

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 - 91

Tuesday, November 3, 1987

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

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. WEEKES, J P., (Speaker)
His Honour J. J. PAYNE, (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A. (Econ.), JJ>.,
(Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Hon. B. M. TATTT, B.A., (Hons.), M.A., LL.B.,
(Hons.) (Minister of Health)
Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Transport, Telecommunications and Immigration and Leader of the House)
Hon. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M., (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)
Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., ChJB., F.R.CP., (Edin.)
Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN, B.A., M.A., (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. M. A. KING, Q.C., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)
Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., JP.,
(Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)
Hon. N. K. SIMMONS, (Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development)
Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN, B.Sc., (Econ.). (Minister of Housing and Lands)
Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M.
Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc., (Econ.)
Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development)
Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P.
Mr. E. BOURNE
Mr. C. A. NEBLETT, B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)
Mr. C. L. TROTMAN, M.A.
Mr. R. L. MORRIS, B.A., Cert. Ed.

Mr. R. P. BYER, LL.B., L.E.C.
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Ivan Harewood. Mr.

SPEAKER: The House is in session. MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, October 27, 1987.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are two sets of Minutes here for confirmation. The first set of Minutes is the Minutes of the meeting of October, 13.

I move, Sir, that they be taken as read and approved.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations on those Minutes, let them stand confirmed.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Minutes of the proceedings of this Honourable House of October 27, 1987 be taken as read and approved.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no observations or corrections, let those Minutes stand confirmed.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I have received the following Message from His Excellency the Governor-General:

"14 October, 1987.

Ref. GG:4 Vol. Vffl

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I shall be away from the island from 24 October to 19 November, 1987, on a private visit to Britain.

In accordance with the provision of Section 29(1)(b) of the Constitution, The Hon. Sir Denys Williams, Kt., GCM, Chief Justice, will perform the functions of the office of Governor-General during my absence.

As the Honourable- The House of Assembly is not expected to meet before my departure, it will not be possible for the usual formal Message to be sent down to your Chamber. Will you therefore please bring my absence formally to the attention of the Honourable The House of Assembly when next it meets.

I have the honour to be,
Yours faithfully, H.W.
SPRINGER GOVERNOR-
GENERAL"

PAPERS

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados for the year 1986.

The Report of the Accountant General for the financial year 1986-87.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I will give notice, Sir, of two Resolutions:

A Resolution to grant the sum of \$124500 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1987-88, Part I - Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1987-88, No. 18, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

A Resolution to grant the sum of \$5 823 550 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1987-88, Part II - Capital, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1987-88, No. 19, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Michael North East, Question No. 78, re deplorable state of Friendship Community Centre at Hothersal Turning.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development

1. Is the Minister aware of:

- (a) the deplorable state of disrepair of the Friendship Community Centre at Hothersal Turning, St. Michael, and
- (b) of the requirement for vastly improved facilities at the centre if the basic needs of the Friendship Community are to be met?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same honourable Member Question No. 79, re better training facilities for sportsmen and sportswomen at Friendship Community Centre.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, to ask the Minister of Tourism and Sports.

Will the Minister ensure that the following provision is made at the Friendship Community Centre:

- (a) better and adequate changing facilities for sportsmen and sportswomen using the facility,
- (b) provision of a multi-purpose hard court to develop and enhance the potential of the young adults of the Friendship community, and
- (c) adequate servicing of the playing field by the Sports Department, and give the assurance that such improvements will be provided with soonest effect?

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Peter, Question No. 80, re St. Joseph Hospital.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, to ask of the Minister of Health:

Will the Minister please state:

1. the amount of money Government has agreed to pay for the St. Joseph Hospital,
2. the use to which Government intends to put the said facilities, and
3. if Government intends to use the facilities as an acute general hospital, the projected capital cost which will be incurred in remodelling and equipping the hospital, and the projected cost of running the hospital in each of the first three years of operation?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same honourable Member, Question No. 81, re roads in various parts of St. Peter.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, to ask of the Minister of Transport, Works and Telecommunications: *

1. Is the Minister aware that road at Indian Ground and Four Hill, Collins, the Castle, and in the

general Road View area of St. Peter are in a serious state of disrepair?

2. If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister please state when repair work on the roads cited will be undertaken?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same honourable Member, Question No. 82, re salary scale, Z. 39.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, to ask of the Prime Minister:

1. Will the Minister state whether in accordance with the statement in this House by the then Prime Minister on 10th March, 1987, the first point in the salary scale Z.39, has been deleted with consequential adjustments to the grading of any posts which have such a commencing salary?
2. If the deletion and consequential adjustments have not yet been made, will the Minister please indicate when action will be taken to bring them into effect?

Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: That brings us to the end of "NOTICES OF QUESTIONS".

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, the following Bill was read a first time.

A Bill to amend certain enactments,

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am asking that Item "(f)" on the "ORDER OF BUSINESS" relating to "Papers" be recommitted.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections, the Minister can proceed.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by the Cabinet to lay:

The Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer for the year 1985.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: At this point, Sir, I would like to move the suspension of the following Standing Orders: 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of the day's sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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 this Island.

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. P. BYER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

AMENDMENT TO EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEAD 71 - CABINET OFFICE

Item 1 (a) was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to amend the Explanatory Note to Head 71 - Cabinet Office, Subhead 2 - Barbados Defence Force, Object No. 23 ~ Structures. 12.30 p.m.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, this particular Resolution has become necessary because there is work to be completed in respect of the Barbados Defence Force. Funds have been provided in the Estimates for this financial year, 1987-1988, but the Note relating to the relevant item is not wide enough to include the continuation of this work. The current Note to Head 71, Subhead 2, Item No. 23, Structures, states:

"Provision is made to refurbish the kitchen, West India Barracks and Operations rooms at Willoughby Fort and at St Ann's Fort, and to complete work on the extensions of the store room."

The work to be completed was started during the last financial year. The Note which I have just read does not permit that work to go on. The work includes completion of work at Paragon, the floor to the Officer's Mess, the dining hall, and adequate lighting is to be provided for the Barracks Square. Because, inadvertently, the note is somewhat restrictive, that work cannot be carried out, and we are now seeking the permission of this Honourable Chamber for an amendment to the Note of the subhead so that work may be permitted.

I therefore move that the Explanatory Note to Head 71, Cabinet Office, Subhead 2, Barbados Defence Force, Subject No. 23 Structures be amended to read as follows:

"Provision is made to refurbish the kitchen and West India Barracks, complete work on extensions to the

store room at St. Ann's Fort, refurbish the Operations Room at Willoughby Fort, complete work on the Administration Block at Paragon, and to pave the Parade Square at Block 'C'."

If there is any information which may be required on this, I will be happy to supply any information which may be available.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I second that, Mr. Chairman.

The question that Head 71 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1987-88 No. 12
\$7000000

HEAD 23 - LOANS AND ADVANCES - \$7 000 000

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, this Resolution for the sum of \$7000000 has become necessary because the Severance Payments Fund is inadequate to meet the commitments which have been made, and which are being made, against it

The Severance Payment Scheme was introduced in 1973. It provided for the payment to workers who become redundant of four weeks average pay for each year of service with the employer.

In 1982, Unemployment Benefit was added to the National Insurance Scheme, and the rate of severance payment was not modified.

In 1984, two changes were introduced - (1) to fix the maximum earnings from which severance can be paid to the National Insurance limit for persons entering into the labour market or changing jobs after that date and (2), to tax severance payments in excess of \$25000. The latter provision was revoked in July 1986.

Let me give this Honourable Chamber some idea of how the operations of the fund have been going. In 1983, the fund received \$2233521.36. That was made up of contributions of \$1489824.78, and there was interest on investments received by the fund of \$743 696.58, giving that total of \$2.23 million, to which I referred. In that year there was expenditure of \$1964 307.47. Therefore, in 1983 the fund was in surplus of \$269 213.89. 12.40 p.m.

But in 1984, the total receipt to the fund was \$2037413.74, but expenditure was \$2.5 million. So the fund went from surplus in 1983 to deficit in 1984, a deficit of \$497 166.66.

That pattern repeated *itself* in 1985, with a deficit of \$5 761431.69. In 1985, the fund received \$1611175.72 in contributions and the interest earned on investments for that year was \$562302.56, giving total receipts for that year of \$2 173 478.28. The expenditure was \$7 934 909 for that year.

Aside.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: If you wish the breakdown, I can give the breakdown for that, for the payments out. There was a small surplus for 1986, with receipts at \$5820663.27 and expenditures at \$5337121.20. The surplus for that year was \$483 542.07, due substantially to some receipts, I believe, which were recovered from the Barbados Foundry.

The fact is that the very great burdens that have been placed on the scheme resulted because there was a large number of redundancies - let me put it that way - taking place during the period 1982-1985, severe strains put upon this particular fund. At the same time, the employers' payments were not being paid into the fund because of the problems the employers were having as far as their business operations were concerned.

So we had a situation in which the receipts to the fund were not showing any spectacular increases as such, but there were tremendous increasing demands being made for outflows from the fund. This has reached the stage, Sir, where it is necessary to inject some money into the fund to ensure that the claims which are already in there, and those which may be pending, can be met in accordance with the intentions of this fund. I think, basically, that is the position.

This is part of the social and economic legislation of this country. I believe we are all agreed on the principle that if persons are deprived of their employment for reasons identified in the legislation, some compensation or some payment should be made to them to help them over the particular period during which they may be seeking a job, so that they can adjust. I think it is legislation that is highly desirable, and in accordance with the philosophy and principles of both parties in this country, but the levels at which payments may be made, some of the specific purposes for which they may be made, as well as whether there is duplication in these funds, are issues which will all have to be considered.

The whole area of severance payment, unemployment benefits and so on is the subject of study by an ILO expert who has been looking at these matter. That ILO expert left at the end of September. I am aware that he has been having some discussions with unions, interested persons and employers on the particular problems, and we are certainly awaiting his report with interest.

Meanwhile, I am very please to note that interested persons in the community have also been observing this particular matter and have been making suggestions and proposals. All of them will have to be studied. No firm decisions have been taken on these matters, but certainly it is one of national concern. 12.50 p.m.

As I have indicated, there is no problem at all as far as the principle of the legislation is concerned, because it

is right and proper, and in accordance with good economic principles, that if for redundancy or for other purposes workers are laid off, there should be some funds to help in the adjustment period, funds contributed to over their working period, and by employers and by employees. But we have to watch this fund and we have to make sure that it is in a condition that it can meet the demands placed upon it. At this time, the fund- is unable to meet the demands placed upon it, and therefore we are seeking a supplement of \$7 million in order that the National Insurance Board would be in a position to administer the Severance Payment Scheme as envisaged.

I therefore beg to move that Head 23 for \$7 million stand part of the Resolution.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I beg to second that

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR (St. Peter): Mr. Chairman, before I begin to address the substantive issues raised by this Resolution, I wish to beseech the Prime Minister that he should make the correct information on the contributions, interest as well as the expenses of the severance payments that he has cited in the House available to the Central Bank, since there is a complete variance between the information which he has cited and the information contained in the Central Bank documents. I think it is very important that, if you are going to address this very important issue we should speak from the same set of information. Indeed, Sir, the Central Bank figures give a more favourable account of the state of the severance payments situation than that outlined by the Minister, and may have coloured the Opposition's initial perception of the degree of the problem that exists at this time.

I want to say, first of all, Sir, that the Severance Payments Fund is obviously a bulwark of Social Security, and the Opposition will be supporting this Resolution, as indeed we will be supporting any additional measures by Government designed not only to protect the short term, immediate solvency of the fund, but also to protect its solvency over a period of time.

While we are very grateful indeed for the information provided by the Minister of Finance as regards the existing state of the funds, I must really confess that the Minister's statement might have been important for what it did not say as much as for what it said. I say that not lightly, Sir.

The Severance Payments Fund, as I understand it, Sir, is operated in accordance with a pay-as-you-go assessment system of finance. This simply means, Sir, that a current rate of contribution is always set at a level to meet both current benefits and expenses, and to provide a margin to build up a contingency reserve fund to meet fluctuations in level of layoffs from time to time.

The picture that the Prime Minister has painted has obviously depicted a situation in which the Severance

Payments Fund is no longer in a position to meet its current expenditures as regards both benefits and direct expenses, far less generating a margin or a surplus to be able to meet any unforeseen eventualities that may arise.

Against that background, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has to regard this present financial arrangement merely as a stop-gap arrangement, because we obviously have to remember that the Severance Payments Fund is not a lending institution from which the proceeds of a loan such as this can be lent to people and the loan itself paid from the re-floats. Obviously, the fund is not constructed on that basis, and we are therefore now faced with a situation, Sir, where the fund, as of now, from a financial point of view, is insolvent, and where, in the immediate future, it will have to pay out of its income the principal and the interest on this particular loan that the House is being asked to agree to today. Therefore, fundamental questions must arise as regards the long term solvency and viability of the Severance Payments Fund in the absence of a statement by Government as to alternative measures either to change the current rate of contribution, change the structure of benefit or to reduce the level of unemployment in such a way that the pressure on the fund can be eased.

I would like to elaborate on this point, Sir, that we obviously now have to set a new current rate, I would imagine, that would allow the fund to address the existing problem, that is, to be able to meet its expenses. We will also have to set a rate that will allow the fund to be able to build reserves, and we will also now have to set a rate reflective of the fact that, in the new set of expenses to be carried by this fund, there will be a debt service charge after the first year has elapsed. I really do think, Sir, that if we are serious about maintaining the solvency of the Severance Payments Fund, the question must arise as to at what level is Government going to peg that new rate to put the fund back in a position of solvency in accordance with the standards of an assessment system of finance.

I also want to make the point, Mr. Chairman, that the setting of a rate which has built into it some consideration of the need for a surplus is going to reflect an implicit statement on the part of the Government as regards the level of unemployment which the Government expects to exist in the immediate future.

The principles on which severance payment funds are based are such that one normally expects to maintain a reserve tantamount to between six months and one and a half years of normal expenditures from the fund, and obviously the level of expenditures and benefits from the fund that inform how large the reserves will be, will be predicated on the extent of unemployment and the level of redundancies that one expects to cope with.

I am making that point, Sir, to say that perhaps the way forward as regards the solvency of the Severance Payments Fund will not only reside in the financial rate,

but obviously will reside in the efforts that the country undertakes to reduce the level of unemployment. There is a financial aspect in this, Mr. Chairman, but underlying the present difficulties that we have as regards the solvency of the Severance Payments Fund - and these difficulties, I would admit, have extended from as far back as 1984 - is obviously the unacceptably high level of unemployment existing in Barbados at this time.

Asides.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I just made the point, Mr. Chairman, that the problem has existed from 1984, but the honourable Member was too busy conspiring with the Prime Minister.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Of course you will withdraw the word "conspiring" and get on with the speech.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I withdraw the remarks, Sir.
1.00 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It should be with a suitable apology.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: The point I am making, Sir, is that fundamental to the management of a severance payments fund is not just a set of financial manoeuvres, and certainly not just a stop-gap manoeuvre such as a loan to the fund, but a serious effort to reduce the level of unemployment in the country. And we are to anticipate, Sir, that with the elevation of the honourable Member for St. Michael East (Hon. Dr. D. G. Blackman) to Cabinet, the short term solutions to the problem of unemployment may become that much more difficult, because, as you know, Sir, he was working on an assignment to bring a large number of jobs from Hong Kong, and in the absence of an announcement regarding his replacement, that particular statement may go by the way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you saying that that knowledge is within the knowledge of this House?

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Oh yes, Sir.

The point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that there is need, as of now, for Government to articulate a programme and a strategy to address fundamental problems of unemployment in this country. I say that, Sir, for a number of reasons.

The country was put in a position where we were led to believe that the Task Force Report was going to be the basis upon which Government would address the problems of unemployment in this country. That Task Force Report, Sir, has received criticisms not only from this side, but from that side as well, as being lacking in a sense of strategy. And there is a general belief, Mr. Chairman, that the Task Force Report has died a natural death as regards its capacity to serve as the basis upon which employment generation in this country can be stimulated, a belief shared by Members

on both sides. It lacks a sense of strategy, and we would add that it lacks a sense of programme and that it does not, either in its short term or in its long term prescription, provide a basis upon which we can see a way forward as regards the generation of employment in this country.

It is a fundamental point, Sir, in so far as the public of this country was led to believe that the Task Force Report was going to be one of the important documents that could serve to inform Government policy now and in the immediate future. If, there is a difficulty as regards the implementability of the Task Force Report, we need to be told exactly what Government will do or wish to do, to supplement it, or to put in place an alternative economic strategy to address the problems of unemployment in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is also clear that the other economic measures, not within the Task Force Report, but purely of a fiscal character, have not as yet, and will not likely have, any substantial impact on the reduction of unemployment in Barbados. Unemployment in this country, Sir, as of June of this year, stood at 18 per cent, and we can only speculate as to the level it would have reached by September, which tends to be the most difficult period of the year where employment creation is concerned.

That period within which the Task Force recommended that Government should lead the way forward in the creation of new jobs in the short term is coming to an end, and it is coming to an end, coincidentally, with a situation prevailing in this country where unemployment has not decreased, but has, in fact, increased. We have, therefore, Mr. Chairman, to begin to address the question, if the fiscal arrangements have not succeeded in bringing down the level of unemployment through immediate spending as a result of increased personal incomes, can we put any faith in the medium and long term possibility of the impact of the fiscal arrangements in generating employment through the investment side?

Those arrangements were meant in the short term to stimulate employment by increasing the spending, and we see what the level of unemployment is. From the medium term point of view, they were supposed to react from the point of view of stimulating investment.

Asides

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I am dealing with the Resolution. You can talk, too.

The point I think that we have to begin to seriously address in this House, Sir, is whether there can be any realistic expectation of this fiscal arrangements, which are part of government's economic strategy, having a beneficial impact on the reduction of the level of unemployment in the immediate future. In my view, the problem as regards the rate of investment in Barbados right now does not have to do with the availability of funds. The problem has,

obviously, Mr. Chairman, to do with the availability of markets, and I believe that we are proceeding on fundamentally flawed premises when we assume that the mere creation of a pool of potential investment funds will create its own investment opportunities in absence of the availability of markets.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has two minutes. Try to stick to the Resolution.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I will come back, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Chairman, I listened with great interest to the speech made by the Honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur), and I am quite sure that I understand the fundamental tactical aspects of the speech. From a macro-economic standpoint, he clearly understands that a shift in fiscal thrust at this point in time, involving significant public sector expenditure, can generate the kind of problems which he predicted would prevail in Barbados and which have not materialised. I quickly recognise his political invitation to fiscal destruction. I will not go down that road.

The honourable Member asked whether or not there has been any response in relation to the report of the Task Force on Unemployment. I believe I did indicate when I had the honour to introduce the national Budget earlier this year that there would be an Employment Levy, and that the proceeds from that levy would go towards implementation of some recommendations of the Task Force on Unemployment. I believe that, already, there has been some expansion of employment opportunities within the public sector in accordance with the recommendations of the Task Force.

The third point is that it is important not only to address the level of unemployment in Barbados, but to look at the level of employment in Barbados. Certainly the last information which I have seen, the figures at the end of March, the end of the first quarter, and I think the same will operate for the end of June, show that although there was no significant change in the employment rate, nonetheless, more people were employed and that is largely because of an expansion in the work force. As I speak now, I remember vaguely that the figure in March, I am speaking from memory, was somewhere in the region of 98 900 or 99 800 as compared with 93 000 at the end of September last year, an increase of about five thousand people in employment.

This is important when you are analysing statistics, otherwise you can be misled or you can mislead yourself. I think the important thing is to look and see whether more people have been at work.

The second point which he has raised, Sir, is a philosophical point. We have had between 1981 and 1986 a major public sector thrust to counteract and deal with employment in Barbados. That has been the approach of the

previous Administration. What happened during that period? Whereas public sector employment expanded during that period, there were significant job losses within the private sector, and the net result was that there was a gradual annual accretion to the level of unemployment in Barbados. 1.10p.m.

