THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 - 91

Tuesday, November 10, 1987.

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

PRESENT

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. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B., (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. B. M. TAnT, 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., Ch.B., 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. 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.B.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P.

Mr. E. BOURNE

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS, M.D.

Mr. C. A. NEBLETT, B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

Mr. C. L. TROTMAN, M.A.

Mr. P. J. M. MILLER

Mr. R. P. BYER, LL.B., L.E.C.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B.

Prayers were led by Fr. Ivan Harewood.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, November 3,1987.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, Sir, that the Minutes be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received the following:

The Accounts and Statements for the month of September, 1987 prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Marketing Corporation for the year ended 31st March, 1986.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I give notice of the following:

A Resolution to approve the granting to the Anglican Diocese of Barbados a parcel of land situated at Baxters, St. Andrew.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 74, asked by the honourable Member for St. Thomas, is ready.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No.

60, asked by the honourable Member for Christ Church East, is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am moving the suspension of Standing Orders, 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44.

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

The question that the several Standing Orders be suspended 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.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1987-88, No. 18 - $124500

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE - $124 500

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, as the Addendum to this Resolution states, supplementary provision in the sum of $124 500 is required under Head 15 - Cabinet Office, Subhead 1, in respect of the following items:

Item?	Utilities	$2000
Item 10	Supplies and Materials	500
Item 11	Maintenance of Property	2000
Item 13	Contingencies	120000

In respect of Item 7, Utilities, the sum of $5 677 which has been provided for the current financial year is proving to be inadequate for the purposes voted. The sum of $4273.15 has already been spent, leaving a balance of $1403.85. It is estimated that a further $2000 will be required to meet expenses appropriately falling under this Head for the remainder of the financial year. This money is to cover the cost of telephones, and it is an expense that is deemed necessary.

Under Item 10, Supplies and Materials, the sum of $950 was provided. That is also proving to be inadequate. At October 12,1987, some $691.33 had been spent, leaving a balance of $258.67, and a supplement of $500 is being sought 12.30p.m.

As far as Item 11, Maintenance of Property, is concerned, the cost of maintaining the electrical equipment - typewriters, photocopier and the Roneo machine - has been higher than expected, and there is only a balance of $1596.85 remaining in the vote which had been approved at the level of $5 350. A supplementary vote is therefore required to meet maintenance costs for the remainder of the financial year.

As far as Item 30, Contingencies, is concerned, the sum of $100 000 was provided in the Estimates. There was only a sum of $664.98 remaining at October 30, 1987, so the amount has been almost exhausted. A substantial part of that has been paid in respect of the State Funeral for the late Prime Minister Barrow.

We are seeking a supplement of $120000 under this Contingencies vote to meet that item. To date, the sum of $75 934.61 has been spent on the State Funeral, and there are outstanding bills totalling $24 362.84.

I should like to advise honourable Members that the tributes paid in Parliament are now in book form and should be available for honourable Members shortly. I have here a copy of the publication coming out with the tributes paid by Members of both this Chamber and the Other Place, and arrangements should be made for distribution to honourable Members shortly.

It is just not true to say, that $120 000 is for the funeral expenses. The sum of money, as I have indicated, is in the region of $100000.1 have given the figures of $75 934.61 and the bills outstanding of $24 362.84.

This vote is really for Contingencies, and a contingency, by definition, is an event which is in its nature unexpected or unexpected at the particular time when it may occur. You cannot really plan for a specific event occurring in that particular way, but if you have a vote for Contingencies, sometimes you have to make diversions from one particular fund to another.

