienced to some extent, and that in order for work to proceed smoothly we should break for one week to accommodate the continuation of certain works to the Chamber. I am therefore proposing that the House next meet two weeks from today.

I therefore beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 21st October, 1986 at 12.00 o'clock noon.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

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

7.05 p.m.

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