Any logical reaction to that must indicate that within the structure of the economy, we should try to recapture the jobs which were lost. The jobs that were lost in Barbados between 1981 and 1985 were not lost in the public sector; in fact, the public sector expanded. Nevertheless, over 13 000 jobs were lost within the private sector of Barbados.

It is also important to recognise that private sector jobs creation is a function of investment, not a function of the availability of cash, and, therefore, it is not going to come about in the same way in which public sector job creation will take place. We can pass a Resolution in here today for \$10 million, if we like, to employ 700 people, and tomorrow we can start recruiting them. It will not happen that way in the private sector. What you have to do is to create an environment in the country whereby, through the investment process, there will be an expansion of employment opportunities. That will take time.

The point I am trying to make is that I do not wish to draw a sharp division between public sector contributions and private sector contributions, because, in a sense, when the public sector makes a sacrifice in relation to the amount it garnishes through taxation from the private sector, it is making a contribution in an indirect way towards employment stability in the country. So I will urge the honourable Member that whereas the basic thesis that he tries to advance is not totally unsound, I am quite sure that he understands the implications of what he is saying, and I am also quite sure he clearly understands the position in which he is trying to push the Administration, I clearly understand all of that.

On the specific matter, Sir, the other points raised by the honourable Member I think are quite valid. It is a very critical step when you make a subvention from the Consolidated Fund to the Social Security system of the country, because the reverse is what normally obtains - the Social Security system lends to Government I think it is important that we should not send the wrong signal to the financial community that there is a fundamental problem and irreversible of them in our Social Security system, because, in fact, Government really has borrowed over \$400 million, I would imagine somewhere in that region now, from the broad Social Security system of the country, and what it is doing now is making a loan of \$7 million, which will be very difficult to recoup unless you can generate surpluses in excess of what is required for reserves and to meet the continuing needs of the Severance Payments Fund.

I wonder whether an important mechanism for cross-lending from these funds might not be the appropriate

answer. The reason is that you are unlikely to find, particularly if you examine the pattern that occurs in Barbados, that the three Funds, namely the National Insurance Fund, Severance Fund, and the Unemployment Fund, will all be undergoing the same levels of pressure at the same time. There may be a need for a legislative framework where there can be some cross-lending within the funds to avoid the kind of fiscal signals that either can be created or sent if one has to make loans and advances from the Consolidated Fund, since once it is spent, this immediately becomes an expenditure item, and therefore has implications at one level or another in respect of future taxation.

I think that while it is highly desirable that people should get their money, nevertheless we certainly have to look very fundamentally at what is happening in our Social Security system. Equally important, we should not at anytime give a signal to the financial community that there is a fundamental problem with our Social Security system, because it is not there at this time.

I think that what has happened in Barbados is that the whole Social Security system was set up and expanded and there has not been a commensurate level of management of the Social Security system in this country. I am very pleased that, for the first time, I believe, the National Insurance Scheme is coming under the direct attention of the Minister of Finance of this country. Prior to this, it has always been under other Ministries and this is the first time, as far as I know, that the actual management of the scheme comes under the Ministry of Finance, which addresses these things from a completely different perspective in many ways.

What we really need to bear on the entire Social Security system of this country is effective actuarial management, money management, cash flow management, a serious attempt to improve the collection system throughout the entire system, and to have a large number of people who are trained in the principles and practices of sound accounting. I am quite sure that if that level of management is applied in the National Insurance system, we will probably save \$1 million to \$2 million a year if not more. This means that we have to review the entire concept of running the National Insurance system as part of the wider Public Service. There is nothing wrong with the Public Service in relation to the functions which they are supposed to perform, but you cannot find a large number of people in the Public Service who are trained and geared to this kind of financial activity. There are many financial houses in Barbados which handle funds of probably one-tenth, or less, of the amount of funds handled by the National Insurance system, but if you look at the level of training and the quality of persons employed in those institutions and then you compare that with what obtains in the National Insurance Scheme of this country, then something is wrong.

I have been firm in the view that there is a need to access, as soon as possible, persons who have that combination of skills which I have outlined, in sufficient numbers, and bring them into the Social Security system in order to deal with the problems of under-returns from the under-collections that you make at the moment within the National Insurance system. I think that if that is done, you will find that within the overall Social Security system, you will be generating sufficient surpluses to deal with this particular problem, because you are talking of substantial amounts of money, and a mere quarter of one per cent or half of one per cent can make a significant difference at the end of a 12-month period in terms of the amounts of money which are available to you. 1.20 p.m.

I agree very much with the presentation of the Honourable Prime Minister to the point that there is a need for a review of all the social legislation in this country and to come to a realistic position as to what the country can afford and what it cannot afford, and on that basis you do what is right for all involved in the system, but within the context of what is financially affordable. There is nothing to lose politically by dealing with what is affordable in respect of social services in any country and to tailor your resources to suit that

The final point which I would like to make is that when this Resolution is passed, some examination should be done. I am not sure of the legal possibilities of this at the moment, I have not checked it, but I believe in 1985 there was some transfer of funds from the Unemployment Benefit Fund to the Severance Payments Fund. I believe it was in January or March of that year, because I recall that when I replied to the Budget in 1985, I had access to information that some \$3 million had been transferred from the surplus of one fund to the other fund, which may have been subsequently repaid. Whether it was subsequently repaid or not, I do not know, but it is important, because, from a macro-economic sense, cross-lending does not affect the deficit, it does not affect the public sector consolidated deficit. In fact, it does not introduce new money as such into the system, so it has less impact on a wide range of macro financial considerations and does what is necessary in the short term, namely, it makes money available to the people.

I think that these considerations should be taken in mind, because if you have to expand the deficit by some \$7 million and you can accommodate cross-lending for this expenditure, then that \$7 million can be used as new spending to relieve some of the unemployment which the honourable Member for St. Peter talks about. One recognises that it is a very smart speech to create political pressure to push the Administration in a particular direction.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES (St. Lucy): Mr. Chairman, I want to make a brief intervention in this debate, and I will be purely political in my intervention.

When this matter "of the problems relating to the Severance Payments Fund surfaced, the Barbados Labour Party took the view that it was all to do with this present Administration and the policies pursued by the Administration. We came in here today expecting, of course, that kind of broadside to be levelled against this Administration, but one could hardly hear the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) when he was making his presentation, because his tack was a completely different one, he came on a completely different line.

Faced with the situation which was outlined by the Prime Minister, naturally he had to change his speech. What did he resort to? He resorted to the Central Bank statistics, indicating that the information which he has in the Central Bank statistics is not the kind of information which the Prime Minister gave, and asked the Prime Minister for the correct information.

When the honourable Member for St. Peter was Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, he was given responsibility by the Minister of Finance for looking after a number of statutory boards, including the National Insurance Board.

Aside: Stop swiping!

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Even if that were not so

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir: I have never been assigned responsibility for the NTS scheme, and it is an attempt by the honourable member to mislead the House.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: As I was saying, even if that were not so, the honourable Member was Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, which had responsibility for overseeing, generally speaking, the management of the finances of statutory boards, including the National Insurance Board. The information which the Prime Minister gave to this House here today would have been information in possession of the honourable Member for St Peter. I am saying, without any fear of contradiction, that he knew the information, or ought to have known the information, because it is not information which was concocted by this Administration, it is information which came from National Insurance and which would have been in the possession of the Ministry of Finance.

We are in a situation now where the fund is in deficit and needs to be supported. It is not as the result of any accumulation which happened since this Administration took office on May 28, 1986. As has been indicated, this fund has been going into deficit for some time. It is an accumulation over a period of time.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member is trying to mislead the House. The last thing the Prime Minister said in his presentation was that in 1986 there was a surplus of \$483 542. He did not give the figure for 1987, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not understand the point of order.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: That is true. He said that in 1986 it was \$483 000. He said that in 1985 the fund received \$1.6 million - do not mind the extras - and the expenditure was \$7.9 million. Mr. Chairman, in 1984, according to the information supplied by the Honourable Prime Minister, the receipts in the fund were \$2.07 million. Again I am not dealing with the extras. The expenditure was \$2.5 million, which left a deficit of \$494 000. The fact of the matter, and as I understand the situation, is that over the years there has been an accumulation of deficits, and it has reached a point where this accumulation has to be accommodated. Whether or not there is cross-lending or whatever it was, the fact of the matter is that some arrangement has to be made to ensure that we do not have a problem getting out of hand, and so that the problem can be dealt with. 1.30 p.m.

When the Barbados Labour Party first came out and made statements on the Severance Payments Fund in response to a statement which the Prime Minister made some time ago, I think he was addressing the Annual Conference of the Barbados Workers Union, they tried to pin the position of the fund on the policies which were pursued by the Democratic Labour Party. In truth and in fact, that is not the case. The honourable Member for St. Peter admitted that the problems were problems which existed for some time during their Administration. We are now only trying to correct the situation.

There is a further point, and it is that the National Insurance Scheme, the Unemployment Scheme and the Severance Payments Scheme are social schemes which were set up for reasons which we all know. They are subject, from time to time, to review by the International Labour Organisation. When the schemes were first discussed, the International Labour Organisation was consulted, and it sent people down here and they worked and gave advice. The scheme has been reviewed from time to time by an expert from the International Labour Organisation, and, indeed, a number of changes which have been made to the schemes have been as a result of recommendations by people who have expert knowledge in this area.

This Administration, like the former Administration and like the first Democratic Labour Party Administration, has relied considerably on the expertise of the ILO. Indeed, that organisation has developed its expertise for many years because they were the people who developed the concept of social benefits around the world, and so we have been able to rely on their expertise. Again, we have relied on

their expertise, and as the Prime Minister has said, a review has been done of the scheme, and¹ obviously recommendations will be made or recommendations have been made. The point is that we will have to study then and see how best we can implement any recommendations which they may make for the improvement of the scheme.

But do not try to come and give the impression that the state of the scheme is as a result of the policies pursued by the Democratic Labour Party. That is the point which the Barbados Labour Party has been making over and over again. Now, today, we come in here and hear a different tune. All reason is now being brought to bear to this debate.

Sir, one has to understand what is happening. In the House of Assembly where they can be confronted with facts and information, it is a completely different approach from out there where they can call up a newspaper or have a press conference and say all sorts of things to which we are not able to reply. Now that they are facing us in here where we can confront them with information, it is sweets and reason which they would want to prevail. Wheresoever we catch them, we are going to deal with them, we will attack them and expose them, because they have to be exposed for the level of dishonesty which we see coming from that side.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order: I am not sitting down in here to hear this talk about "the level of dishonesty" coming from "that side." There can only be three on "that side."

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Coming from the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS (Christ Church East Central): Mr. Chairman, I believe that this topic, the Severance Payments Scheme, and the Resolution brought by Government to bring some equilibrium back to the scheme for the moment, gives us an opportunity to look at Social Security legislation and similar measures as they affect the people of Barbados, in particular the workers, and I believe that this forum provides us with an opportunity to look at the matter with a little less heat than one hears it discussed in other areas. I believe it is of supreme importance to this country that matters like this are debated in a forum such as this, so that we can expose as analytically as possible our thinking about this very important area. I recognise the difficulty of the Opposition in debating this particular topic, but I am pleased that they have not taken a position which I would say would be beyond the realms of sensible discussion of the topic.

Clearly, finding \$7 million to pay these workers who have lost their occupation through no fault of their own is not a matter of debate, and I agree, therefore, that we are talking about more fundamental issues; we are talking about the need for a Severance Payments Scheme, the structure of that scheme, the level of benefits and other matters relating to the scheme. And the Severance Payments

Scheme cannot stand on its own, I think it has to be looked at in relation to the Unemployment Benefit Scheme, and even then they have to be placed within the context of other [^]t schemes that are introduced to deal with unemployment and under-employment. One has to look at provision for welfare grants, crash jobs, work experience schemes, skills training schemes, all of which relate basically to the same matter.

How can one soften the harsh effects of unemployment in a country such as ours? I think that to put this in some framework, one has to understand that for the longest time in Barbados, for years, there has been a group of people who have not been easily employed. I think that if one chases the statistics back for some time, you will see that, generally speaking, there are always about 10 000 to 15 000 people in Barbados who have not been employed at some time or other.

What I regret very much is the level of unsophistication of our labour market generation in this country. It is a matter of continuing concern to me that we do not have the kind of employment bureau that can tell us at any one time > what is the state of the labour market, how it is segmented, and give us good information about the difficulties in that market.

As far as I know, since our Administration came into office, we have started a manpower survey. I am not sure at this time what is the status of that survey, but I have been getting some feedback that we might have been getting some difficulty in the private sector co-operating in providing information and data that would help to give us the kind of information that we need. I am not saying that this would have been widespread or that all persons in the private sector refused to co-operate. Certainly the Barbados Workers Union was presented with a lengthy questionnaire, which we thought was quite appropriate. The questions were well-conceived and we responded and sent it in. I am not sure to what extent this was generalised and what the v total response was, but I would be expecting, sooner or later, to get a report on that manpower survey so that all of us can examine what is the situation in Barbados at present and be able to make projections in terms of what the labour force is going to be like up to the end of the century.

The importance of labour market information is that we are able to get some idea of the people who are unemployed and we can also get some idea in terms of where we have to plan for future employment. To some extent, of course, the exercise in the setting up of a task force on employment would have been hindered by the lack of that kind of information. At the same time, let me make it very clear that I do not share certain views I have heard about the Task Force report. I believe that that is a perfectly good report. I believe that anybody who is looking for a quick fix about unemployment has no idea whatsoever about economics, and do not understand much about employment.

As far as I remember from reading that Task Force Report, it came up with a mixture of short term/long term. It had to look at macro-economic considerations, the movement of world trade protectionism and markets, as the honourable member for St. Peter said. Markets are crucially important at this time. Even if people were persuaded to invest, either local investors or American investors for that matter, they are looking at markets, and what is happening in the markets.

I was therefore very disappointed when a former Minister of Trade, talking to some constituency branch meeting, suggested that the reason why you are not getting twin plant ventures from Puerto Rico is because the Puerto Ricans are unsure about the Barbados Government, and they are waiting to see what will happen to this Government.

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

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: A former Minister of Trade of the former Administration, of the Barbados Labour Party Administration, a failed Minister of Trade, one who now sits in the Other Place, was making the comment, Mr. Chairman, some person that you would know very well, that the reasons why there are not twin plant ventures between Puerto Rico and Barbados is because the Puerto Rican Administration is checking out the Barbados Administration. What kind of nonsense is that? Most of the twin plant ventures from Puerto Rico are going to Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Are you going to tell me that there is more confidence in the Government of Haiti and the Dominican Republic than in the Government of Barbados? There is also a lot of activity going on in Jamaica, where there is a lot of political uncertainty, as against an Administration in Barbados where you have a Democratic Labour Party with a track record in economic administration between 1961 and 1976, one that came to office with 24:3. Can somebody be doubting, a Puerto Rican Administration or a United States Administration.....

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I ask the honourable member to handle the gentleman from the Other Place. Give him his handle.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Senator Louis Tull. I was very disappointed when he allowed the Press, because he would have spoken to the Press, to carry him saying such nonsense, a former Minister of Trade, that there are not more joint venture developments between Puerto Rico and Barbados because the Puerto Rican Government is not sure about the Barbados under the Democratic Labour Party. When you check all the statistics, the joint ventures are between Puerto Rico and Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Jamaica. Do you want to compare those three Governments with the Government of Barbados? He should be ashamed to be making that kind of comment! 1.40p.m.

But as was said by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Hon. Dr. R. C. Haynes) and by the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Hon. E. E. Greaves), it is a different thing when you are sitting down across the table from people who can answer, from when you go to these branch meetings and you can talk anything at all. And paper does not refuse words, especially with the kind of journalists we have in Barbados. They tend to put down anything at all, especially when it is coming from the Barbados Labour Party and it has to be reported in the *Nation*.

Every day you are reading that there is a slippage, that the economy in Barbados is slipping, and then when you read the text, it contradicts the headline. That is the kind of thing that has been encouraged by the Barbados Labour Party and the *Nation*. Where is this economy slipping? Slipping and going where? Tourism has taken off at a fantastic rate. You are having difficulties in manufacturing, but every country in the Caribbean is suffering the same difficulties. Sugar performs seasonally, sometimes, it is down, sometimes it is up. The rest of the economy is very well managed, but these destructive people in the Barbados Labour Party, power hungry people, are creating the impression that the Barbados Government is supervising an economy that is slipping. Slipping and going where? Where is it slipping? Slipping into the Caribbean Sea? Into the Atlantic Ocean? Where is it going? This is a country that is well-managed, well administered under the Democratic Labour Party Administration. When you depend on your denizens in the Press to write your nonsense, you realise that you are affecting a lot of people's lives. Some of you deal with politics as though it is a game. It is not a game.

Getting back to this matter of unemployment and employment, the record of the Barbados Labour Party between 1982 and 1985 in terms of closures of factories and redundancies is horrible. It is a period in the history of this country that one would not want to go through again. Luckily, it has bottomed out.

When we come into office, we found that two large companies, Intel and Playtex, were at the stage where they were still releasing hundreds of people - in fact, I think Intel was over 1 000 persons - into the marketplace. We were therefore faced with a backlog. You cannot be creating new jobs without first of all looking at the backlog that you had to take on. But if you look at unemployment statistics for the period that we have been in office, you have not seen any sudden deterioration. We have held the position. We have not yet been able to erode that backlog that we found, but we have held the position. That is important. It means that as soon as we are able to develop that growth which is going to come, because we are laying the ground work for it, you will see a reduction in the unemployment statistics. That is going to happen.

The honourable Member for St. Peter knows that He knows that our record in terms of dealing with employment is not a bad record. And he knows that, contrary to what we have been seeing, the Democratic Labour Party never noised in this country that you could clean up unemployment overnight. Where could we have said that? And to whom? And by what procedures? Who waived a wand. Who indicated that a wand would have been waived? Nobody ever said that, that is your fabrications. You have said it often enough that you believe that somebody said so, and you want the people in this country to believe that somebody on this side has said so. Whoever said that overnight you can erase problems of unemployment? No country can do it! Not the United States of America nor Britain, none of them!

Getting back to the point, we established a Severance Payments scheme that was a good scheme, because, basically, nobody is at all speaking to the principles of the scheme. Everybody agrees that it is a good scheme. Let us understand, too, that the scheme is in trouble because it went through a shock. It went through trauma in the period between 1982 and 1985. There is nothing to suggest that, basically, the scheme is not a sound scheme, and that when things get back to a state of normalcy it will not right itself. But it did go through a shock.

I would not cast any blame. It happened during the Barbados Labour Party's Administration, but I am not saying the Barbados Labour Party went out there to close down companies and so on. I am not absolving them of total blame, but I am saying that we were going through the second oil crisis. After 1980, there were several difficulties.

A lot of companies that closed down, were a lot of companies, American companies were established here which decided that they were going to relocate, for one reason or another. Basically, the Barbadian companies have been able to maintain the strain. Barbadian companies have been extremely virile and very flexible during this period. A lot of the shocks in employment came from companies that were established from outside. That is a fact The Barbadian entrepreneur, the Barbadian investor, has held a lot of strain during the period 1982 - 1985. Some companies collapsed, but I do not believe they collapsed necessarily because of what happened between 1982 and 1985, a lot of them collapsed because of other problems that antedated that particular period. Barbadians, generally, Barbadian manufacturers, retail owners and so on, held on to their labour force. Some of them used the opportunity to shed labour from time to time, but there were not massive closures in terms of local companies.

I want to look at these two matters, because in relation to redundancy that came about between 1982 and 1985 from closures of American branch plants that were operating here, I think we need to look very carefully at the legislation in terms of how these companies have to notify us in terms

of their intentions to close and what procedures are to be followed.