In the Contingencies vote, there was provision for meeting certain compensation to individuals in respect of damage for which *ex gratia* payments may be made, or for which liabilities may be incurred by the Government, and there are some outstanding claims in respect of payments in relation to motor cars, fishing boats and injuries, and with the passing of this particular supplement, if the Committee and the House so agree, then some of these outstanding claims would be met

I know that as they carry out their duties as Members of Parliament certain Members are very concerned if there are delays in payment of compensation, and the passing of this supplement will put the appropriate Ministries in a better state to meet the contingencies and the payments. I know, for example, that the honourable Member for Christ Church East (Mr. E. Bourne), who is very diligent and very persistent in carrying out his duties as a Member of

Parliament in looking after the interests of his constituents, is very concerned over delays in these payments and wants to make sure that they are made in a timely manner, and I will certainly urge this Committee and the House to deal with this matter expeditiously so that he can inform his constituents that the funds may be available.

There is no need to get worried. This Democratic Labour Party Government met and discussed a whole range of matters as a parliamentary group, and matters affecting us as parliamentarians. I see the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) is smiling. You were in St. Peter, but you could.not get into that particular meeting.

I believe I have given the full details of this matter. It was really a non-controversial matter.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1987-88 No. 19 - $5823550

HEAD 84 - MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, WORKS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS - $5 823 550

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN (St. Michael East): Mr. Chairman, this is a request for a sum of $5 823 550 to supplement Head 84, Subhead 30, of the Estimates of the Ministry of Transport and Works. 12.40 p.m.

This relates to the construction of the road known as the Northern Access Road, a contract for the construction of which was signed on May 27, 1986, the day before the last General Election, amid circumstances that advisers described as being akin to panic.....

Laughter.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: .....if not pandemonium.

Laughter.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: At that time, C.O. Williams Construction Ltd, was awarded a contract in the sum of $13 616 875. It is my uncomfortable responsibility, Mr. Chairman, to request a sum of money of which approximately $4 245 000 will be paid to this contractor in respect of additional work and other costs incurred as a result of delays in the construction of this road. This represents over 30 per cent, Mr. Chairman, of the contract price for the construction of this road, the duration of which under the contract was estimated at 457 days, which commenced on June 26, and, if things had gone according to plan, would have been concluded by September 25 this year. The new date projected for completion is December 24,1987.

Let us therefore examine, Mr. Chairman, the causes of this particular request to this Honourable House. The contractor's estimated cost - I have to point out very clearly that this is just an estimate, since the contractor himself has made no specific claim as yet with respect to delays - is $750000. These costings, I am advised, have been done by the contract consultant, Consulting Engineers Partnership, which I shall refer to in the future as CEP. CEP presented a rather exhaustive report with respect to the grounds upon which the contractor's claim is based for compensation as a result of delay in completing the construction work.

The first item is exceptional adverse weather in 1986, and I should perhaps link that to the second item, which is exceptional adverse weather in 1987. CEP's methodological approach was to compile data with respect to the historic weather conditions in that area and compare it with the actual weather conditions for the actual periods in 1986 and 1987. They found that while the contractor was claiming for 21.3 days actually lost in 1986 as a result of adverse weather conditions and nine days lost in 1987, they could only award that firm eight and seven days respectively for that period.

The analysis of CEP is admirable in most respects. But I must draw to the attention of the House one conspicuous omission from the report which I believe is a critical element in determining the number of days which should be awarded, and that is, the hour of the day or night that the rain fell. I think the hours of the day critically determine whether the work stoppage was of a nature which would justify a claim under these two Heads.

Another ground was with respect to land acquisition where the owner of land at Cleland refused to permit the contractor to enter on his land to complete his work. The contractor charged 43 days' work lost. CEP was prepared to grant compensation only in respect of a period of 13 days.

There were other claims made with respect to unexpected deep excavations at Bourbon, to which I shall advert later on, and late permission for removal of trees. The contractor claimed 18 and 31 days lost respectively, CEP lumped them together and was prepared to grant only seven days.

There was an order on the part of the Government of Barbados in which proposals for modification of the work involving a horizontal realignment west of Checker Hall was executed. That resulted in a delay. The contractor charged 17 days and CEP granted ten. 12.50 p.m.

The demolition of a house within the area, the owner of which could not be immediately found, resulted in a claim by the contractor for 39 days lost CEP granted 14.