Apart from that, as I said, there is another kind of redundancy, another kind of unemployment, that is created when Mr. X decides to let go 15 of his 100 workers, and sometimes he has no economic reason whatsoever to let go those 15. There are countries that have introduced legislation where, before you can cut off employment, you have to get a certificate from the Ministry of Employment that gives you the permission to release people into unemployment I am convinced that sometimes there are some employers who need not shed labour in the way that they do. But we know that in economics labour is seen as a variable, one that you can be very flexible with. When you run into difficulties, the first thing that you do is to let go some workers. That is an unfortunate position that is taken up sometimes by employers.

I regretted very much the solution that was sought by the Barbados Labour Party in extending the period of layoffs to 13 weeks, because it seems to me that in 1986 ^{T*} and 1987 we did not have a lot of layoffs. And it had nothing to do with legislation at all, it had to do with the fact that your tourism planning encouraged a lot of work during the summer season. I think that whoever is responsible for that coup, for making sure that there were tourists in Barbados in the summer time in 1986 and 1987 must be complimented throughout the length and breadth of this country for the tremendous job that they have done. I am referring now to the former Minister of Tourism, who is the Minister of Health. He understood that dealing with redundancy is not one of extending legislation so that people could be laid off from four weeks to 13 weeks, but of finding jobs for people. In, tourism, that could only mean bringing tourists here and making sure that they are here for a longer time, extending the amount of bed nights, and it means that you are going to do planning to bring this about.

The problem with unemployment in Barbados is that there are a lot of us who believe it has to be with us all the time. There are some people who, unfortunately also say that trade unions are more concerned with the employed than the unemployed. That happens to be nonsense. Trade unions must depend on a high level of employment. That is logical, sensible, and straightforward. Trade unions are as much concerned with the unemployed as they are with the employed. That is why sometimes some of them become politicians, too, so that we can help in both areas. 1.50 p.m.

So we are all very concerned about unemployment, and we believe, basically, that we can find solutions to the problem. We cannot find solutions as easily as we would like, because, as others have said today, there are certain macro-economic considerations that are important You can only start creating jobs in an environment in which there is economic growth, trading and when there are markets. It is

not a matter of Mr. Scale saying he is going to take on 21. He can take on 21, because there are markets at Christmas. He is not going to be able to sustain that throughout the year, even if he wishes with all of his best feelings to be able to do it. I would hope that, now there is a market, others would also do the same thing, and take on not just the 21 - do not use token numbers - but what they can afford at this time. But employment is not any charity, with any businessman taking on three more or 21. It is not a numbers game. It is a matter of how the economy is performing, and that relates to a number of variables.

Sir, I will have no difficulty supporting this Resolution.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE (St. Michael North East): Mr. Chairman, I join this debate in support of the Resolution, primarily because there are quite a number of persons who have been approaching me with their dissatisfaction about the non-settlement of severance payments claims over a couple of years.

Listening to the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) today and his great concern for unemployment as it presently stands, that tell me that he is apparently saying to us that unemployment is a new phenomenon.

Asides.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: I can understand that, Mr. Chairman, because somewhere along the line I seem to recall that it was the late Prime Minister Tom Adams who, on a visit to the United States of America, was reported as saying that they had embarked on a system of unemployment insurance which had amassed such large sums that he had become embarrassed about receiving the money and not do something about it. What seems to me very hurtful is that since then the Barbados Labour Party seemed to have presided over a period of redundancies and bankruptcies, to some extent, resulting in enormous job losses. What we are doing today, Sir, clearly indicates the mess in which the Severance Payments Fund was left by the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

The Fund was created sometime in 1971. I worked in industry in this country during that period. In 1981, my job was made redundant because my employers went out of business, but I had no problem receiving my severance payments, no problem whatever. So it seems to me that the problems occurred between 1981 and 1986-87, and if you look at the statistics of redundancies and bankruptcies in this country between 1981 and 1986, you can understand where the problems lay.

I need to have the assurance from the Minister that for persons who are today still reeling under the effects of not having their severance payments claims met, and there are quite a number of persons who cannot afford to be

without a settlement, these funds will go largely to making those payments available to the persons who require them.

There are other aspects of the Severance Payments Fund, and the difficulties with which we are faced, that we have to address ourselves to. Constantly we hear that there are employers who are unable to make their contributions to the Severance Payments Fund. I do not believe that should be so, because if we accept it as a legal entity it is the responsibility of those persons who are employing people to fulfill the laws of this country. It is not only so with severance payments, but even with the National Insurance we have some unscrupulous employers who deduct money from employees and refuse to pay those funds into the National Insurance Office.

I hope that Government can give us the assurance that when these persons are found to be breaching of the severance payments legislation, they should serve the penalty that can give some redress to those persons who are suffering as a result of their bad action. I believe the time has come to let employers understand that those acts of dishonesty, because basically that is what it is, must be met with prison terms. I am not one of those people who feel that they only have to pay the money because they repay the money when they can and how they can, if they do. I believe they must know that they are playing with lives of a lot of people who deserve better treatment.

I wish only to know, Sir, that in injecting these funds into the severance payments Kitty, Government will be able from henceforth to create a more favourable situation for those people - I hope there will be so many fewer than there have been in the last couple of years - to get what is their due as a result of being severed.

Thank you.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I am not replying to the debate. I understand the Member for St. Peter wishes to make another intervention. At this stage I just want to make two points abundantly clear. 2.00 p.m.

It is absolutely incorrect to try to suggest that this particular measure is being brought to the House today, or that the Severance Payments Fund is in deficit, because of the unemployment figure prevailing since the Democratic Labour Party Government assumed office. That is absolutely incorrect. The deficit in the fund has been built up largely because of the tailspin into which the economy of this country went following the recession of the late 1970s and the early 1980s, and the resulting closures of a large number of companies in this country. Furthermore, Sir, in 1985 and in 1986, under the Barbados Labour Party Government, proposals were being actively considered for a loan of \$14 million for the Severance Payments Fund because the fund was in deficit I have the files here before me. They were asking for that money, \$14 million, to come

from the Unemployment Benefit Fund to the Severance Fund. That particular proposal went up to the Minister in 1986.

What is worse, Sir, from that particular time the Severance Fund, has been carrying a loan - I do not know, carrying some funds in it - but more on that a little later.

I thought I would just clarify that particular matter. This is nothing that has been developed or hatched up under the Democratic Labour Party Government. These are proposals that were very active under the last Administration, but I do not know why they did not take the step. The scheme went further and further into problems, so we have to take charge of the situation now. There are many persons out there, as my colleague has said, who are waiting for payment but cannot be paid, and we are taking the steps to ensure that that is done.

LEAVE TO SIT AGAIN

On the motion of Hon. B. M. TAITT, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. B. M. TATTT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended for lunch until 3.00 p.m.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I beg to second that

The question that the sitting be suspended until 3 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 2.05 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: The sitting is resumed.

When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it should revert

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. R. P. BYER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member for St. Peter.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I really must begin by complimenting the honourable Member for St Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) for a very well reasoned and very clearly argued presentation on this matter, which, to my mind, reflected a very deep understanding of many of the important principles of actuarial practice.

In the course of his contribution, he made a very important point which I hope would not be lost on his side,

and particularly not lost on his Prime Minister. The point that he was making, which I regard as an important point, is that when we are considering schemes to which there are a number of separate branches, there is nothing wrong in principle with part of the surpluses existing in certain branches of the same scheme being transferred to other branches where deficits exist. He reinforced the point, if I must remind the House, by putting the additional case that it might have) been preferable for the \$7 million, which we are now being asked to approve as a loan to the Severance Payments Fund, to have been used for employment generation, and some other device put in place involving a movement of funds between the various categories of the branches operated by the National Insurance to meet the financial deficiency of the Severance Payments Fund.

I say all that, Sir, to say this, that the substance, the logic and the impact of the contribution by the honourable member for St. Michael South Central differ fundamentally from the unfortunate contribution made by the Prime Minister to the effect that the Barbados Labour Party is now to be castigated because at a point in time a proposal was put to the Barbados Labour Party to transfer funds from a part of the National Insurance Scheme in surplus to one which is in deficit

Mr. Chairman, that for us to address some of the issues that have been so loosely addressed by Members on the other side, we ought to go back and understand the course of evolution of some of the funds administered by the National Insurance.

Up to 1981, Sir, the Unemployment Benefit Scheme and the Severance Payments Scheme were merged. In 1982, they were separated, and a decision was taken to reduce the rate of contribution under the Severance Payments Fund from the existing .5 of insurable earnings to 0.25. It was a decision taken because, as you know, Sir, the contributions paid to the Severance Payments Fund fall on employers, and the argument was being put then, with great force, that Barbados' non-wage payroll costs, including severance payments contributions by employers, were putting Barbados in a position where it was uncompetitive with its partners in the region and uncompetitive with other countries in the world.

The point that I am making is that when we begin to discuss the experience of the Severance Payments Fund, and more particularly the reasons why it has reached this particular stage, let us not be so anxious, as the other side is anxious to do, Sir, in saying that it has all to do with the rate of increase in employment, forgetting the fundamental fact that, at a critical point in time, an adjustment was made to cut the rate of contribution by half to address one of the major problems in the Barbados' economy, to try to reduce the extent to which non-wage payroll costs can affect the competitiveness of this country.

What has been experienced, Mr. Chairman, is that the rate of contribution was cut in half, and you would therefore expect that the income accruing to the fund would correspondingly decline. We must weigh the facts before we judge and rush into a heated argument. 3.10p.m.

In 1985, an actuarial study was done of the scheme under the auspices of the ILO and the Organisation of American States. The advice that was given to us then, and I must read it for the benefit of the House, was that excess....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before you start to read....

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: This is a document of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Very well. I just wanted to be certain about that

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: On a point of elucidation: Did the honourable Member say that the reduction in rate was for the Unemployment Scheme or the Severance Payments Scheme? Do you mean reduced from 0.5 to 0.25?

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: The Severance Payments Scheme. That is a fact. Subsequently, the Unemployment Benefit Scheme was moved from 2.0 per cent to one per cent. These things are true.

In 1985, Sir, an actuarial study was done of the scheme, and the advice that was put to us was that excess....,

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Which page?

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: This is page 10 of this report, Government of Barbados on the Fifth Actuarial Review of the National Insurance Scheme. It is a document of the House, and it says here, Sir:

"Excess contingency reserves; arising from actual experience being more favourable than expected, are sometimes transferred to other benefit branches. Either of these steps is normally taken on the basis of recommendations arising from an actuarial review."

So when the position was put that the Prime Minister speaks of, of our seeking to ensure the solvency of the Severance Payments Fund by making a transfer from one part of the National Insurance Scheme to another, it was in accordance with accepted practices and principles of persons....

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: I just want to be clear in our minds that the honourable Member is saying that the Unemployment Benefit Scheme is part of the Social Security system.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You are rising on what? Mr.

R. L. MORRIS: On a point of elucidation:

It does not appear to be quite correct to assume that the Severance Payments Scheme is of the same nature as the National Insurance Scheme or the Unemployment

Benefit Scheme. The Severance Payments Scheme is regulated by an Act that is separate from the National Insurance Act and is not properly a Social Security scheme. So if you are transferring from one like, from sickness to invalidity, that to me is a different thing from when you are transferring from the Severance Payments Scheme into one of these other schemes. They are different types of schemes.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I take the honourable Member's point, but the point I was making did not relate to a classification of them into Social Security and otherwise. I am saying that they are operated by the National Insurance Department, and the point I was trying to make is that the proposal that was put to Government was a proposal in keeping with the kinds of recommendations that were given to us from an actuarial review at a time when a surplus had been built up in the Unemployment Benefit Scheme, but because of reduction in the rate of contribution under the Severance Payments Fund, you were having problems as regards the accrual of income to that fund.

I want to go further - and that is why I say that the contribution of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is fundamental to this debate, because he understands actuarial practice - the actuaries recommend that either of these steps is normally taken on the basis of recommendations arising from an actuarial review. The Prime Minister wants to castigate us for not having acted on a proposal put to us merely because it was a proposal put to us. You just cannot transfer \$14 million from an unemployment benefit fund because it is put to you without conducting an actuarial review to determine how that large transfer... ..

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Chairman: What I was seeking to do was to establish that the fund did not become insolvent in 1987 or after June 1986, but that the insolvency existed way back from 1985 or 1984 or thereabouts. I was not castigating anybody. I was simply setting out the facts.

Furthermore, Sir, in 1985, \$3.3 million was credited to the fund erroneously by the Barbados National Bank, and it was not corrected, and up to this point it has not been corrected.

The fact is that the fund has been insolvent for a very long time, for many years now, and we are trying to correct this. This is all we are trying to point out from this side. We are not castigating the honourable Member for that, or for paying heed to an actuarial study.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I have again to go back to the document and I will proceed again with some of the information put to us that could have informed the decision not to transfer the \$14 million from the

Unemployment Fund to the Severance Payments Fund which seemed to be a concern of me Prime Minister.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation: That is not a concern of mine. It is obvious that is a matter of concern to the honourable Member for St. Peter. It is not a major concern of mine why that was not done. The people of Barbados have spoken on that matter already. We want to get on with the business now, that is all.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, it is a fundamental point we have to address, because when the time comes for us to discuss the size of the deficits, this side will remember the advice that has been put to the Government by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

As regards the state of the funds in those years, this actuarial review at page 57 said that the fund had accumulated up to the end of 1984 in excess of \$7 million in reserves and at page 58: "from the financial standpoint, the solvency of the fund appears to be guaranteed for the immediate future.

(Aside: We are not discussing solvency.)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I read that, Sir, because there has crept into this House a perception, stated by the honourable Member for St. Michael North East (Mr. L. L. Brathwaite) and repeated by others, that there was a fundamental problem with the Severance Payments Fund starting as far back as 1981. We have to correct the misconception, and we have to understand, as I said, that part of the problem with the fund has to do with the cut in the rate of contribution. That is why I asked the Prime Minister - I made the point earlier when I spoke about if we are going to be interested in the long term solvency of the Severance Payments Fund - what are we to do, now that the electors have spoken, as regards rates of contribution, integration of the Severance Payments Fund with the Unemployment Fund in such a way that the deficit of one does not have to be reflected as a deficit on the public account and matters of that character? 3.20 p.m.

The electors, Sir, have spoken, and the electors have spoken not only in relation to our management of the Severance Payments Fund, they have spoken as well as regards the rate of unemployment under us, and they are now speaking as regards the rate of unemployment under you.

It is not enough for this Government

(Aside: Hon. P. M. GREAVES: That is nothing to do with unemployment. The severance payments is nothing to do with unemployment.)

(Aside: Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If you are severed you have no job.)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I thought we could discuss unemployment under you.

Asides.

(Aside: Hon. P. M. GREAVES: That was lay-offs, not unemployment.)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, can you separate the two sides for a moment?

I subscribe to the position taken in part by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, as well as the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Mr. R. L. Morris), that fundamental to the solution to the solvency of the Severance Payments Fund must be the manner in which we deal with the problem of unemployment. We cannot, Mr. Chairman, seek to discuss severance funds purely from a financial point of view without recognising that there is a human dimension to the problem, that human dimension being the level of unemployment.

This debate has generated some interesting insights as regards the manner in which the unemployment problem should be addressed. The honourable Member for Christ Church East Central put forward a point of view that would see there being put in place certain regulations that would militate against the indiscriminate layoff of people, regardless of the financial position of companies.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member should wind up in a half minute.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I will have the opportunity to speak again before the end of the debate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Attorney-General.

Hon. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Chairman, I get the impression from listening to the speech of the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) that he is trying to back the Government into a corner on this issue.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. KING: Trying, not succeeding.

(Aside: Say Richie.)

Hon. M. A. KING: Not Richie.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Whoever Richie is, I have not the slightest idea. Continue.

Hon. M. A. KING: The honourable Member for St. Peter, in a very skilful presentation, I suggest, set out to base his thesis on the argument that we have to protect the solvency of the Severance Payments Fund. No one can question that, it is certainly an excellent premise from which to start. He is interested in protecting the solvency of the fund and we are interested in protecting the solvency of the

fund, but if you start from that premise, it depends on how you go after that.

What is the cause for the insolvency of the fund? Because against that background, you are dealing with a problem of a fund which is insolvent.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. M. TAITT: Tell them, A.G!)

Hon. M. A. KING: The honourable Member for St. Peter has said that part of the problem has certainly been the cut back in contributions, which they had instituted in 1982, reducing from .5 per cent to .25 per cent. Certainly another cause for the insolvency of the fund was the large number of bankruptcies which existed in that period, with the resultant layoffs, terminating with unemployment by virtue of redundancies, and the considerable quantity of payments which had to be made to employees in those circumstances. The situation was that because the companies were bankrupt or insolvent, whichever you like, the companies were unable to pay contributions to the workers' severance which, by law they were required to pay. As a result, the fund had to pick the slack up.

(*Aside:* Section 31.)

Hon. M. A. KING: Of course, it is Section 31.

What you also have to recount is that a lot of the problems which the fund has faced is not because the fund had to pay the payments which would normally be the contributions which the fund would pay anyhow in rebates to employers, but they had to pay the employers' payments as well. Look at the mass of companies which went out of existence in those circumstances. I am not going to call any names, but certainly there have been a lot of techniques and measures used by a variety of companies, employers, with a view to defeating the whole purpose of severance payments, National Insurance contributions and other obligations to the Government.

Part of the problem is that sufficient curative measures have not been taken early enough to deal with the fundamental problems which the fund was facing. I vouchsafe to say that if the last Administration had taken this matter seriously and had taken curative measures at an early enough stage in the proceedings, the fund would not be in the position that it is today.

Let us give some illustrations. You find that you have a company which owns real estate, a large company which owns real property, which employs persons in the hotel industry. That company goes to the extent of incorporating another company, a management company, to which the liability for employing the workers is transferred, and also the concomitant liabilities which go with employment, like liability for National Insurance contributions, Income Tax to Government and severance payments contributions. So when someone incorporates a dummy company, so to speak, to take over the running of the business and the employment

of the workers, and then the company falls on hard times, you find that the dummy company has no assets against which the fund can proceed to recover not only contributions that they should rightly have been paying over the years, but also the severance payments which, as employers, they were bound to make once the redundancies take place.

There were several companies like that, and I will call names. There was Miramar and Sunset Crest, examples where the dummy companies had been incorporated and you found that when they went out of existence, first of all, owing the Government a lot of money for employees' contributions - the contributions mark you, not the redundancy payments - the fund itself had to chip in - you add insult to injury - and pay the part of the contributions which the employers should normally have paid.

When in his opening statement the Prime Minister made the point that in 1985, for instance, the collections of the fund were \$1.6 million and the total receipts were \$2.173 million, and the expenditures were \$7.9 million, you find in that set of payments the amount which was paid out for severance payments benefits which the employers should have paid. The fund would have been to the credit of that amount if the employers had paid the contributions which the law said they should pay. That is a problem which existed, it is not new, through the ages, and we found that no action had been taken on it. From time to time in this very Parliament we have talked about these issues, but nothing has happened about them.

If you look at the amounts which have been paid out, I mean, they are vast. The Barbados Foundry went out in that time, Building Supplies. They were not only overseas companies, what have been called the offshore companies; there were some substantial companies in this country, Barbados Foundry, Clarke Johnson Construction, Mapp's Garments, Koves, the whole lot. You can go down the list

Aside.

Hon. M. A. KING: Miramar was even a little earlier. The Government had to make payments as a result of all of those going out of business.

In 1982, the Government reduced the level of Severance Fund contributions. One wonders whether any proper and analytical approach had been done when they took that decision to reduce it. You cannot tell me that because of the problem businesses were facing, you thought that you would do something to ease them. You are complimenting the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes), why did you not follow those sort of approaches?

Aside.

Hon. M. A. KING: I cannot lose that.

By the fiscal policy of the Democratic Labour Party in 1986, we did a lot to shore up some of the problems

which the businesses had been facing as a result of the pressures which had been put upon them by the Barbados Labour Party Administration. That was one way of dealing with the problem. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has already made the point that you have to deal with the issue of employment, in the context of creating an environment where the private sector can take up some of the slack in restoring some of the jobs which have been lost over the years as a result of your policies. That is the kind of problem with which we are faced. 3.30 p.m.

The general consensus is that the Severance Payments Scheme is a good one. It has not been failing over the years, and I think no one can have any doubt that if the administration of the fund was at its best, so to speak, some of the problems could perhaps be avoided. What we need to do is to ensure that for the future, the contributions which are required to be paid by employers during the course of employment are, in fact, paid. There is no point having the law requiring that the contributions be paid and then nothing is done about ensuring that those contributions are paid and allowing those contributions to run into the millions and millions before some attempt at collection is made.

We have perceived that that has been a problem and have taken some steps to deal with it. We say, for instance, that in relation to the award of Government contracts, one of the requirements is that no contract should be awarded to anyone unless he can establish that they have paid their National Insurance contributions and PAYE liabilities. These are methods which recognise the problems and seek to address them. But I think we have to go further than that, and I am sure that at the moment urgent consideration is being given to addressing the more fundamental problem of requiring employers to make the contributions, as the law requires them to do.

In other countries a variety of methods have been used. Some countries tend to make the failure to pay contributions as required, criminal. A lot of countries prefer to rely on the civil remedy in providing for actions by the fund to recover the amount due to the fund as contributions. Those countries which place emphasis on the civil remedies have very substantial penal provisions for failure to pay. For instance, in Trinidad and Tobago, for failure to pay contributions there is a relatively substantial fine of \$4000 or six months imprisonment, plus \$100 a day for each day the offense continues. In Jamaica, the corresponding provisions of that Act is a penalty of \$5000 or the taxable amount of the contribution which remains unpaid, whichever is greater, and in default of that, imprisonment not exceeding 12 months. Those countries have gone to the extent of placing fairly severe criminal penalties on the employers in addition to the civil obligation to pay monies into the fund. Some of them even go to the extent of placing a personal liability on the directors who are responsible for the administration of that aspect of the company's business

to be responsible and make them penally liable in cases where the companies are in default

The whole problem is that we have to come to grips with the elemental problems which are presented by this matter. It is not so much a matter of unemployment as an attempt to stem the problem of redundancies. We have to ensure that whatever policy we pursue, it is pursued in such a way that businesses grow and develop rather than go out of existence. That is the critical problem. We believe, and we hope, that redundancies, as the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has said, have bottomed out at this stage. But the problem is to ensure that the type of environment is created in this country in which the redundancies of the levels which we saw in the early 1980s are a thing of the past, and that we would not have to pay for those problems any more.

I am not getting into the issue as to whether funds from one Social Security benefit area should be transferred into another, because in the final analysis, the position is that whatever you do, you are still having a liability on an aspect of Social Security benefit. The mission, in my view, is not so much to deal with transfer ability from one fund, because that is passing the buck from one fund to the other and not necessarily coming to grips with the more fundamental problem. In the final analysis, it is still the Government -you can say what you like -which has to find the money to pay the benefits. If you want to get into this thing about left hand and right hand and switching liabilities, you can get into that, but I do not think it is the direction that we want to go in. We have to deal with the issues more fundamentally and get down to the basic problems.

Hon. B. M. TATIT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I really would have preferred not to get involved in this debate.

(*Aside:* Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, sit down, then.)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: But there are some things which have been said, and are said from time to time, which require sober reflection and response.

Mr. Chairman, in recent times, in perhaps a rush of blood to the head, the Barbados Labour Party has managed to capture the public airwaves and, to a large extent, the press columns. They have managed to confuse themselves into a position where they think that the people of Barbados have forgotten what occurred between 1981 and 1986. And in the discussion of this issue before us today, Sir, while I will not accuse the two honourable Members who are sitting in their places on the other side, I would say their appendages may from time to time confuse. 3.40 p.m.

If one looks at what passes as columns in the newspapers, written by the representatives and apologists

for the Barbados Labour Party, they are doing what is a desirable thing from an Opposition point of view, whether it is by way of a letter from Philip George, or Harold George, or Harold Jones. But in this Honourable Chamber, the honourable Members on the other side are called to the very high requirement of fact and of sober reflection, generally speaking, and, therefore, when we discuss these issues, we have to discuss them in real terms.

In 1980, where the Government had determined that the only way they could win the 1981 election was if they made a massive push both at the propaganda level and at the - I am going to call it political investment level - a certain amount of public funds were used in a particular way which would not permit me to discuss it in this Resolution. But by 1982, after they had been re-elected, the Barbados Labour Party's position was starkly naked, and the issue relating to the economy of this country was in very clear terms, and the result was a systematic reduction of the employment of people in this country.

The number of redundancies, the number of companies which went into bankruptcy, the number of companies which went into liquidation, the number of people who were laid off between 1982 and 1985 constitute a record on the economic horizon of Barbados. There is no doubt that that was the worst period in the history of economic life in Barbados since it was recorded. Even when for the first time we had a crisis in 1973, when the world came to a crisis in 1973, Barbados did not suffer between 1973 and 1979 in as difficult a situation as they suffered in 1982 to 1985.

Mr. Chairman, because we have a relaxation, and indeed an amplification of the freedoms in this country, a massive number of people are able to articulate their concerns throughout this country freely without any consideration of restraint. People are free on the air waves to utter how they feel, and as a result, Sir,.....

(*Aside:* Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Con-do-Iences and not con-dul-ences.)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: As a result, Sir, the public is able - or the public are able, depending on your point of view - to air their views.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, there is no "con-dul-ences." I now know that you wrote that particular article for the Barbados Labour Party, under the pseudonym of Henri Christopher. I was waiting to find out who is the person that wants to say "con-dul-ences" is a word and challenged me on "condolences." I now express condolences to the honourable Member in the circumstances. That is neither here nor there. We are not discussing pronunciation, Sir, because I do not think he will challenge me on that.

The point I am making is that the public of Barbados will never forget the circumstances in which the degradation of moral, political and economic life of this country occurred between 1982 and 1985. It would not be that we had 24 and they had 3 if the people of Barbados had not reached a certain level. I do not mind discussing the politics of it. We told them in 1981 that they were being tricked and they did not accept that *in toto* - although there are many persons who believe that something happened which is unspeakable, including the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. Simmons), during that time. I am not going to go into that, I am talking about the politics of the situation. There are many people who believe that in 1981 the election went a different way from how it was determined, but I am not getting into that at all, I am dealing with the pure business of the redundancies, the lay-offs, and I am going to spell out for the honourable Members on that side some of the situations which occurred, because they tend to forget.

The Monday morning, or whenever it is, the Stock Market just fell in the United States, on Wall Street, - is nothing like the degradation which people suffered in this country, and which they are still suffering. The results of the layoffs in Barbados between 1982 and 1985 are still reverberating around this country today. The Democratic Labour Party's difficulties, whatever difficulties they have as the Government now, are manifested in, and informed by the policies of the Barbados Labour Party in the five year period before we came to office. We are still grappling with the difficulties of finding employment for people who have been unemployed for as much as eight years. We have people in this country who cannot find employment, and who are unemployable, because of the policies of the Barbados Labour Party. We have a number of young people who are leaving school now who are finding difficulty finding work, because we in the Government have to reorganise and try to find ways of bringing people who have been left out completely from the system back into the fold.

The Barbados Labour Party, under the Government of the honourable Member for St. Thomas, who is now sitting in his place, who did not personally participate but who must bear the scars, and who shared with us the views which I am now expressing, until recently,.....

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order: Really, the honourable Member cannot speak for me. I do not think my head is on his shoulders yet, or will be at all. His matters of understanding are very personal.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The point I am making, Sir, is that we on this side are grappling now with people who were alienated, deliberately and mischievously, from the mainstream of employment in this country. We are in the

situation where we have people who have never been admitted into the employment stream. We have young people who have had ten years in the wilderness without a hope of employment, who have had three 'O' levels, four 'O' levels sometimes seven 'O' levels, sometimes nine 'O' levels, and the reason why is because - and I am going to repeat it - the Prime Minister of the day had no interest in industrial development - I am speaking of the late Tom Adams - in conflict with his successor, who was in the Ministry of Industry at the time. He had no interest in a Ministry of Industry at all, and he presided over the destruction of whatever industrial sector we were trying to put together in this country. I am saying it on the floor of this House. 3.50 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Do not worry about why I got moved. I got moved for the same reason you got moved, or the same reason you never got elevated.

The Barbados Labour Party keeps being involved in trivia. It does not matter which Ministry I am put to. What is important is what happens to the people of the country, and that is what I am discussing.

Let me say it so that you will have no doubt - I have never been concerned with where I go, I am concerned with what happens when I go, so let no one concern himself about how I get moved.

The Barbados Labour Party talks about having a Minister without Information,

(Aside: Barrow said that.)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Let Barrow rest in his grave.

I am saying to you that you must not concern yourself with what happens to me. You must concern yourself with what quality I bring to where I go.

The point I am making is that Tom Adams systematically destroyed industry in this country. He took the Barbados Manufacturers Association in this country, and because Frank DaSilva had been associated with it, he systematically destroyed it. Let it be said, because in this country there are certain truths which are not spoken.

He then went to the International Monetary Fund, and the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, who is not in his place, in this said very honourable, venerable Chamber brought him to Christian feelings in the context of what he had intended to slip past the people of Barbados. It was this Democratic Labour Party, and the honourable Member for St. Thomas is aware of this, ...

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I know that you will not be bothering with me, but I am bothering with you.

It was the then Prime Minister who attempted to mislead the people, and I have here a list of the numbers of layoffs which the Barbados Central Bank will not have.

Let me say something on the Central Bank, because Bree St. John used to say it is the Bible. He did not know what the Central Bank was, but when he became aware of it, he said it was the Bible. I want to say from the floor of this House that the Central Bank has not always been clean. I will not elaborate on it, but if anybody wants to discuss it with me, I am willing to discuss it.

The Barbados Central Bank figures come from the Statistical Department, and the Statistical Department is the department which the same very Tom Adams manipulated. The same Tom Adams told me behind the Chair of the Speaker - I know you are going to say he is dead and I should not speak ill of him; I am not speaking ill, I am telling the truth - I came back and put it in the record, so you can check it - that, yes, he admits there is something wrong with the statistics, and I am saying that because the honourable Member for St. Peter raised the question and these things have to be said. The statistics have to do with the employment statistics, and if you take the statistics in Barbados from 1977 and come all the way up to 1987, you will see that the employment statistics are faulty, and the problem has to do with manipulation in the Ministry of Finance of the statistics.

(Aside: Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Up to now?)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am talking about under Prime Minister Tom Adams, Minister of Finance, who admitted to me on the floor of the House that they were wrong. I am saying that to deal with the issue raised by my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Peter, about the correction that is to be made. I am saying that if the Prime Minister brings information, the Central Bank will say that it gets its statistics from the Statistical Department, and it is necessary for the Statistical Department to get the information straight, so if you find that we give you information on the National Insurance and or any part thereof, take the information of the Prime Minister because that is the accurate information.

(Aside: Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You have reduced the debate badly.)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You can say that, because whenever the Barbados Labour Party goes out into the highways and byways and reduces the debate, they then come and say that in the House that we are supposed to speak in a certain manner. But when you are going out into the highways and byways misrepresenting, and when the Barbados Labour Party columnists are making their representations in the newspapers, the public, gullible as they are, are being taken for a ride, and therefore in this House of Assembly we have a responsibility to put the record straight.

There are lies, there are damned lies and there are statistics. And there are some people in the Barbados Labour Party columns who are deliberately misleading the population. Only today on Gutterperk you had somebody calling in from the Barbados Labour Party saying that there were only eleven Ministers in the last Administration, when in fact there were 13. This is the kind of information which is being put out. The Leader of the Opposition - I am sorry he is not in his chair - said that you are going to have to infiltrate, and therefore you are infiltrating and you feel that you can put out bad information.

These are the facts. In 1983, some 1995 people were laid off; in 1984, some 2 500; and 1054 were laid off in 1985. These were redundancies.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Where they have come from? Let me call some names so that you will know. I am going to call a sample list. In 1985, the redundancies were as follows: Evelyn Roach & Co. 50; Koves, 112; C. Angelus & Co., 43; Adams Construction, 4; Tropical Batteries, 7; Home Centre, 5; Super Poultry, 4; and that is only part; Eastern Industries, 15; Plantrac, 11; Building Supplies, 80; TRW, 18; Opelika, 150. You want more statistics and I am going to give you them. In 1984, we had Forbes, 40; W. B. Hutchinson, 70; Belvue Estates Ltd., 31; Club St. James, 115; Barbados Foundry Group, 150; Surf and Sand, 25-1 am calling the big ones, Sir - Corcom, 200. All of these occurred during the Barbados Labour Party's time, but he is asking about the statistics!

Mr. Chairman, I have said it in the way I have said it because people tend to forget that the Barbados Labour Party wreaked terror on the community.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It has nothing to do with you personally, but even you will agree that the place was terrorised. You have to understand and accept that any attempt in the last few months to give some respectability to the columnists in this country cannot negate and cannot take away what had occurred in this country between 1982 and 1986, and I am here, as well as the Democratic Labour Party front bench and back bench, to remind you that the reason why this House is so constituted has to do with our commitment to restore.

I am going to read for you, Sir, from a document that is already a document of the House. At page 3 of our 1986 manifesto, we said:

"In 1961, Barbados was a place of limited job opportunities. The Democratic Labour Party changed all that."

The Democratic Labour Party changed all that, and not even our worst enemy will deny that we changed all that. We presided over the development of the tourist

industry. Today, tourism is the mainstay of the Barbadian economy. We presided over the emergence of a vibrant and rapidly expanding manufacturing sector. We were able to move Barbadians, including some of the people who ran for them, from people who were by the wayside patching a few things into manufacturers and businessmen in this country. 4.00 p.m.

We said to the people 18 months ago:

"Today, the manufacturing sector is in an acute state of distress. Therefore, a Democratic Labour Party Government, assuming office in 1986, will be required to work to ensure that the manufacturing sector regains its vitality and internal growth and dynamism, in the shortest time possible".

"The challenge facing the Democratic Labour Party, and the people in general, is the restoration of the social, economic and moral health of our Nation. Especial urgency attaches to the restoration of the economic health of the Nation. Therefore, this shall be our first order of business."

You can print as many newspapers which carry a headline - Mr. Chairman, never before in the history of journalism have you seen it - and the headline says one thing and the very first paragraph contradicts the headline. We have restored the moral strength in this country. People can walk in this country and feel proud again. They can curse the party in power, they can curse the Government, but they do not have to look back over their shoulder and discover what is going to happen to them. We have done that! We said we would do it!

Applause.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: We have had Barbados Labour Party people in the middle management levels laughing at Democratic Labour Party people in this country because we had the courage of our convictions not to send them home, like how you did. As a result, you are now fulminating against us and saying that we have not fulfilled our promises. But our people understand that the moral integrity of the country is even more important than any other aspect of it. That is why we can stand up to you any time, and we can take the taunting and we can take the lashings. We can take the columnists because we know we stand on a strong moral foundation.

We have done what we said we would do. We have restored this country to a position where its moral integrity is acceptable. The economic position is being restored. We told them that when we came into office, we would restore the tourist industry. We have not done it singlehandedly, we have done it collectively. What we have done is to demonstrate that what we said we would do, we could do. And by God's grace, we are going to bring this country back to a level and a position of economic development where we all as a community, including the honourable

Members on that side, can say, 'thank God for the Democratic Labour Party and its policy.'

We do not have to worry about you. You are to stay and oppose us and get your little inky-dinky journalists to say a few things about us. The true journalists in the country understand the situation and will not be taken by the editorials that are written by politicians.

Mr. Chairman, there is nothing more dastardly in a community than to have editorials written by politicians. There are politicians in this country, active politicians, who are writing editorials on a daily basis. We know who they are and they know who they are.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Even the honourable Members are saying he is not active, I leave them, they are two of a kind.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to make sure that they do not misunderstand. Silence over here is nothing more than courtesy. We have not lost the capacity to deal with you in the manner to which you are accustomed. But we are being courteous to you because we recognise that you are only three. We are trying to be nice and gentle, but if you interfere with us, we will treat you in the way you deserve.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. C. L. TROTMAN (St. Michael Central): Mr. Chairman, Social Security generally, and severance payments particularly, may very well be considered as being very sound socialist and practical policies of any Administration. In June, 1985 organisations like the Barbados Workers Union, so concerned as they were for maintaining that practical socialist approach to the matter of Social Security, were calling for a complete review of the National Insurance Scheme, and I think, Mr. Chairman, that one has to understand the history of Social Security in Barbados to be able to recognise where 1985 puts us in the continuum regarding Social Security.

When the Democratic Labour Party first introduced severance payments as part of the Social Security Scheme, the opponents of Social Security, particularly the opponents of the Severance Payments Scheme and I think that we would have to include the Opposition Barbados Labour Party as part of the opponents, claimed among other things that the employee was under contract to the employer, and at the end of a contract, the employer should not be obligated to reward the worker. They were saying in no uncertain terms that if you go to the baker and buy bread, or you go to the tailor and he makes a suit for you, at the end of that contract for service, the provision of bread or the provision of a suit, you are under no social obligation whatsoever to provide continuity of service for that particular worker. They were taking that argument from the sublime to the ridiculous by arguing that a worker who works continuously

at a work place is under a similar contractual arrangement for service and did not recognise, or having recognised, did not give suitable credit to the difference between the ** contract for service and the contract of service. Since there are a number of people who are familiar with those kind of differences as recognised by the law, I will not go further into it, except to say that we are pleased that the Democratic Labour Party was able to recognise the difference between a contract of service, and, therefore, notwithstanding the opposition which there was to the introduction of a Social Security Scheme, particularly to the element of severance payments, the Democratic Labour Party went ahead and introduced the scheme.

Immediately in the 1970s, those of us who have been able to follow the fortunes of the working class in Barbados were able to recognise that there were immediate benefits to be derived for a large number of persons. The Elite Bus Company and the Rocklyn Bus Company, to name a couple, at about that time had to lay off large numbers of workers. Those workers would have been without the benefit of severance had it not been for this scheme. At about the same time, because of the energy crisis in the 1970s, 1973 and 1974, a number of hotels, especially west coast hotels, were forced to lay off large numbers of persons, and as a direct consequence, the scheme was immediately realised as providing a very useful and very practical social benefit to the workers of this country.

There can be no doubt, therefore, whatever side we are on politically, that we must be able in Barbados today, in 1987, to recognise the usefulness that severance payments have for the working people of this country. It is true, Sir, that over time, a number of people have used and abused the system. But we would have to be able to go back to the source to find out the whys and the wherefores of that abuse to be able to correct it and to lead to a better system in the future. Whatever the abuse has been, there is no question but that it is absolutely essential in 1987, and in the future, ^ that we continue to have a system of benefits by which workers, when once they have gone to work and they have given all that they can offer to their job, do not find themselves in a situation where because of acts of God or other acts of redundancy, they are without any means whatsoever of regaining anything from their contribution to the world of work.

The employer sometimes is able to go back to his insurance, or is able because he has a limited liability company, and maintain a certain level of equilibrium. The worker has given nothing but his blood, sweat and his tears, and, therefore, he must be in a position of protection if and when the moment comes. 4.10p.m.

I wish to remind you, Sir, that when we look at the coming of the moment, we must not look alone at individual companies which have large work forces that are able or

that are forced to lay off those large work forces. I do not believe that anybody derived any pleasure from the closing of Intel or Playtex, to name two of the companies which operated in Barbados, but if one reduces that to its stark, real cruel nakedness, one is forced to recognise that there were two companies which were recently in the business of laying off workers. If one, however, were to look back in time, one would be able to recognise that, overtime, especially in the period between 1983 and 1986, very large numbers of companies were forced to lay off large numbers of workers and, in fact, some of them were even forced to close their doors.