The foregoing is the basis of the claim for $750 000 of the approximately $4.2 million which the contractor is seeking.

The first other item with respect to actual modification of work entailed upgrading the quality of existing road from All Saints to Farley Hill and Greenland to Shorey Village junction - $1679 and $23 060 respectively. I consider that, Mr. Chairman, to be money well spent.

General roadside accommodation works at Farley Hill and All Saints resulted in submissions for sums of $88 100 and $9 700 respectively. I have no questions about these either.

The third item, increase excavation and marl fill, $2392 111, the major portion of the additional $4.2 million. This work was necessitated, according to my technical advisers, by the fact that excavation at certain parts of the route where the road was being reconstructed entailed digging deeper than was envisaged at the outset I tried in vain to find any evidence whatsoever that before work commenced there was any soil test I believe, Mr. Chairman, that prudence in these circumstances ought to have required those charged with the responsibility of giving technical advice to the Ministry to conduct appropriate soil tests, and as a consequence, I have serious reservations about this element in the expenditure. I am not an engineer, but applying the common sense with which the Almighty endowed me, one would have thought that in an area surrounding the Scotland District, it would be a *sine qua non* of construction activity of any kind that testing of the soil would be conducted before any work was done. The absence of evidence of any soil testing leaves me extremely uneasy about this particular item.

The other modification to improve the quality of the project involved highway safety improvements, such as the construction of a sidewalk at Benny Hall. I do not know where these places are, Mr. Chairman. I must frankly admit that these things came upon me suddenly and I did not have the opportunity to visit the site.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Benny Hall. Somebody said "Benny Hill."

(Aside: Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He does not know.)

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: That is $15 100.

Emergency arrester tracks - $45 900. Further improvements to the original plan were effected when drainage at Allendale was carried out for a sum of $15000, and additional suck wells from All Saints to Farley Hill provided, $9850. The honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) should be very satisfied.

Escalation of labour and material costs - $162000. It is not clear to me what this "escalation" means. I assume it means wages increases.

Disposing unstable material after slips - $29 500. The replacement of a broken box culvert at Allendale - $9 000. The extension of a new road at Nesfield - $400000. ^ Portland- $130000.

Under the terms of the contract, the consulting engineers, CEP, can claim for additional fees if the contract went beyond the originally agreed period of 457 days. This has happened, and they have claimed, and the amount of $137 287 as professional services is included in this sum.

Mr. Chairman, last week the Cabinet approved a further sum of $530000 which will be spent specifically for improvements relating to St. Lucy's Church roundabout I have been hoping to get the administrative process to have the Resolution before this Honourable House today, but the wheels of Government run exceedingly slow and it is not here, so I am indicating to the House that in a few weeks, when the bureaucracy proceeds with deliberate speed, that Resolution in relation to this road will be before you.

That then, Mr. Chairman, is the information I consider ^ relevant at this time to the request for the granting of this sum of money contained in the Resolution.

I beg to move that Head 84, Subhead 13, stand part of this Resolution. 1.00p.m.

Hon. M. A. KING: I beg to second that and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS (St Thomas): Sir, the Opposition is not going to be long on this one. I understand the Minister's position that he has only recently joined the Ministry, and so I do not expect him to be *aufait* with all the details. But it seems to me from what he said that many of the claims are not unusual or unreasonable, having regard to the type of contract, and I was just wondering whether this was the JCT type of contract, a revised edition of 1963, I think it was, and whether it provided, first of all, for 4 fluctuations, or whether the fluctuations clause was deleted.

Many of the claims, for example, the claims based upon exceptional inclemency of the weather - clause 25 or something in the R.I.B.A. one, which is very similar - are not unusual - and the methodology used by CEP in arriving at a quantification of the claim is standard.

I take the Minister's point that perhaps there should be some detail as to whether there was rain in the day that prevented the men from working, or whether it was heavy rain in the night that washed off work that was already done and so they could not work, or whatever. There seems'to be a gap in that kind of information.