I do not say this as any discredit to any Administration, because I do not believe that any Administration that we have had would serve any practical purpose by wanting to close down all the companies that are closed down. They may have wanted to close some, like Cavalier, for example, but they may not want to close all. So when we find that W.B. Hutchinson laid off several people, at least 70, that Koves had to close down, that Towels Limited had to close down, that Hanschell Inniss had to lay off workers, that Greensleeves Hotel had to make people redundant, that Kleerex Electronics had to make people redundant, that Bellevue Estates had to make people redundant, that Club St. James had to make people redundant - I cannot go on, Sir, because you will limit my time -that dozens of establishments made several persons redundant we would be able to recognise the problem I am drawing to your attention, which is that if several companies found a climate in this country which was not conducive to their ongoing operations, then we would have had a problem.

I am suggesting to you, Sir, that, in those circumstances, the workers of Barbados were not very happy when the Barbados Labour Party Government did two things which they considered to be other than in their best interest. On the one hand, the Barbados Labour Party Government tried to tax severance payments. I believe that even today, Barbados Labour Party members themselves consider that to be reprehensible in conception and dastardly in implementation.

Furthermore, the Barbados Labour Party Government put a maximum of 52 weeks on the number of benefits which workers were able to get from severance payments as opposed to the 132 weeks which workers are able to get under the Administration of the Democratic Labour Party.

As if that were not enough, Sir, they went further, at a later stage, to move the qualifying period from four weeks to qualify for severance to 13 weeks that a person had to be laid off before that person could qualify for severance. I still find that that is totally unacceptable, and I am using this occasion to call on the present Administration to move with alacrity and dispatch to change that iniquitous arrangement to give the workers a benefit by which they can make claim to severance by a much earlier time.

If I read you right, Sir, I have very limited time left and I might be able to come back to this subsequently. So let me treat more fully this matter of the layoff period.

I was fortunate to be a member of a delegation that visited the last Leader of the Administration under the Barbados Labour Party, Mr. St. John, to advise him that it was our considered view that the Government of the day was making a very serious mistake by asking workers to wait for 13 weeks before they can make a claim for severance. As a matter of fact, the organisation that I work for, the Barbados Workers Union, went beyond that and wrote a letter on July 16, 1985, which, Sir, I shall be happy to make a document of this Honourable Chamber, advising the Prime Minister that he was very much in error to go in that direction because the increase in the minimum period of layoff from four weeks to 13 consecutive weeks before a worker can make a claim for severance payment is not in the best interest of the workers in Barbados. That is the first thing we said to him. The Barbados Labour Party rejected our submission and the workers retaliated by rejecting them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has one more minute to wind up.

Mr. C. L. TROTMAN: I thank you very kindly, Sir.

Among other things, Sir, we wrote to indicate that it was not in the best interest of the Government and/or the workers to base the increase in the layoff period on the Government's aim to cater to the seasonality of the tourist industry and, therefore, towards winter vegetable production. In short, what we were understanding was that the Prime Minister of the day wanted hotel workers to alternate between working in the hotels and working in the agricultural industry to produce the vegetables. Those of us who recognise the difference in labour would know that that was a non-starter from the beginning.

It is useful for us to recognise that in all of this, the Barbados Workers Union, in 1981, 1983 and in 1985, called for a review of Social Security benefits and Social Security schemes, particularly the Severance Payments Scheme and the Unemployment Scheme. My understanding is that such a review was conducted, that a report is now in, and I would like to urge Government and all sides to be frank enough and to be manful enough to examine those findings, to look for the best aspects of it and direct them to the best interest of the nation as a whole and to the working people of Barbados in particular.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS (St. Thomas): Mr. Chair man

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before you start, the debate will wind up in another 15 minutes or so, allowing two or three minutes for the change-over to the Speaker and so on. I just told you that so you will know the time in which you can make your presentation.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I had not intended to speak on this until the Honourable Minister of Health provoked me by a speech, in the words of the Leader of the Opposition, of outstanding emptiness. I have to reply to some of the folly that was said.

He spoke of moral degradation in 1982 to 1985. I am not going to deal with anything happening at Caribbean House in London or anybody connected therewith.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The debate is about severance payments.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir. I am replying to the Honourable Minister of Health who was allowed by you, Sir, for 15 minutes, to inveigh against the former Barbados Labour Party Administration and use language like "moral degradation." I claim the same rights to reply to him in similar language. 4.20 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If the honourable Member will just hear me out, I am not denying you that privilege. All I am trying to tell you is that the honourable Member for St. Michael West spoke of moral degradation and did not go into specifics. Let us stick to the debate. The debate is about severance pay. I know what limits I ought to allow.

Mr. D.A.C. SIMMONS: I do not like to make generalised, wild statements like that, otherwise, I would tell him of some of the very immoral things that are happening in his administration now.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: As long as these things are within the context of the Severance Payments Bill.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let us deal with severance payments, because this debate has now gone a little offtrack.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is that a reflection on the Chair?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, Sir. If it is, I withdraw it.

I was very grateful to hear the Honourable Attorney General, because I thought that he put the debate in proper perspective after the speeches of the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur), the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Mr. R. L. Morris) and the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes). The Honourable Attorney General pointed to five reasons for the present difficulties in the Severance Payments Fund. I do not think anyone can quarrel with four of them - cutback in contributions, the large number of bankruptcies and layoffs, the large payments to employees and companies refusing to pay their share of contributions, and a number of stratagems that were devised by companies to defeat the payment of contributions.

His fifth point was that there was no curative action taken to arrest the slippage in the Severance Payments Fund. I do not necessarily agree with that, Sir.

I think one has to be careful to put the matter in its proper perspective. Let us start with the historical side. This severance pay legislation was passed in 1972. Contrary to what the last speaker said, the Barbados Labour Party did not oppose the passing of the Severance Payments Act, and we do not take kindly to being numbered with the opponents of that legislation.

The legislation in Barbados is the same as that passed in the Redundancy Payments Act in England in 1965. It had had six years of operation when it came to Barbados and everyone was aware of the shortcomings of the legislation, but thought that it had a role to play, as the Prime Minister said in his opening speech, in cushioning the difficulties that people who were laid off or who were made redundant would find. So we could not in all conscience oppose it, and we did not.

What the Labour Party has always said, and I believe that honourable Members will agree - even the Minister who is now the Deputy Prime Minister, I believe he had responsibility for introducing the Severance Payments Act - is that because it was a carbon copy of the English Act of 1965, it has remained fraught with all the problems thrown up by the Act of 1965. It is one piece of legislation that is written back to front, Sir, and the time will come when we will have to have a new Severance Payments Act, a lot more simple and one which takes account of our experiences over 15 to 16 years. I have no doubt that that will be done in due course.

Just after this Act was passed, the parent Act 355A, the whole world was affected with a recession, caused principally by the fuel crisis. I was pleased to hear the honourable Member for St. Michael Central (Mr. C. L. Trotman) advert to the fact that in 1973-74 there was a large number of hotels on the west coast which closed and threw people out of work. I suppose you would hear that at that time the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, in 1973-74. That situation of crisis was relived in 1982, when the world was again in a recession. Some say it was the worst recession since 1929, and we are not going to deny it, and I am grateful to the honourable member for Christ Church East Central who reluctantly conceded in his speech that there was world economic pressure that affected the economies in the period after 1981.

I am now reading a book by Radice which speaks of the difficulties, the adjustments that socialism has had to make as a philosophy consequent upon the recession of the early seventies and the early eighties. I got it in London recently.

During the administrations of both parties there were economic pressures forced upon Barbados and forced upon the community, which predisposed to a slump in economic activity and consequential unemployment, layoffs and redundancies. It is true that at no time in the recessionary period of 1981 to 1985 did unemployment reach a level of

22 per cent, as it was in August 1976, before the Governments changed.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He was not in here, Sir. The Honourable Prime Minister will tell you that the Honourable Minister of Health was not in here when in the Budget of 1976, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Barrow, from the southern end, said that unemployment was 22 per cent. There were alleged to have been cheers on the Opposition benches.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We will get the debate then; we will get it later on today. He is going to deny that under him as Minister of Trade - the now Minister of Health, the Member for St. Michael West - he had inflation in Barbados at 40 per cent and was pleased to write about it in the Democratic Labour Party's manifesto.

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Check the one for 1976 where you admitted

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: that inflation was 40%.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has risen on a point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I submit, on a point of order, that the honourable Member is being deliberately provocative of the Chair in this sense, that this is a matter which has been raised in this House and has been corrected over and over again, and the honourable Member has been in this House when it was corrected.

Never was it so in the history of Barbados, and I challenge the honourable Member to ever find any official document published in Barbados where the rate of inflation was 40 per cent.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Point made.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It is dishonest.
4.30 p.m.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Minister of Health who speaks of the bankruptcies under the Barbados Labour Party between 1981 and 1985 cannot deny that he was known in Barbados, in the equivalent period leading up to the 1976 elections, as the one who presided over the closure of over 200 small shops in this country.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member is misleading the Committee. First of all, I deny it categorically. Secondly, the only person to whom I was known in that way is the honourable Member and a certain merchant who has admitted in writing that it served his purpose to do that No 200 shops have ever been

closed, and no Minister of Trade, or any other Minister in this country, has ever been able to find evidence of any 200 small shops which were closed.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He made the point, Sir. I concede I was wrong, Sir. It was not 200, it was 400, as the honourable Member for St. Peter just reminded me. Four hundred small shops you closed!

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order: The gravamen of the honourable Member's speech is that the level of debate should be at a certain level. I submit that now when he says 400, he is being completely contemptuous of the House, because I am stating categorically that nowhere can he find a document saying that On the contrary, he will find in the Ministry of Trade that there is a document which says there were 1 503 shops at the time and nowhere can it be found that any 200 or 400, or any 100, at any time were closed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has a minute.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What I am submitting, Sir, is that since the introduction of the Severance Payments Act of 1972 in 1973, there have been two periods of recession in the Administrations of both parties, and both periods have been characterized by high levels of redundancy and unemployment. Undoubtedly, there has been strain put on the Severance Payments Fund. The point that the Opposition has been concerned to make is that if you have two funds which are aspects, facets or branches of the same pot, tree or whatever, it would be better if one fund, the Unemployment Benefit Fund in this case, is more solvent than the other and can bear a transfer, to transfer from the Unemployment Benefit Fund to the Severance Payments Fund, rather than coming to the Central Government to borrow by way of a loan an amount of \$7 million to shore up the Severance Payments Fund, precisely because today we have been given nothing by the Prime Minister by way of a policy that speaks to the repayment of this loan. How is it going to be paid back?

At the end of the financial year, the deficit will have increased by \$7 million. Is it proposed to pay back \$1 million a year, \$2 million or what? We have been told nothing. We have been told there has been a problem and the Government is trying to solve it by borrowing from the Treasury, whereas we think it might have been more efficacious if the Government had attempted to borrow from the Unemployment Benefit Fund, always assuming that the Unemployment Benefit Fund could have sustained a loan of this magnitude.

I do not know at the moment what the figures are. In April/May 1986, I remember seeing minutes from the National Insurance people showing that the Unemployment Fund then had in some \$41 million in surplus. I do not know what the present level is, but members of the Cabinet

would probably get to see minutes every month and be able to tell us.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Member has to wind up.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: As a matter of the organisation of this loan, we thought it would have been better if there could have been a borrowing from a similar fund.

Secondly, Sir, I wish to submit that one of the things that did happen in the period of recession was that to safeguard the fund - Members have not adverted to this at all - an amendment was made which made payments of National Insurance contributions, unemployment benefits, severance pay and so on - a first charge in the event of liquidation to try and preserve something.

The problem which I want to hear the Prime Minister address is still more fundamental. A company collapses, people are thrown out of work, made redundant, they claim on their employer who does not pay, cannot pay, and the Severance Fund then pays the award.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I want to know what attempt is being made to recover, and with what level of success, from the employer who has gone out of business. If he has assets, you must sell them out and recover.

Thank you.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1987-88 No. 14 -
\$225900

HEAD 14 - INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT DIVISION
- \$169780

Hon. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Chairman, the West Indies Shipping Corporation suffered a loss in 1986 in excess of \$5 million, to be precise, \$5 747 606. Barbados has a 10 per cent shareholding in that corporation, and according to agreement, is required to contribute to that deficiency by an identical amount of money, that is 10 per cent, which represents the shareholding. In other words, Sir, Barbados' share of the contribution would be \$574 760.60.

Sir, in the 1986-87 Estimates of Expenditure, \$228998.85 was repaid of that amount, and the whole amount that has been allocated in this year's Estimates of \$175982 was also used to help pay off Barbados' contribution. That still leaves a shortfall of \$169779.75, and this amount is required by Barbados now to completely wipe out the monies owing as Barbados' share of the West Indies Shipping Corporation. 4.40 p.m.

There are a number of reasons why the shipping corporation lost money. For one thing, the amount of freight we had estimated that we would carry fell short. The estimated amount of freight was 150 000 tonnes and we only carried 136 800 tonnes. Also, Sir, there were periods when both of the ships owned by the corporation were on dry dock for long periods. On another occasion, one ship of the company ran aground somewhere on the reefs off the Dominican Republic. Of course, there are other reasons as well, the fall-off in trade being not an insignificant reason for the drop in revenue earned by the corporation.

The amount now required is as is stated, \$169780, and that is what we are asking.

I move, Sir, that this item stand part, that Object No. 17, Head 14, stand part.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 14 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE - \$55 120

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, the amount of money provided under Head 15 in respect of the items indicated, proved to be insufficient for carrying on the business of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission. It is therefore necessary to seek additional funds by way of supplementary Resolution to put the commission in funds to meet the expenditures indicated.

First of all, Sir, the sum of \$950 is required in respect of Utilities. A provision of \$5050 was made in the Estimates to pay for telephone expenses at the offices of the commission located in the National Insurance building. However, part of the commission is now located in the West Wing of the Public Buildings, certain of its activities are carried on there, and it therefore has become necessary to establish an additional telephone line in the office in the West Wing of these Public Buildings. So it is necessary to supplement this Vote by \$950, that is Object No. 7.

As far as Object No. 10 is concerned, Supplies and Materials, the commission has had new camera equipment. Apparently, when things are new they seem to cost more to operate, in spite of all the talk about greater efficiencies. You cannot get the same number of exposures from the film being used and so more film is being used and an additional amount of money is required to cover these increased operations. A sum of \$21 800 is required as a supplement under Supplies and Materials.

Sir, I can well understand why the Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. Simmons) says, 'Let it pass, let it pass.' He does not want to hear about the by-election in St. John. I thought you want to hear about that.

(*Aside:* Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I want to hear about how you were driving a tractor yesterday.)

(Aside: In a three piece suit!)

Laughter.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: That was under protest.

Laughter.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, under Object No. 12, Operating Expenses, there is additional expenditure of \$33370 required, directly connected with by-elections. There are certain duties which fall to the Chief Electoral Officer. He is required to establish revising centres throughout the constituencies and then have them staffed by photographers and so on. There are also all kinds of expenses relating to election officials, polling stations, rental of buildings, repairs to booths, the marking of roads, fees for Island Constables and rental of coaches. There are travelling allowances and also there are some miscellaneous expenses, including the cleaning of schools and transportation of furniture. This supplementary is required to meet those inescapable expenses. I do not think anyone would quarrel with this expenditure.

Let me say from the floor of the House that I have not seen any serious report, or any report, about any infelicities in respect of the conduct and operation of that by-election. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the commission and their officials on the very good job that was expected and that was done as far as this by-election is concerned.

I would like to congratulate the people of St. John for taking the very sensible decision of rejecting the Barbados Labour Party candidate once more. They did it in 1986 and they did it in 1987. If they continue the kinds of criticisms and the kinds of political comment, both journalistically and otherwise, that they have been conducting, they will continue in that particular situation for quite some time.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of \$56120 for Head 15, Subhead 5, stand part of the Schedule.

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

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE (St. Michael North East): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would just like to ask two very brief questions relating to the Electoral and Boundaries Commission. One has to do with the publication of monthly lists, as we were promised some time late last year, I think.

I still think that if you are seriously managing a constituency, you need to know of the movements in and out of the constituency, information on deaths and persons coming of age. I wonder if there is any indication yet as to the publication of such lists.

Secondly, in the St. Michael North East constituency, in respect of the actual location of the office of the officer who is doing the registering in the constituency, I would wish that the Electoral and Boundaries Commission would find a more suitable area, because people are not necessarily

encouraged to go to the particular area, either the St. Matthew's School or in the Friendship Community Centre.

Hon. B. M. TATTT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I crave the indulgence of the House to speak in my capacity as representative rather than in my capacity of Minister, because the comments I shall make have to do with my role as the representative of the constituency of St. Michael West 4.50 p.m.

You will recall that some time ago, a decision was made that the constituencies would share the registering officer. I have had a lot of difficulty with the concept. It is my judgment that in the representation of people, the registering officer of a constituency should live in, or at least near to, but I opt for living in, that constituency, and I do not believe that the principle of representation in the electoral system which we practise can be said to be properly in place if the argument were raised that no one from that constituency could be found who could fulfil the role of registering officer.

It seems to me that in every constituency, if there is to be representative democracy, there must be a person who can represent that constituency as the registering officer. I have always believed, and continue to believe, that that is a cost which the country must bear, if it comes down to cost. It is a cost which the country must bear if we are to have true democracy, because there is nothing nearer to the heart of the democratic system than the right of persons to be registered to vote.

In the last election we had, the by-election, it seemed as though we had no problems in that regard. It does seem as if the Electoral and Boundaries Commission is getting on top of its task in that regard. But I feel bound to speak with some serious concern to the issue of the facilities provided for representatives and the arrangements made for registration and for the electoral list. I believe that the electoral list in a community of 254 000 souls should be as pure as Caesar's wife was supposed to be. I believe that there is no ground, no room, for an electoral list that carries with it and on it persons who have long passed to the Great Beyond, and I think that for 254 000 people it is not beyond the capability of this country to manage such a system.

I have asked, and I am still speaking as a representative, because persons in the Cabinet do not have jurisdiction over this. The Electoral and Boundaries Commission is the sole body responsible for elections in this country, and so, as a representative, I am saying that I wish to have a pure list. I wish to be certain that in the same way I am aware that people have died, in the same way that I am aware that people have been born, that when people become age 18 in the constituency, the Electoral and Boundaries Commission should be aware of it as well. It seems to me that in a modern day when a personal computer is not so expensive, this House could afford to give to the Electoral and

Boundaries Commission any equipment, machinery or manpower that it requires to give us a system of democracy that we can continue to be proud of.

I am not now criticising the Commission. I have no reason to criticise the Commission. I am speaking from my own point of view in saying that I do not wish to share my registering officer with anybody else, and I am authorised to speak on behalf of the people of St. Michael West who do not wish to share their registering officer with anybody else. They wish somebody whom they know, know where he or she lives and have no doubt in the integrity of the person; and they do not wish to be confined to two afternoons at St. Leonard's School, they wish to be able to have this on a continuing basis.

I do not think that I need to push the issue because -I think that my colleague, the Prime Minister, who is responsible for Electoral Affairs, shares the view, and in any case may have some information for me in this regard. But I want to say it for the record, because I do not wish it to be said subsequently that I did not say anything. I think this is a view shared by almost all of us, I do not think this is a matter that is going to get any reaction from anybody.

It is not a lot of money, Sir. We have spent a lot of money in this country on a lot of things about which we may have been doubtful, but there can be never any doubt, in my view, about money spent to ensure that the people's rights are respected, and that the people have their day on election day. So I am asking for a full time, if we must have them, registering officer in the constituency of St. Michael West I am asking further that we give consideration - I am still speaking in my capacity as a representative - to the facilities provided for our Members.

Honourable Members who represent their constituencies will have to provide a certain quality of service. I know that there are people who are always willing when we are discussing salaries to discuss it in negative terms, but I hope that there is no one who will deny that proper representation requires an office, a secretary, supplies, and other ancillary services. I know that Parliament has made provision for this, but I am saying that the Electoral and Boundaries Commission has a vested interest in seeing that we are properly served in the constituencies, because we who are elected form and are part of the purest aspect of the democracy of this country. Once we are elected, Sir, we are not at the mercies of our respective political parties in so far as this is concerned. We are at the mercies of our constituents, and we, as representatives, have the right to articulate for them the highest level of representation that the country can afford.

I am not asking for anything exorbitant. I am not asking for anything that is beyond the capability of the country. I am even prepared to be criticised for asking it, but I am asking in their name that we be given a standard in the constituency where, from the time a person is born,

he or she becomes part of the electoral system, and from the time the person dies, he or she leaves the electoral system - no more and no less. What that brings with it, it seems -* to me, includes a single, maybe more than one but at least one, electoral officer in the constituency belonging to that constituency - St. Peter, St. Thomas, Christ Church West or SL Michael West.

Thank you very much.

Mr. D. A. O. SIMMONS (St. Thomas): Mr. Chairman, on the matter of separate registering officers for the individual constituencies, the Opposition would wish to endorse the comments made by the honourable Member, the Honourable Minister of Health,....

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sorry, he spoke as the representative for SL Michael West The Minister of Health can be deleted, Sir. The Prime Minister is laughing at that, as though to say that will come in due course.

Laughter.

*

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, the commission operated a system where each constituency had its own registering officer. Since the Democratic Labour Party has been in Government, we have had this change. We have seen the Government reverse itself on other matters. I know the commission is independent, but because it is independent does not derogate from the ability of the Minister responsible for electoral matters to have a word with the commission from time to time, as must happen, and to say to them that it is the feeling of the representatives that we had better revert to the old system. 5.00 p.m.

There are cost implications, I do not know how many more we need now, but it cannot be a lot of money. It probably would not be \$200 000, but it is certainly more ^ than Mr. Beckles will get when he comes in on November 23. Still, I think that everybody will perhaps feel more comfortable, and I do urge what the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Hon. B. M. Taitt) has said.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You wonder how we get the news over here?

I do feel that the registering officers should come from the constituencies where they would tend to know the constituents and the constituents would know them. It would be easier to carry out an ongoing exercise within the community.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I will respond very briefly to this debate, Mr. Chairman. Three points have been raised. One relates to the publication of a monthly list, or a list of changes to the registers. The view has been expressed that

this list should come in because Members are interested in seeing movements onto and off the existing registers, and that is a legitimate concern of any Member of Parliament. We cannot wait, or should not be made to wait, for a full year before seeing a new "register."

That is a viewpoint which I share, and it will be drawn to the attention of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission to make sure that some supplementary lists are published so that Members can keep an ongoing record of changes to the register, either by way of additions or deletions.

The second matter raised related to the location of registering centres within the constituencies. I believe that these centres should be located for the convenience of persons within the several constituencies. If any Member is finding difficulty with the present location, I believe the Electoral and Boundaries Commission should be invited to find a more suitable location for the centre. That is a matter which I believe we can generally agree to, and that will also be drawn to the attention of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission, which has responsibility for these matters.

The third one relates to the appointment of registering officers for each constituency. The principle that one registering officer should be appointed for each of the 27 constituencies is one which I support, and one which the Government supports. There are now 14 full time registering officers to serve 27 constituencies, which means that there has to be a doubling up in almost all cases.

The arguments advanced by the Member for St. Michael West (Hon. B. M. Taitt) cannot be controverted in principle. The points which he makes in debates in the House of Assembly are generally very sound, and that is yet another very sound point he has made. I wish to give this House the assurance that the Government will take every step to make funds available, or to recommend to this Chamber that funds be made available, for the purpose of providing an additional 13 registering officers so that each constituency would have its own registering officer.

Applause.

The question that Head 15 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1987-88, No. 15 -
\$272959

HEAD 14 - INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT DIVISION
- \$272 959

Hon. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Chairman, the amount of \$272959 is required as a subvention to LIAT. There has been an agreement between LIAT and the Caribbean Development Bank, and of course the participating Governments, that whenever the expenditure exceeds revenue, the deficit would be made good by the participating Governments in LIAT.

LIAT made money between the years 1980 and 1984. Since then, LIAT has been in a sustained loss position. In 1985, the losses sustained by LIAT amounted to EC \$1 851818. According to the formula for making good the deficit, Barbados will contribute 20 per cent of the losses.

For the year 1985, Barbados' contribution would be EC \$370364, which converts to Bds. \$272959.28. LIAT made a loss again in subsequent year, 1986, but that is not before us at this time. 5.10p.m.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS (St. Thomas): I have a couple of questions. In regard to the year 1985, does the Minister have any information with him to explain the loss of EC \$370 000? I am wondering whether this loss of 1985/86 is in any way attributable to debt servicing in respect of a loan which they borrowed. They bought some new planes, the Dash 8, there are some new planes that are filling in as they retire the Avro 728, and I am just wondering if our part of this is due to the fact that they have paid off for a loan. It is a different matter if the airline does not have that kind of loan liability and is making losses on its operation.

I do not know if the Minister has the answer. This is perhaps new to the Minister, because he is new to the job. Anyhow, you have some help, you have a Parliamentary Secretary.

I want to know if the Minister has found premises yet to carry his office. If he has, the general public would wish to know what is the headquarters of this new Ministry of International Transport and all the other bits and pieces that have been put together to create a substantive Ministry. I know he has left the Pine.

It is important, Sir, because people have letters to write and what not. We want to know if the Minister is temporarily residing at the Post Office. As the Minister responsible for Telecommunications, he should commandeer some space in that building, but he is such a nice person that he would probably allow himself to be pushed around a little further and end up down in Fontabelle, at the old Herbert House or something. I do not know, I am only speculating.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us get back to International Transport.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This is International Transport. I want to know, Sir, about International Transport. I am like Hall; I can't find my brother at all! I would like to know where the Minister is going to have his offices.

The third point on this - I am not going to be facetious any more - is that Barbados has had an excellent reputation in the region for paying its debts almost all on time. I think both Governments have been seriously committed to regionalism, and to those organisations to which we are asked to contribute, Barbados has never been in serious default. Once again, this Government is ready to pay up its share in respect of the debt on LIAT.

I think that the time has come when somebody should speak out and make it clear to the other Governments in the region that we expect them to pull their weight too. The Shipping Corporation is one, and I am sure the Attorney General would have come across the situation with the Council on Legal Education where, up to August 1985, some Governments have been in arrears by as much as \$4 million and would come to a meeting and tell you they do not know when they will pay that. Barbados keeps carrying the bag. There is also the Caribbean Meteorological Institute.

Sir, I want to encourage Ministers on the other side that when they go to regional conferences, they must get it across to the others that if we are committed to regionalism, we must operate in a situation of unanimity and reciprocity. If Barbados pulls its weight and pulls its pocket, we expect the others to do that I believe that on this the two parties are agreed, and the feeling should be conveyed in no uncertain terms to the other Governments, because, sooner or later, the people of Barbados are going to cry halt and get disgusted with a situation where we always seem to be implementing our share of the bargain.

I never forget the Nassau Agreement. The Government of Barbados at the time incurred a high degree of approbrium on the matter of the imposition of duty on beef. The decision had been taken in Nassau, all the Governments agreed to it, Barbados came back and implemented it, and I believe up to now there may be one or two that still have not implemented the agreement.

This issue of one's word and one's honour is important in the region. I know there are manoeuvres that can be taken in other areas to represent a tit-for-tat attitude. I am not advocating that. I am just saying that at this stage we need to drive it home to all the other Governments in the region that we expect them to pull their weight.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a comment on one point which I believe was made by the honourable Member for St. Thomas. If I got him incorrectly, he can correct me on the point he was making. I think he made the general point that Barbados has a very good record in making payments to regional bodies and he would wish that reputation to continue. There is no quarrel with that principle. I believe that in looking at the principle, he wondered why - I am not sure that he put it any stronger than that - this request is only now being met, or he merely made the point and left it at that.

I would like to say that the financial year of this particular operation, LIAT, ends in October of any year, so the financial year would have ended 31st October, 1985. The request actually came in to the Government, as far as I can glean from the records, in 1987, so it is not that we have been very tardy in this.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order: I think the Prime Minister has gone down the wrong line. I was not on that at all. The point I had asked is whether there was anything in the file to explain the loss of EC \$1.8 million and whether it was related to debt servicing in respect of the new aircraft, or in respect of pure operating loss. There really was no problem or query like that 5.20 p.m.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I thought there was a question about the actual servicing of the amounts owed to LIAT.

Thank you very much.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, to answer the Member's query is difficult I can find nothing on the file to communicate the reason why. It seems however, to coincide with the period when the company acquired new aircraft, and, therefore, the answer might be contained in his own question as to whether that might be the reason. But I really cannot at this moment give a specific reason.

There would have been a shareholders meeting a year ago, at the end of 1986, which I assume would have been looking at LIAT's position between 1985 and 1986. I said earlier that there would be a loss sustained by LIAT during the last financial year and that will be discussed at the upcoming shareholders meeting at the end of this week in St. Lucia. I assume that at the shareholders meeting, these matters will be discussed and we will know at that time. If at any time I am able to get some information, I will be happy to pass it on.

The question that Head 14 stand pott was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1987-88 -
NO. 16 - \$12 724

HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR-GENERAL-
\$12 724

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$12 724 is needed to supplement Object No. 12, Operating Expenses, and this is to cover the cost of leave passages for the Governor-General and his spouse.

We have already accepted the principle that such passages should be provided on a particular basis. This simply relates to the funds to pay for the consequential costs.

I beg to move that Head 10 stand part.

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

The question that Head 10 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1987-88

NO; 17 - \$45 142

Head 84 - Ministry of Transport, Works and Telecommunications - \$45 142.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN (St. Michael East): Mr. Chairman, this is a request of the Honourable House for the sum of \$45 142 to supplement the Capital Estimates of the Ministry of Transport and Works, Subhead 21, Object No. 26, Professional Services.

This request is as a result of an agreement, entered into between the Government of Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank for technical co-operation, which was signed on May 9, 1983. The nature of this technical co-operation was to provide for a feasibility study and final designs of a traffic management study.

Specifically, the objectives of the study included *inter alia* control and modification of traffic flows in Bridgetown and greater Bridgetown, the construction of a system of by-passes in greater Bridgetown and the consequential cost effectiveness of the implementation of the system of by-passes, as well as all other ancillary socio-economic benefits.

The study was contemplated to last for 12 months and to be conducted in two phases, the commencement of Phase 2 being contingent upon the approval of the draft report which would be submitted to the Government at the end of Phase 1.

The study commenced on January 7, 1985, and if the terms of the agreement between the Government and the bank, or the Government and the consultants, were adhered to it would have been concluded on January 6, 1986 the following year. The work was completed one calendar month later, and since delay is due to action on the part of the agents and/or servants of the government, of Barbados, the contract stipulated that certain penalties would be incurred.

Part of this sum of \$45 142 has to do with the delay that is a consequence of the extended review by the Government of Part 1. This should have been concluded by October 10, 1985, the draft report having been submitted to the Government on September 11 in the same year.

I indicated earlier that such permission was required before the consultants could commence the second part of their study. It was not granted until November 6, and as a result the Government has incurred a penalty of \$12 666.66 in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

The second money penalty was incurred as a result of the failure of the Government of Barbados to provide counterpart surveyor services at the time. These services were two weeks late, and this has cost the Government \$11475.

The third aspect of the penalty involved a breach of a commitment on the part of the Town and Country Planning Department to provide certain information in respect to employment in Bridgetown at an appropriate time. This is now costing the Government \$21 000. 5.30 p.m.

Those are the three reasons for the incurring of this obligation under the contract between the Government and the consultants.

I now ask that Head 84 stand part of this Resolution.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: I beg to second that.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE (St. Michael North East): Mr. Chairman, under this Head, I would like to draw to the Honourable Minister's attention a very dangerous situation which exists in Lewis Gap in Green Hill. Yesterday, a fire destroyed a dwelling house, and it highlighted the incapacity of that particular street to accommodate the fire engine, specifically the bridge over which the truck would have to pass, if that tragedy had struck beyond the bridge.

I remember, Sir, that I had asked a question on December 16.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Which year?

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE:.....1986, relating to the widening of that road and the repair of the said bridge. The Minister, in his response, said to me that the Minister was aware of the problem, "but that the Ministry considers road widening in Lewis Gap a low priority due to the low volume of vehicular traffic and the relatively few houses in the area." He said, "Other road repairs are now in progress on this road. Some drainage works have been effected to the water course under the bridge while improved concrete curbs have been reconstructed on both sides of the bridge."

I have to report, Sir, that only facial work was done in so far as the repairs of the bridge is concerned. The under-carriage of the bridge is still a problem, and I would like the Minister to give me the assurance that some priority treatment can be given to Lewis Gap, and not only to the matter relating to the widening, but to the same work which the Minister said had been carried out. I agree that some work has been carried out, but has been carried out in such a ridiculous manner that water still holds in the road that has just been resurfaced. I need to have some remedy to this bad state of repair.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Cognizance, Mr. Chairman, is taken of the lamentations of the honourable Member.

Laughter.

The question that Head 84 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

AMENDMENT TO EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEAD
15 - CABINET OFFICE

Item 1 (g) was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to amend the Explanatory Note to Head 15 - Cabinet Office - Subhead 4 - Central Emergency Relief Organisation, Object No. 12 - Operating Expenses.

Hon. L. E. SANDDFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is one which seeks to amend the Note to Head 15 - Cabinet Office - Subhead 4 - Central Emergency Relief Organisation, Object No. 12 - Operating Expenses. There is a problem which we are facing, Sir, and it is that the Central Emergency Relief Organisation should be in a position to come into operation speedily and immediately on an emergency, and it should be able not only directly out of its own resources to respond to the emergency situations, but also to be able to co-ordinate the work of the various Government departments and agencies which would have prime responsibility in carrying out remedial or repair work or damage control in their areas of responsibility. But we find, Sir, that from time to time, we may identify the problems, and what needs to be done, but then find that because certain inhibitions in terms of how our Notes may be written up, or it may be insufficiency of funds in a vote, or it may be a lack of manpower in the organisation itself between the dirability of getting action and the legal and other capacity actually to put that work in hand, there is some kind of gap. Therefore, this particular Resolution seeks to amend the Note to give the organisation the capacity to purchase supplies and equipment for disaster preparedness, emergency relief, and for assistance to other countries.

We had a situation in which tropical storm Emily, which passed out of Barbados on September 21, 1987, did some damage to houses, trees, utility poles and other things. At least 46 houses were affected. Damage assessment was carried out by the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board, and at least six houses owned by senior citizens were identified being in need of repairs. We are seeking now permission for that work to be carried out without any further delay.

I know that some representatives, including the Member for Christ Church West Central (Hon. M. A. King) has been very concerned about this matter. I have been very concerned, and we wish by this Resolution to ensure that our agencies of Government are able to respond, and respond quickly, as emergencies would merit. I, therefore, commend this particular Resolution to the House so that the Note to the Head, as indicated, may be amended.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I second that, Mr. Chairman.
5.40 p.m.

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

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of seven Resolutions in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, the Resolutions were read a first and second time and agreed to.

WITHDRAWAL OF BILL TO AMEND THE
LAND VALUATION ACT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Speaker, this Bill that is before the House, we do not propose to proceed with this particular Bill and I seek the leave of the House to withdraw it

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections then, the Minister may now withdraw it.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I move, Sir, that the Bill to amend the Land Valuation Act, Cap. 229A, be withdrawn.

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

The question that the Bill be withdrawn was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Speaker, it is proposed to bring a new Bill to amend the Ombudsman Act before this Honourable House. In the circumstances, we do not propose to proceed with the Bill on the Order Paper, and we are seeking the leave of the House to withdraw the Bill presently before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections, then the Minister can withdraw the Bill. There being no objections, the Minister has permission to withdraw the Bill.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill to amend the Ombudsman Act, 1986 be withdrawn.

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

The question that the Bill be withdrawn was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS ACT,
1987

Order No. 3 was called - To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend certain enactments.

Hon. B. M. TATTT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, this Bill has to do with the National Health Service Board, which was established by an Act of Parliament in 1984. The National Health Service Board Act was passed, and in 1985, the Minister then responsible for Finance, in his Budget Speech announced that the expense of the Barbados Drug Service would be met by the National Health Service Board, which would be reimbursed by the Consolidated Fund. He also announced at that time that the National Health Service Board would also meet the cost of certain health services which were considered ancillary to the general practice service to provide by the board.

Sir, the history of the National Health Service has engaged the attention of this House for a considerable amount of time, but the short point is that the Democratic Labour Party, during its presentation to the public in the period leading up to the last election, indicated that it would scrap the National Health Service, that it would embark on a new, expanded and different approach to the provision of health for the community, and, in fact, it would not be so different, because it would be returning to the position which it had taken prior to the Government of the day's own excursion into the National Health Scheme.

The National Health Scheme itself was fraught with a considerable amount of friction within the community. But the Government of the day did set up a board and appoint a director, and the scheme, as you will recall, embraced the National Drug Service. 5.50 p.m.

The Barbados Drug Service, which, incidentally, the professionals in the Ministry had always hoped would remain within the Ministry of Health as opposed to falling within the ambit of the Board of the National Health Scheme, was established early in the Eighties. It has functioned, and I must say that is functioning effectively.

The National Health Scheme itself fell on leaner times, and perhaps on stonier ground. The Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners never accepted the rationale and the principle embraced in the National Health Scheme, and there was tremendous contention between the Government and the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners. This is perhaps the best manifestation of the kind of difficulties surrounding the introduction of the National Health Scheme, and as a result, Sir, the scheme never really got off the ground.

I do not know that it is necessary to recount the history of all that went before, but suffice it to say that the Democratic Labour Party committed itself to the abolition of the National Health Scheme, as it was intended, or purported, to be. It committed itself to the delivery of health care centred in the concept of the polyclinic service at the primary health care level, the upgrading of the secondary and tertiary health provision institutions in the country, and a recognition that there should be free medical services and

facilities to persons in the community who were indigent, persons who were over 65, persons who were under the age of six, and persons who were suffering chronic diseases. This was adumbrated with the delivery of free drugs to persons in those categories that I just identified, and a general determination that the health care in the country would be provided in the framework of an atmosphere of co-operation between the health professionals and the Government.

Since assuming the reins of Government, the Government has, to the extent that is humanly possibly I think fulfilled its responsibility. It has maintained, enhanced and expanded the Drug Service. My colleague who was the first Minister of Health in this Administration had early consultations with the doctors, and as a result changed, I think it is fair to say, the atmosphere which existed between the doctors and the Government. We have also embarked on a programme of updating the facilities in the secondary and tertiary health institutions in the country.

There is a massive development programme going on at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where some \$14 million will be expended in a project that will see the addition of two blocks. In the process of the implementation of that project, it became obvious that the physical facilities for the Accident and Emergency Department were inadequate and, in fact, dangerous. A decision was therefore made to destroy, literally to push down, the old Accident and Emergency Department and to build a new Accident and Emergency Department attached to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as part of the project.

There are some eight polyclinics in Barbados falling within the polyclinic programme, which provides the main thrust of the primary health care of the Government. The service is designed to offer total primary health care, embracing both preventive and curative care. These eight polyclinics are placed in strategic locations to allow easy accessibility, and one of the phenomena which we have observed is that whereas these polyclinics were designed with certain defined catchment areas in view, in almost every one of them the actual attendances at the clinics have exceeded, by far, the anticipated numbers. Example: the Sir Winston Scott Polyclinic had been designed for a catchment area of 55 336 persons, and in 1986 the total number of attendances at the polyclinic was 81384. That is a pattern which extends throughout the polyclinics in St. Peter, St. Michael, Christ Church, St. Philip and St. George.