As to the bore holes, Sir, I think it would depend on the specifications in the contract at the time of tender. It must not be assumed that it is the contractor's responsibility > to put in bore holes at various points to test how far down they have to go for foundation. I would have thought that

that would be the responsibility of the consulting engineers also. The fact that money has been allowed by the persons who had the supervision of the contract CEP, suggests that there was nothing unreasonable on the part of the contractor.

Almost every building or engineering contract will run into those problems, and especially in Barbados in that area, you will find parts of the subsoil where you have to go further down for foundations than at other parts. Similarly, when you are building in Cave Hill, at West Terrace and so on, that area has a number of fissures and breaks in the rock structure that would affect the foundations. At some points you will find a foundation of two or three feet, then at another point, because of a fissure or change in soil type, you have to go down six or seven feet to reach a foundation!

Having regard to the pure contractual matters dealt with by the Minister, the Opposition does not have any difficulty in supporting the Resolution. We are a little concerned, though, Sir, that at one point when the contract had been awarded and the design of the road had been tendered on by the contractor, suddenly, three days before he died, the last Prime Minister, by a wave of the hand, altered the alignment of the road somewhere in the vicinity of St. Lucy's Church, going to the cement plant, and has exacerbated the cost of this road. I do not know if that is what is meant by Nesfield, I can get myself lost in St. Lucy.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You see that Sir? Because the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Hon. B. M. Taitt) stood up in the gathering yesterday at the funeral and bellowed mellifluously every hymn that was sung, he is feeling what the English people would call "chuck" today.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, without a hymn sheet, Sir. He obviously learnt well when he was a chorister at St. Michael's Cathedral.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There must be some relationship between singing and engineering.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: As Your Honour can very well attest, Sir, I was not the only one capable of that. Explain it to the honourable Member.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You may continue.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I was told yesterday that the Honourable Prime Minister is also of exceptional voice in choral singing. He made a recent appearance on television, which I did not see, but he has been highly complimented for it

We are concerned as to whether there is any increase in the overall contract price as a result of the realignment of the road from where it had been originally designed to now go elsewhere towards the cement plant, and at the same time to do some damage to a playing field that had been existing there. The honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) understands the geography of that area better than I do, but I remember that there had been some concern expressed at the time.

We understand the need for $500 000 in a few weeks, or few months, when the Minister comes for it, for the roundabout at St. Lucy's Church. I believe the House has been given a hint before that the Government intends to place a statue of Charles Duncan O'Neal somewhere in that area, or near the roundabout, or in the roundabout He having come from St. Lucy, and the last Prime Minister having come from St. Lucy, and they being cousins, it will adorn and embellish the area.

I am not in a position to say whether $500 000 is too much or not, Sir, but we understand that there is a need for additional funds to accommodate the construction of this roundabout at St. Lucy's Church. I just wish to know from the Minister, if he has the information - if he does not have it, it does not matter; at a future date, when he comes for the other $500 000, he can give it - whether there is any additional cost implication in all the realignment, because houses would have had to be moved, so that would be a cost, but I do not think we have got those figures. If the Minister does not have them, we are not pressing, but it would suggest that there may be an increase in the overall contract price at a future date. 1.10p.m.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES (St Lucy): Mr. Chairman, I would not be able to answer precisely the points raised by the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. Simmons), since that comes within the province of the substantive Minister, but you will appreciate that I would have more than a passing interest in this Resolution, particularly since the road goes through a substantial part of St Lucy to the Arawak Cement plant.

Let me at the very outset state that I am not a technician, and, therefore, I am in no position to confirm what the Honourable Minister has said. Obviously, he has the files at his disposal and would be more *aufait* with the information. However, I want to compliment this Democratic Labour Party Administration for responding to some of the problems which arose, and which were dealt with in an expeditious manner.