I do not wish, Mr. Speaker, unless it is absolutely necessary, to embark on a long historical statement concerning these projects, but I think honourable Members might wish to have some idea of what is being provided in our delivery of primary health care. The services provided at the polyclinics include maternal and child health services; family life development, including family planning; school health services, with the extension to those into the primary

schools; dental services, ophthalmic services, general practice services, control of sexually transmitted diseases, disease investigation and control, pharmacy services, laboratory services, domestic and environmental sanitation services, specialist clinics, domiciliary medical and nursing care, nutrition services and community-based rehabilitation services.

Mr. Speaker, we are not as proficient in each of these categories as I would wish, but it would be fair to say that we are proceeding towards a level of proficiency which can be acceptable to the community as a whole.

The polyclinics function, generally, between the hours of 8.15 in the morning and 4.30 in the afternoon on week days, and the Randall Phillips, the Black Rock, the Sir Winston Scott and the Maurice Byer polyclinics remain open until 8 p.m. on week days, and there is a service from 8.00 to 12.00 on Saturdays.

My colleague before me implemented, and I have consolidated, an appointments system which has tended to ease the pressure of persons going to the polyclinics, and this seems to be working fairly well. You would take into account, Sir, the numbers which I have quoted, 81 000, and similar numbers going to the various polyclinics. This was as a result of an on-going problem of overcrowding in the general practice clinics.

I would say that there is need for a polyclinic in the Horse Hill area of St. Joseph. There is a clinic there, not a polyclinic, and there is also a sub-clinic in the Belieplaine area. I am seeking to have a polyclinic established, either a full polyclinic or one similar to what exists at Four Roads, in St. John. It seems to me that we will have to update the St. John's polyclinic in due course.

By and large, we have had a higher call on the services than was anticipated. The walk-in General Practice Service has resulted in more and more time being taken up in clinical work, and the outreach services to the community, which form a substantial part of the polyclinic concept, has tended to diminish. It is now, in my view, at an unacceptable level. That means that follow-ups, such as post-natals, are not being carried out as satisfactorily as I would wish to see, and it is proposed that each Health Sister in the various areas would be given responsibility for a geographical area.

Mr. Speaker, I am in the process of visiting the various health institutions in the country and discussing the problems on an immediate basis with the people immediately involved. Policy changes, as necessary, will be made resulting from the consultations with the people who are actually involved and responsible for the carrying out of the programmes. I would say, however, that the concept of visits into the community, while it is a concept, has not been executed in as efficient and expeditious a manner as we would like. That is one of the areas where there is room

for improvement, and we are going to be working on it. 6.00 p.m.

The School Health Service is one in which again we -4 need to see further development, so as to ensure that the progress of children between the ages of 5 and 11 is monitored. I think that this will result in a tremendous saving for the country, because if we can do preventative medicine at younger stages, it will save us a significant cost in the long term.

We are trying to detect and treat some problems, early, such as learning disabilities, vision and hearing problems and some mental problems. It is being realised every day that there is need to include mental health services in polyclinic services. In this respect, we had a pilot study done at the Randall Phillips Polyclinic, and that study has confirmed that mental health services should be integrated in the polyclinic services, and the pilot study resulted in certain conclusions.

When we set out the study, what we wanted to do was, among other things, to define the nature and the size > of mental health problems in Barbados, to establish the pathways by which patients were referred and cases disposed of, to study the present delivery of mental health services within the context of that particular institution, and we wanted to determine the mix of personnel necessary to implement a broader-based, community mental health service.

I think the present thinking in the delivery of mental health care is that, generally speaking, a substantial part of health problems can be related to stress and other mental problems. In Barbados, when once you say "mental", there is a picture which is conjured up of a stark, raving, mad person. But, in truth, mental has come finally to mean what it has always meant, that persons become ill mentally similarly to how they become ill physically. We in Barbados have spent a lot of time dealing with the physical illnesses but not much time with the mental illnesses.

I do not wish to take this opportunity to go into a long discussion, but suffice it to say that resulting from a study which was carried out by the health professions in Barbados, all of them were Barbadian, we have added to the establishment in the polyclinic service consultant psychiatrists. Generally speaking, we are effecting a team approach to the delivery of health care at all levels, especially at the primary care level. The psychiatrists will form part of the health care delivery scheme and, hopefully, by the time we can report to the House that the system is working perfectly, everybody in Barbados will be familiar with the health team. That health team will see us providing a holistic or wholistic - we in America say "holistic" but the Englishmen like "wholistic" - delivery of health care for all the citizens.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of areas in which we will be able to become involved in discussion at another

time. I merely wanted to give a sketch of what is happening in the area, finally to come down to where we are on this particular piece of legislation.

We determined then that we would have all monies collected through the National Health Levy put into the Consolidated Fund. This is the one but last piece of legislation to end the National Health Service once and for all, and to allow funds collected under the aegis of the National Health Service legislation and the board to go into the Consolidated Fund. This Resolution therefore seeks, Mr. Speaker, to have amendments to legislation that would allow for the monies collected to go into the Consolidated Fund.

When this is completed, the National Health Service Board will be no more. I might say in passing that the period of appointment of the board has expired and we have not re-appointed a new board, because, based on this legislation, it will not be necessary for us to appoint a new board. I may ask the Attorney General in due course to bring legislation. When once the Attorney General's Chambers has determined how it is to be done, we will bring legislation to abolish the National Health Service Board.

What this seeks to do now is to ensure that contributions collected shall be paid into the Consolidated Fund. There are already being paid into the Fund under the aegis of the Budgetary Statement made at the last Budget. There is a sum, however, that was kept in a below-the-line account so that the bills for the Drug Service can be paid.

There was a problem relating to staffing in the Drug Service, but the Drug Service has been functioning effectively and efficiently. Up to now, the Drug Service has not suffered any of the disabilities usually associated with public corporations. The Drug Service is again one of those institutions which demonstrate that public institutions can be efficient. It has a large coterie of pharmacists. They are qualified, all of them, many of them are young, they have been trained at the Community College in Barbados in a special programme, and, by and large, they are performing effectively.

In one of the newspapers recently it was published that a public officer had announced that the Drug Service will now have to compete with other entities for funds. I want to state that that is not the perception of the Government, because the Drug Service falls almost within the category of statutory expenditure. There can be no question of its competing with other agencies of Government for funds. What we need to do is to ensure that the level of efficiency is maintained.

The commitment of the Government to provide drugs for those who need them, for persons under six, for persons over 65, for persons who are suffering from chronic diseases, is not a commitment that is going to form part of any competition with any other agencies for funds. Those

are commitments which had been made to the population of this country and which have to be fulfilled. The money is going into the Consolidated Fund because of a fundamental belief, which we have on this side of the House, that all monies collected, and, generally, monies collected from the population by way of taxation, by whichever style, should go into the Consolidated Fund. We are working towards a full realisation of that principle, and we are certainly doing it in relation to the Health Levy and the surrounding areas. 6.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there is one area related to drugs which is going to be in the public arena of debate in the not too distant future. It has to do with the treatment of the dreaded disease AIDS. We are in a situation where the knowledge and information which we have on AIDS is generally limited, and because of modern means of communication, all of us become instant experts in the field, because such knowledge as there is that is available, becomes available to all of us almost instantaneously.

It is, therefore, within our general knowledge that there are drugs now being experimented with that are related to the cure of AIDS. I think it is fair to say that there is no cure that has been identified. One drug has been identified, the claim for which is that it will control the spread of the disease, the result of which would be a longer period of existence for certain diseased persons. The price, Mr. Speaker, as of today is about Bds \$20 000 per person per year. That is the information which we have. I am saying it now so that honourable Members can be aware that this is a matter which the National Advisory Committee will have to grapple with, which the Government will have to grapple with, and which, ultimately, the community will have to grapple with, this whole question of how we are going to deal with the provision of drugs for those persons who, unfortunately, become afflicted with this disease.

Again, Sir, I do not intend to take this opportunity to expound on the disease, not that I could, because by expound, all I could do here would be to give a fuller indication of the knowledge that is available to us. I am merely saying that in the context of the Drug Service, which is the only vestige of the National Health Service that will be kept by this Government, the drug will form part of our discussion. We will have to inform ourselves and we will have to make decisions about it. There are other drugs which are on the verge of announcement, from what one hears, but one would be better off not speaking about those until they become available.

Mr. Speaker, I have attempted to be as full as possible in the introduction of this rather innocuously worded Resolution - it is called the Miscellaneous Amendments Act 1987 - because I wish to assure the honourable Members in the House of a full disclosure policy in so far as the

National Health Service, the Barbados Drug Service, and the delivery of health care in Barbados is concerned.

Having said it to the Press, I think it is fair to say to you, Sir, and to the House, that there are areas of expenditure which we will have to engage in in Barbados during the next few years if we are to raise the standard of the delivery of health care to the levels which this Government, and, indeed, the people of Barbados, have a right to expect. We have committed ourselves to that, and over the years we are going to be dealing with those matters. No doubt, when we come to do the Estimates, we will be able to speak in more detail. Certainly the \$14 million being spent at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should provide us* at the end of the day, with a modern Accident and Emergency Department, a modern Burns Unit and with provision for doctors to be able to rest and sleep on the premises in reasonable surroundings so that there will be no excuses for our not having available doctors and other health professionals at the right level all through the year.

We are replacing the Casualty with an Accident and Emergency Department. The Casualty has been a problem in Barbados from time immemorial. It continues to be a problem, and I know that, generally speaking, the staff in the Casualty is a harassed and hard-pressed staff. I know that they have difficulties in the context of the cultural approaches of people in Barbados to this area. But I also wish to say that the Government will not, under any circumstances, resile from its responsibility to the population in regard to emergency care. I am not satisfied, and will never be satisfied, that a person who goes to the Casualty who has to wait eight, nine, ten or 15 hours is being well served. We have to find, and most find, a solution to that problem.

I have been on a recent trip to a high quality Accident and Emergency Department at a hospital in Washington, and the doctors there, who form part of a trauma team, indicated that they considered four hours to be the maximum period that an Emergency Department should keep the walk-in patients. If you add your cultural considerations to it, you might move that a little beyond four hours, but I think that when you start getting into the next day, we are running into areas that are not acceptable.

It will be the responsibility of the Government to examine this issue once again, because all Governments and all Administrations examine this issue, in the context of providing the requisite number of hands to satisfy the requirements. I want to say that it is not true that the polyclinics are not accepting people. One can hear from the statistics that 81000 people in 1986 going to one polyclinic cannot be any indication that the polyclinics are not accepting people. But, Sir, there was one consultant in the Casualty. We have now provided two consultants in the Casualty. I am not saying by any stretch of the imagination

we have solved the staffing problem, but we are on the way to solving that problem.

I have asked the Head of the Accident and Emergency Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to come and meet with me because I wish to ensure that the doctors at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Director and the Minister are singing the same tune, hearing the same voices and rejoicing together in harmony. I have no intention of having a *contretemps* or confrontation between the doctors and the Ministry. I would not, however, wish anybody to misunderstand the courtesy in the Ministry to be any form of weakness. We have a responsibility, and I take the responsibility for the errors and the ills of the entire health delivery system in this House, because that is my responsibility, but I expect everybody else in the health delivery team to share in the responsibility that we have to the people of this country. In the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, as you know so well, it is only the people who make us what we are, and if we can deliver the service we promise them, even 80 per cent of those services, we will be doing > them and us a service of which we can be proud. 6.20 p.m.

I think, generally, so far as I have found out, that the health care delivery in Barbados still ranks with, and is equal to, the best anywhere in this region. Certainly in this hemisphere we have nothing to be ashamed of. Any shame we have would be that it is taking us too long to move from the 19th century into the 21st century so far as the delivery of psychiatric and geriatric care is concerned. That is why at the moment, we have two projects in the Ministry which we are working on, and on which I have spoken outside of this House, where we are seeking to bring a high level of care to the geriatrics and to the psychiatrics in this country.

As the Prime Minister said recently on his humanitarian visit to the hospital, I think last Sunday, we are aiming to make the Geriatric Hospital the best of its kind in the region. We may have to do this on a step-by-step basis. We are spending, I think, nearly \$2 million this year, and we will put that much more into the Estimates next year. We are going to replace all of the floors in the Geriatric Hospital. They have become urine soaked, they have become, in many ways, unacceptable.

We still have attitudinal problems. Indeed, if one could identify a single problem throughout the health care delivery system, it would be one of attitude. We have a massive job on our hands as a community to change the attitude of persons in this community one to another. It is not an easy task, it has already been embarked on, and I have no doubt that we will eventually succeed, but it is an institutional bias which was created in the days of the concept of "us" and "them", where the poor man at the gate used to espy the rich man in the castle.

In those circumstances, Sir, it is sometimes difficult to get the people who have the responsibility now as the middle corps to recognise that the poor poor are still part of our community and part of our race. That is the attitudinal problem which we have to address with more intensity than perhaps we have done in the past. The matter is engaging the attention of the Ministry. It will require our assistance from not only the experts in the Ministry, but the experts from other aspects and parts of the Government, as well as people who are not in the Government.

With that, Sir, I hope the House would bear with the fact that I took perhaps longer than the size of these amendments suggests I should, but I wanted to ensure that I took this opportunity to brief the House on why we have come to ask for the passage of this Bill.

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

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: I beg to second that

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS (St. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, I am no longer frightened, like the doctors, by the silence that was coming out of Jemmotts Lane. I am glad that the Minister has found his voice in the House to let us know what has been going on from his perspective in the Ministry since he has assumed responsibility for it. Obviously, one has been reading in the last three weeks a number and different statements from the Minister, and we welcome this opportunity for him to take us across the table and tell us what is happening.

I was a little bit confused at points of the Minister's excellent presentation - I must say that - of what he found, and, to some extent, where he is going. I was particularly confused by an overuse of the word "we" in relation to the projects, programmes and concepts that have been going on in the Ministry of Health. I am not sure when he was saying "we", whether he meant "we" the Barbadians, or "we" the Democratic Labour Party. For the sake of clarification, I wish to set the record straight with a few matters that were perhaps blurred by the use of "we". The impression may have been given at points that particular programmes were those of the Democratic Labour Party, and since this is the first time we are really having a proper and full scale debate on health, I think it is but right that, quickly, we can deal with some of these matters.

As we understand it, the National Health Service, after the passage of this Bill in the Senate, is as good as dead, but an aspect of the National Health Service, for which the Barbados Labour Party was responsible, will continue in the form of the National Drug Service. I understand that to mean that the National Drug Service, which will be continued, will continue as it has operated under the Barbados Labour Party, to provide free drugs for those who suffer from high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes - chronic diseases - the indigent, those over 65 and those under six.

So to that extent, as the recent calypso goes, no change, just a continuation. So that "we" means an amalgamation of we, the BLP and the DLP, doing the same thing for the people of Barbados in terms of the provision of health care.

The next thing of moment in the Minister's speech relates to the extensions of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I presume that the extensions which were planned for, and started, during the Administration of the Barbados Labour Party are continuing without any major alterations. I have some specific questions to ask at the end, but I want to set the parameters. We started those \$14 million extensions as the Barbados Labour Party, and the DLP, using the word "we" now, are continuing. 6.30 p.m.

I do not believe there have been any new polyclinics built under the present Government. I am grateful to hear the Minister say that they have been strategically placed and no fault can be found with the geographical distribution of those polyclinics.

Sir, I am not too clear, and I would wish the Minister in his reply to explain, about the pilot study at the Randall Phillips Polyclinic which confirm that the mental health services should be integrated with the other health services in the polyclinics. I do not think that he developed that too clearly. The honourable Member only indicated that there are consultant psychiatrists in the polyclinics and they are operating in a team situation.

Sir, I am a little disturbed that, as the Minister apparently advising us of a continuation of the polyclinic service, and indeed a refinement and rationalisation in some areas, doctors at the polyclinics are being sent home.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Two, to my certain knowledge. One was consulted, I do not want to go into the details because we may yet end up in court, I do not know.

People have been given what has been called "terminal pay." I do not know the reason, but since there is no Health Service Board to fire them, I would like to know who has been doing the firing.

The system of appointments that is operated at the polyclinics, even though the Minister seems satisfied to carry on the work of his colleague who instituted the system of appointments, is creating some dissatisfaction. It is a little difficult to make an appointment about sickness or illness. I do not know that I am going to be sick tomorrow, and the criticism that has been reaching the Opposition is that the public is not happy with the system of making appointments, and the consequence of this is that they will not make appointments regularly, and they prefer to go to the Casualty instead.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You say you are doing something about the problem at the Casualty. It is a difficult problem and we are going to give you time to see if you can straighten that out. But the feedback which we have been having in relation to the appointments system at the polyclinics is not supportive of the Minister's confidence.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have no doubt at all, and I am willing to stand here every week and say that every single thing the Government is doing is absolutely right; they have not done anything wrong, they will not do anything wrong, they cannot, indeed, do anything wrong.

The Minister has not explained to the House, in relation to drugs, that there has been a newspaper report, arising out of the report of a visit that he made to the hospital, I believe, a couple of weeks ago, suggesting that Government is encouraging the recycling of drugs. I wish to have an explanation from the Minister as to whether he was quoted correctly when the newspaper reported that if you do not use all your drugs, you can bring them back and they will be sent out again.

I believe that such a system of recycling - if I have misquoted, do not let me go any further - is fraught with very great dangers. We all know that drugs have an expiry date, and perhaps the reason for an expiry date is to warn the ultimate consumer that after that date, the efficacy or potency of the drugs may not be of the required and acceptable level to work efficaciously on the particular patient. I know very little about medicine and so on, but I believe it could not be in the best interest of the general public of Barbados, especially those who have to rely on drugs to have drugs recycled, apart from the fact of contamination. You do not know where somebody stores his drugs.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I can only speculate. There has been a statement by the Minister, it has not been sufficiently developed to make it acceptable, and perhaps the Minister will be in a position to tell us what exactly he meant I draw that to his attention.

When the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, I think a CAT scan machine was bought and installed at the hospital to limit the number of Barbadians who would have to go abroad to use that type of facility. I am advised that this machine is not working, has not been working for a considerable time, and that Government has refused to appoint a specialist who can operate the machine. I wish to know from the Minister if the machine is working, why has it not been working, if he intends to make it work, and if he intends to appoint the necessary person to get it working.

The Minister perhaps could also tell us whether it is a fact that a garage not far from here has been refusing to supply the Ambulance Service with parts for vehicles unless cash is brought to the garage.

In regard to the Psychiatric Hospital, Sir, I read of the Minister's plans to build a new psychiatric hospital in four years or something like that. I am sure that the Minister will have found in the Ministry a study that was commissioned by the Barbados Labour Party for the redevelopment of the Psychiatric Hospital, done by experts from PAHO. I am sure that that is the same study that has now informed the Minister's planning. If I am wrong, the Minister can tell me that I am wrong, that he has done his own study in the last two months and has come up with a new blueprint. I wish him to know that at some considerable expense, the Barbados Labour Party incurred the wrath of the former Prime Minister Barrow, then in Opposition, because a loan was obtained by the previous Government to carry out the study for psychiatric hospital redevelopment. Mr. Barrow said that we spent too much money, we were too interested in borrowing money, and it was a waste of money to borrow money to carry out a study to develop the Psychiatric Hospital.

I believe that a recommendation of that study was that the Psychiatric Hospital and the Geriatric Hospital should be combined in some form or fashion. It was before my time in Cabinet, but I remember seeing some document about it 6.40 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It might be in relation to the Randall Phillips Polyclinic.

I think all Barbadians will be pleased tonight to hear that the Minister thinks that he is on the way to solving the staffing problems at the Casualty. If, that, plus the new development that is going on there, relieves the problems that existed at the Casualty from as long as we had the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, at least this Minister would have brought substantial benefit to the people of Barbados. It is a very difficult problem, and the Opposition is in great sympathy with the Minister on this one, and we offer him our very best wishes in trying to get it solved. I think it is a very difficult problem.