Let me give you one example. When the St Lucy roundabout was put down, it was observed by a number of people that the three triangles which were laid down to direct traffic around the roundabout were too big and that long vehicles attempting to go around there would have some difficulty. This information was conveyed to the Ministry and to the project office, and as a result of that, they were able to go and make some adjustments to that particular area. I think that the quick way in which the response was forthcoming from the Government is something which we ought to acknowledge.

Naturally, in a road like this problems are going to develop. There was a situation, and I am speaking now as the representative for the constituency of St. Lucy, where some houses had to be moved and adjustments had to be made. Where such problems arose, and continue to arise, I consider it my duty to draw them to the attention of the Ministry, as I have done. There are a number of other things which I have drawn to the attention of the Ministry. I do not want at this point to indicate them on the floor of the House, because I have every confidence that they will be dealt with.

I want to refer to the comment made by the honourable Member for St. Thomas, who tried to make sport at the former Prime Minister and the advice or directions which he gave that that part of the road going to the Arawak Cement Plant should take a different route. Let me explain what happened. A lot of concern was expressed about the route that the road was taking in Checker Hall. If they had gone the original route, it would have meant that a number of houses would have had to be acquired and people resiled. A former Minister of Transport and Works in this Government has indicated that wherever possible, if we can avoid relocating people when we are doing a road, we would naturally do that Here you had land owned by the company, and rather than taking a direct route to the cement plant, there was a roundabout route going down to the bottom of Checker Hall corner and across the road into Arawak. It seemed to me to be a common sense thing to take the route which the road has eventually taken.

In the process, Mr. Chairman, a portion of a large playing field was taken off. Indeed, the furore which developed as a result of that was, as far as I am concerned, and as far as the people in Checker Hall are concerned, a storm in a teapot, because the football poles which were on the field before that portion was taken off are still there, and people still play football there. It is true that in respect of the cricket field, as the Minister for Sports has indicated, they will have to do some shifting of that, but the playing field is a large playing field and can accommodate that adjustment

I think it is a reasonable position which was taken by the Government, and I do not think that I would allow the comment to pass that the former Prime Minister, by a wave of his hand, caused the road to be changed. The consultants were there, the contractors were there, the project office personnel were there, and they all agreed that this could be done, and that this was the most appropriate thing.

One has to pick up members of the Opposition when they try to make sport and then try to pass it off by saying,'I did not mean anything by that' The honourable Member for St. Thomas was attempting to reduce....

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, he is about to impute motives.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: When he imputes motives, you can then get up on a point of order.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: The honourable Member for St. Thomas was attempting to reduce the impact of the decision which was made, and that it was obviously a most reasonable decision. I want to compliment the late Prime Minister for taking that decision, because I was there, the former Minister was there and we all agreed. As a matter of fact it was I who drew it to his attention, and I take full responsibility for it and you can go into Checker Hall and say I was responsible for the road being moved from where it was going to where it is now going into the cement plant. I consider that to be reasonable, and I would face anybody on any political platform on that

I am saying this because - I am not sure if the honourable Member for St Thomas was there - when this matter came up in the Press, I knew the people who were behind it, and members of the Opposition including Senator lull went down to Checker Hall and tried to make an issue out of it. I am not sure the Leader of the Opposition was > there. Maybe the person who reported to me does not know him, that could very well be the case. They tried to make an issue out of it.

Sir, as a result of what is happening in St Lucy, the Honourable Minister has indicated that there will be some additional monies which would be sought to do some further work around St. Lucy's Church corner. The point I am making is that when the road was designed, it was in my view a most insensitive thing on the part of the Barbados Labour Party and Vic Johnson, who lives around the corner, having recognised that there was a problem around St Lucy's Church corner for a long time, not to have taken the opportunity to get the whole thing straightened out, which they refused to do. You will hear more about that later on, because we are going to do that 1.20 p.m. ^

I am not anticipating any debate, but, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Community Development we will be doing some work to ensure that a beautification programme is put in place around the St. Lucy's Church corner. Even in the Checker Hall area, where there will be some lands that will be made available as a result of the road, we will make sure that a proper beautification programme is put in place there.