Those are the only points that we wish to raise at this stage. It has been a very intense day so far, and we are only directing attention to particular areas of disquiet as they have been drawn to our attention.

It is regrettable that the National Health Service will not be continued in any form or fashion. We trust that now that the way is made clear for the health levies of the workers to be paid into the Consolidated Fund, the quality of service which will be dispensed on their behalf through the polyclinics and at the QEHS will not in any way suffer.

I believe the point that was being alluded to by the person who, as a civil servant, made a comment two or three weeks ago about the competition for funds, was that if there is no separation of accounts, the Health Levy will go into the big pot of the Consolidated Fund and find itself, theoretically, used to finance all things, not specifically health matters. This is a philosophical divide between the two parties, and time will tell which will be the more preferable and sensible arrangement. If there is a diminution in the quality of health care delivered to the people of Barbados, the Government can be assured today that the Opposition will not limit its criticisms to Parliament, but we will take to the streets in public meetings.

(*Aside:* Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Not again, David.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We will continue to take the night dew to let the public know

(*Aside:* Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: You must be a soldier, you like marching.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: that the money is being mixed up in the pot and they are not getting the quality of service that they deserve. That is a word of warning to the wise.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS (St. James South): Mr. Speaker, I want to make one or two brief comments on what the last speaker said. To begin with the diminution of services, it is impossible for the Democratic Labour Party to lower the standard of service. When I was in the Ministry of Health, we discovered that the Minister before me was introducing nurses into the polyclinic system who had no nursing training at all. I hope you understand what I am saying. There were people who were called nurses and were unqualified to do nursing jobs. We cannot get lower than that!

The appointment system is more critical, and I think it has to do with the history of the polyclinics. I think the Member, Mr. Speaker, must have known how they were started. Coming close to elections, the then Minister decided that he wanted the system started. He got on the telephone and called around some people and said they were working the next morning. The doctors who went did not even know if they had a contract; they had no policy, no system. At one time, as he believes, it was for people over 65, under six and those with chronic diseases. The then Minister decided that whosoever will may come. Even if you came off a tourist boat and you wanted to go to the polyclinic, you could have gone whether you were a Barbadian or non-Barbadian.

When we took over the Government, obviously the persons working in the polyclinic system complained. The nurses, doctors, the pharmacists sat down with BAMP and the Ministry and devised a system, and one of the planks was the appointment system. One of the main reasons for the appointment system was that if you did not have the

appointment system, sometimes you could see three or four different doctors; you go now and see doctor A, you go back, you see doctor B, and so on. The appointment system eliminated that.

If you are a diabetic, as with a private doctor, you phone up and make an appointment to go to the polyclinic. If it is an emergency you can walk in at any time. Those over 65, with chronic diseases and under six years of age can walk in and see a doctor immediately. There is no necessity for an appointment system for them, on the first occasion, but thereafter, in order to have a follow up visit, it is important that you see the same medical person who has your history. It is better that way.

We do not want people to believe that it is a welfare system either. If you can walk in and you can see somebody different each time, you think it is something that is giving away. We want to get away from that type of system. It is a social policy which we are developing.

There were some people who were abusing the system. They would go on the beach and relax for the whole day, and then walk in 15 minutes before the polyclinic closed to see a doctor. The appointment system reduced that as well. Some people also went in if they had a little cut on their hand, just because it was free. We had a full study of the operations of the polyclinics, and this is what the personnel there came up with.

I thought I would explain that, Mr. Speaker, so as to allay any fears which my friend might have had.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to my colleague, the honourable Member for St. James South (Hon. N. K. Simmons) and the Minister responsible for Employment, for the contribution he has made. As you know, Sir, he was the first Minister of Health in this dispensation, and he set in motion a number of the health programmes which are continuing. The position with the appointment system is as he said.

I want to go very definitively to a question which the honourable Member for St. Thomas raised, because it is important. He asked, on the basis of the newspaper report, if we were practising recycling drugs. I think it is proper and important that he should ask that question, and I am glad for the opportunity to say that it is one of the strangest things that have ever happened to me in public life. 6.50 p.m.

I called one of the editors of the *Nation* newspaper and drew to their attention that it was a paragraph imported completely from out in left field that had nothing whatsoever to do with anything that I had said. What the reporter did was to report what I said and then put in the paragraph saying "he did not say", and went on to allude to the recycling of drugs. I have never seen anything like it, Mr. Speaker.

The point that was being made, in a speech at a seminar given by the Drug Service, was that elderly persons, especially, were in the habit of retaining drugs, not completing the cycle and going back for more, and that it would be a good policy for the GPs, from time to time, to ask their patients and the ones in the polyclinics to bring in any drugs they may have at home so one can see to what extent they were finishing their cycles, that it would reduce the cost, if persons would take out their full cycle of drugs rather than store them. I was making the point that old people tend to store their drugs and go back for more. As a matter of fact, I do not think that my father would be upset if I say that only last night I had an argument with my own father who, is a diabetic and with an amputation, for whom I had got drugs with his prescription that morning, and his nephew had got the prescription the same morning. I was making the point that it costs the country money for him to get two sets of drugs, so I was going to take one and keep it at my house until he had finished the other one. Only last night I was telling that to my own father, and that was the point I was trying to make. I do not know what stroke of genius led the reporter to that particular position, but he implemented a paragraph saying what I had not said. I will say no more than that.

I want to assure the honourable Member that the question of recycling drugs did not, and does not, arise. It was not contemplated, and it is out of the question.

I appreciate the opportunity which the honourable Member provided to answer that. Mind you, what I have just said would not appear in the newspapers. It will not appear in the *Nation*.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I spoke to one of the editors, and I am waiting to see how long it will take for them to correct that error which they made.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the issue of "we". The honourable Member said he was a bit bemused about my use of the term "we", and I want to say clearly for him that I use it at all levels. When I am speaking, however, about the Ministry of Health, I tend to think of the delivery of health care in the team concept which we are advocating, and I have gotten into the habit of saying "we", because I consider that the Minister, Permanent Secretary, the officials in the Ministry, the doctors, maids, the ward clerks and the whole category of persons constitute one health care delivery team. So when I say "we", in the first instance, invariably, I mean all of us who are providing this health care. That is the total "we".

I also wish to say this that when I say "we" I do include all that has gone before me.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I will go back to that.

I consider that especially in the field of health, and to a lesser extent, or perhaps to a greater extent, education and law, in the delivery of health care there cannot be any point of separation from one kind of health policy to another. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital doctors, in spite of what BAMP has stated in their editorials from time to time, do not go from delivering one kind of medicine on one morning and another kind of medicine the next day after an election -at least, I would hope not. The matron of the hospital does not change because there is an election, and the nurses at the hospitals continue their excellent care, no matter what the circumstances.

It would be improper for me, or any Minister of Health, therefore, to give the impression that the sun started rising with him, or that the day after he became the Minister of Health was the creation of all that was good and wonderful. When I said "we", I was very careful to give the start of the Barbados Drug Service to the Barbados Labour Party, in the same way I was careful to point out that the National Health Service was a still-born. If abortion could be retroactive, both the Minister and the National Health Service would have fallen into the high priority category for retroactive abortion. It would have been as simple as that.

The National Health Service was born out of an idea, but it soon turned into a vendetta, and the files are complete with the Minister's high-handedness in trying to implement this system, in spite of the recommendation of his own technical people, of the doctors themselves and a host of other people, including, I suspect, some of his political followers. Anytime a Minister can call a whole category of persons who are doctors vagabonds, that is evidence that the Minister is unfit to hold the particular portfolio, or, indeed, any portfolio. My position on that has been so clearly documented, both inside and outside of the House, that I would not wish to contaminate the presentation about our health policies by frequent, or any, references to that particular Minister, or that particular time, unless I am provoked or induced by comments such as those which came from the honourable Member for St. Thomas. I will merely say that anyone who wishes to get a full complete and accurate chronicle of the times of the Barbados Labour Party during the period referred to, need only refer to the litany by the Permanent Secretary of the day, when he became liberated through his retirement to the point where he could speak of his experience under the hand of that particular Minister. His letter to the *Advocate* and *Nation* will form an interesting part of the public administration of this country, and I would not wish to add or subtract from it. Let he who rests in peace, rest in peace. 7.00 p.m.

So far as the alterations to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital project are concerned - I am sorry the honourable

Member is not in his place - there has been substantial alterations to the project as conceived by the Barbados Labour Party. There had to be substantial changes. As a matter of fact, it may be said that the project in its present form is a substantially different project from that which was envisaged by the Barbados Labour Party, but I do not wish to get into niggling differentiations between then and now. Suffice it to say that over the period when the concept of upgrading the Queen Elizabeth Hospital came to discussion at the Cabinet during the Barbados Labour Party's time and the time of implementation, which is now, there have been substantial changes, both in the plan and in the concept of execution. For example, the replacement of the Casualty did not form part of that project, that arose out of the result. When the project was being implemented, the Casualty was found to be in a dangerous state and the decision was made by this Administration to simply push it down and build a new one. That is a part of the project that was not there.

Only on Sunday, for example, a team would have left here - a team of two doctors, four nurses and physiotherapists, etc. - who have gone off to training at a hospital in Boston. The Hospital Director is himself on a short term fellowship. In terms of refurbishing not only physically, but intellectually and psychologically and at the level of scholarship, full teams have been going out between last year and this year, and will be going out into 1988, so that by the time the project is completed, we will have all of the persons who are going to be functioning in the blocks fully trained with the new equipment

There have been changes in approaches to the equipment. For example, there are going to be new operating theatres completely, whereas before it was envisaged that we would simply refurbish one. Indeed, all of the operating theatres at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be refurbished.

In that respect let me make a comment, because I have heard little bubblings about some inconvenience of persons in the eye ward. When the hospital was built, it was built with asbestos roofs in many places. There is an asbestos roof on the kitchen and there was one in the Casualty, and, generally speaking, we have asbestos roofs throughout Barbados. It is only a matter of time before we eliminate them altogether. Wherever possible, we are taking the opportunity to remove them, because I am convinced that they are a health hazard. We must not have asbestos roofs in Barbados eventually.

Once we are doing refurbishing work, we have to get specialist people to remove the roofs, because the removal of asbestos roofs is now a specialist occupation, and in the course of knocking down the Casualty and removing the roof, it became necessary to close one of the eye wards and other wards which suffered from a higher dust problem than was anticipated. Because of the ophthalmic nature of the illnesses persons would have, the need for dust control would be much higher, so there is only one operating theatre

that has been functional for ophthalmology and ophthalmological operations. That means that some persons have had to have their operations delayed.

In the course of improving the hospital we have inconvenienced some people, and I will apologize on behalf of the whole country for any inconveniences which are being caused as a result of that, but they cannot be helped if we are to eventually produce the standard and level which we consider to be reasonable. Still there are some people of not so good will who seem to feel that they ought to use the fact that we have had to reschedule some operations in a particular way. I say, Mr. Speaker, that those persons do not have the goodwill of Barbados at heart I will go no further.

The CAT scan has not, as the honourable Member seemed to have been told, been out of commission for some considerable time. Rats at the hospital bit through the outer housing of one of the cables that operate the CAT scan machine, and as a result caused it to be slightly off, and the machine became inoperable. It was out of operation for one week and five days, as I understand it, but I am going to be generous and say two weeks.

The person who can repair it has to come from Puerto Rico as part of the contract of service connected with the CAT scan, so there can be no question of the Government failing to appoint anybody who has responsibility for the CAT scan machine. I am saying categorically, and I wish the honourable Member to be aware of it, that that is not true, it cannot be true. All of the persons who are working with the CAT scan machine, including the doctor, who is a specialist and is the specialist in the use of the CAT scan machine, are in place.

If it is meant that persons in the hospital are in temporary posts as opposed to permanent posts, that is a function and a feature of the administrative system which we have in this country where persons are appointed to temporary posts by the Establishments Division first and then the posts are confirmed as permanent posts. This is not a function or a feature that began yesterday, it has been going on from time immemorial, but in so far as the actual hands that run the CAT scan machine, those persons are in place. I can say that categorically, because I saw them and spoke to them.

I hope the Barbados Labour Party does not attempt to claim any credit for these kinds of machines. The CAT scan machine was a product of an anonymous gift from a person in London, who gave a donation of \$100 000 on condition that the name not be revealed. It was not the Barbados Labour Party in Barbados or anywhere, it was a donor in London who gave a gift of \$100 000 to get the CAT scan machine. What happened is that the gift was sent via the legal adviser to the person, who happens to be a member of the Barbados Labour Party. I will not reveal

who the person is, because I think that I have to honour the conditions of the gift.

On the question of the terminal pay for persons in the polyclinic service, the polyclinic service for the general practitioner is a contractual service, and the contracts are with the Ministry of Health, they are not with the National Health Service Board. All of the contractual officers have their contracts with the Ministry of Health and they have to perform the contracts well, like anybody else, and if a contract has not been performed well, the Ministry of Health will reserve the right of any contractor not to renew a contract, a perfectly legitimate right.

There is a person in Barbados who was inadvertently told - in fact, he was not told himself, his wife was told - that his contract had not been renewed. That is true in the sense that a new contract has not been signed, and the system of administration we have is that if a new contract has not been signed, the contractual officer would not normally be paid even though he might be continuing to work. That misunderstanding was coupled with another problem in that the said officer already holds a contract with the Government, so the Ministry of Health told that officer that it discovered that he holds two contracts with the Government from which he would be receiving two salaries under the services of the Crown, which is contrary to the law and/or the custom of this country, and asked him to make a decision about which of them he would like to continue. 7.10p.m.

If that person has sought advice from the honourable Member for St. Thomas in his capacity as a legal adviser, then the honourable Member should stick to advising him legally and not seek to intersperse the two matters, for fear that he might confuse himself and, subsequently, his client. We hold no brief for anybody who works for us on contract, whether that person is from Barbados, Timbuctu or Japan. What we ask of the person is that they carry out the contract. If the contract is performed well in the first instance, we will renew it in the second, and if it is not performed well, we will exercise our right on your behalf, because we wish that when you go to the polyclinics for the various services, you are treated competently and efficiently.

The strategically-placed polyclinics is not a matter that should have excited any political comment, so I will not allow it to excite any on this side. I did say, however, that we will put new ones at Horse Hill and in Belleplaine. I think the Glebe might have been completed during our time rather than your time, but it does not matter, for the reason that I said earlier, the continuation of the service is important.

What is different about our practice in the polyclinics is the mental health aspect, which the honourable Member said he was not too sure of.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: That is because the contract had ended. It is not that he is not going to get his money. In fact, arrangements have been made for him to get his full money, but his wife and the person who spoke were agents.

A pilot study to implement the mental health services into the polyclinic was carried out at the Randall Phillips Polyclinic. It was started on June 16, 1986. Do you think we can claim that it happened under the Democratic Labour Party? Do you think if it began on June 16, 1986, it would be fair to say that we were in office then?

The study went on and it was carried on by Dr. Pat Bannister and some other persons, and it really was based on the recognition that the present mental health care service is not in keeping with advancement in the field of mental health, and that we should continue to attempt to replace the traditional custodial approaches to mental health with preventative and follow up care within the community setting. It was to test the efficacy of the concept that a broader-based spectrum of community based mental health services and the polyclinic services are desirable.

We checked that out, and I am not going to spend a lot of time going through the details, but they identified a definitive need for the integration of mental health services at the primary health care level. It also highlighted that not one category of professionals is able to provide for the social, physical and psycho-social needs of the patients in the community, and given the fact that over 60 per cent of the clients were never treated for mental health before the service, this was also shown to be preventive in nature. In other words, the study demonstrated that persons who had never been to a mental hospital, who had never had any kind of declared or any mental health problem, who came to the polyclinic, fell into the category of persons who could be deemed to have a mental or socio-mental problem, stress related, etcetera. That is what I meant when I said that we are carrying it into the polyclinics. The psychiatrists will be attached to the Ministry under the aegis of the Psychiatric Hospital, but will tend to do the practice out in the polyclinics, on an appointments basis, and also as advisers and trainers to the public health nurses and other health care deliverers.

I do not know that there was any study that agreed that the psychiatric and geriatric patients should be joined together. I think there was a confusion there. There was no such study.

I promise that I will investigate the information supplied by the honourable Member that there is a garage which is refusing to supply the Ambulance Department with parts unless they have the money. I know of no such thing and, therefore, can only say that I will seek to find out if it is so. I would find it rather strange, however, that the ambulances would be at the mercy of any particular garage

to get parts, or that if they went to a garage that did not supply the parts the first time, they would even return there. I would hope that that is not a matter that we would have to spend a lot of time on.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have answered all of the serious questions which have been asked, except to say that the concept of the polyclinic is not a concept which the Barbados Labour Party has a right to claim. The name "polyclinic" is what they have a right to claim. The multi-purpose clinic was designed during the time of the Democratic Labour Party, and the first one, at Black Rock, was established during the Democratic Labour Party's time.

I am being reminded that the word "polyclinic" was recommended when we were looking at "multi-purpose". It was rejected by the now Prime Minister, who was then Minister of Health, and resubstituted multi-purpose clinics. It is interesting that if we had had "multi-purpose" a number of the difficulties which we are having now in the integration of the services might have been easier, because "poly" is a word that might be familiar to those who have been so fortunate as to be exposed to Greek or the Greek classics, but "multi" is a word that has been heard sufficiently in the body politic that it means something. However, so that I would not contribute to any polyglot of utterances which, collectively, might be deemed fatuous, as the honourable Member earlier had accused me, I am not going to spend any more time on that.

I would merely say finally that the Psychiatric Hospital idea is one which we discussed when we were going into the 1981 elections and when we were going into the 1976 elections. We discussed the need for a new hospital, and all my colleagues on this side will tell you that I have long said that the real estate at Jenkins could bring the country a substantial housing development stock, and it would be an ideal place for a modern complex for the development of Barbados in the 21st century.

That does not negate the fact that I have heard Mr. L. B. Brathwaite as Minister saying he wanted a new hospital. I am not going to deny that honourable Members in this House before my time have said that a new psychiatric hospital is desirable. That is the thinking, and it has been the thinking for well nigh 20 years. 7.20 p.m.

What I would say is that the time is now that we in this Administration, informed by the prognostications and other perambulations that had gone in the previous period, must now bite the bullet and deal with this issue of a new hospital. I recognise that we do not have the money and, therefore, we are outside in the community. Whenever I leave this country to go overseas, and even here in the region, we are pursuing a very pervasive, and, I hope, persuasive, course of getting the funds to put this hospital on track.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words I think I will stop and allow my colleagues and myself to go to another place where we can discuss these matters in finer detail.

I am grateful to honourable Members, in particular the two honourable Members who spoke, for giving me the opportunity to speak a little bit on the health policies that we are following and hope to follow in the immediate future.

Thank you, Sir.

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

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

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1-3 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. B. M. TAITT, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES (St Michael North): Mr. Speaker, I am about to move the adjournment of this House. Against the background of last week's aborted meeting, we are pleased that we were able to conduct business uninterrupted, for any reason whatsoever, and in particular due to any malfunctioning of our public address system.

We have taken steps to notify our consultants from overseas as well as contractors of the problem. Members may have seen someone here today who is a consultant to the project, who agreed to come. The contractor is calling for some pay to come to correct the problem, which the Project Office, I am told, has refused to give.

It seems as though we are functioning better. We are even getting a better sound and, in general, a reception of Members' contributions both in this Chamber and wherever it is monitored outside this Chamber. I am told that the consultant himself did install an Electro Voice Graphic Equalizer in the system which has helped the system considerably.

I thought I should make this report, because there were a lot of comments after last week's aborted meeting. The system is still not perfect, we are still having problems,

but I think, Sir, that we will probably see from here on a better functioning of our public address system.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until November 10, 1987 at 12.00 noon.

Hon. B. M. TATTT: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that this sitting do now adjourn until Tuesday, November 10, 1987, at 12.00o'clock noon, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.

7.28 p.m.

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