Further, in my capacity as the representative for the constituency, I have approached those persons who I consider as the corporate citizens of St. Lucy and have been able to get them to agree that they would assist with the beautification and the works to be done in that particular area. We believe that corporate citizens have a role to play in this country, and the beautification programme is one area in which they could be utilised, and we are going to > be utilising them. All the ones who we have approached have agreed readily to give assistance in that particular area.

We have responded to the problems which have developed there. I do not think that we have come to the end of the problems in that area. As a result of the road and the construction of the Arawak Cement Plant, traffic in that area of Checker Hall has increased considerably, and very soon I certainly will be making representation for us to have a look at the roads in that area, because they will have to be upgraded.

I certainly am supportive of this Resolution.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR (St. Peter): Mr. Chairman, this road runs through a large pan of the constituency of St. Peter, and certainly, that part of the road that runs through St. Peter is a very fine structure, of which the people of St. Peter are very well pleased.

If there is but one major omission, I believe, Sir, that that omission would be the failure to improve the juncture of the road with that road that takes one into Indian Ground. The juncture of this road with the road going into Indian Ground has always been very unsafe, and one anticipated that as part of the general improvement of the roads in that particular area, that the juncture at Indian Ground and Welchtown would have been widened, particularly since the buses of the Transport Board have to use that particular tight corner as the access into the Indian Ground area. I am very disappointed that absolutely nothing has been done with that particular comer. Indeed, what now stands is worse than the original situation that was there. We now have two right-angular pieces of rock which makes that corner even more unsafe than it was to begin with.

Generally speaking, though, the people of St. Peter are very well pleased with this particular structure. I do feel, Sir, that it will perhaps have an impact on the potential for flooding in the St. Peter area since the wells that have been sunk in the vicinity of All Saints will help to take off some of the waters that normally congregate in the Speightstown district.

A lot of the problems with this road have to do not so much with the road in St. Peter - St. Peter never causes this country problems, and never leads to unnecessary expenses or burdens on the public purse, - but have very much, Sir, to do with the road in St. Lucy, and this is really the concern of the Opposition. When the original alignment was done, it was done by engineers, following, as we understand it, proper engineering practices, to try to find that line of best fit, that alignment of the road that would have the least impact on residential districts, use of land and certainly the social facilities. As a result, the road alignment, which formed the basis upon which the contract was awarded, was in fact not an alignment chosen at random or by chance, but an alignment that was determined by engineers after very careful study.

Indeed, Sir, I must tell the House that this particular road has gone through many re-examinations. At one stage, an examination was done to see if it might not have been preferable to carry the road not through Ebworth Plantation, but through the Mile and a Quarter area to improve that very disastrous piece of road that now exists between Bend Hill and All Saints. The studies that were done indicated that the cost of pursuing that particular option would have been prohibitive. For example, my father's house would have had to be relocated to pursue that option, which would be very pleasing to the school children at All Saints, a very dangerous piece of road at this time, to the persons who use the All Saints Church and to the constituents of Bend Hill, Rose Hill and Mile and a Quarter who find the existing road between All Saints and Mile and a Quarter particularly dangerous at nights. But it was ruled out after an engineering evaluation, sought by the Member of Parliament, because the cost was prohibitive and it was not really a line of best fit

The question the Opposition is asking, Sir, is a similar evaluation done before a decision was taken to change the alignment, which formed the basis upon which the contract was awarded, to the present alignment, which has a radically different impact on the residences in the surrounding area?

Asides.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: We did have a proper evaluation done by engineers which ruled out the road coming through the Bend Hill/Mile and a Quarter area. I am asking whether a similar evaluation was done to determine whether the new alignment was a better line of fit than the one which served as the basis upon which the contract was awarded.

These things find their way into partisan politics, and they find their way into partisan politics, Sir, because there is in many people's minds an element of patronage associated with the manner in which residential and other improvements ensue from the execution of Government capital projects. It is to be anticipated, Mr. Chairman, that in circumstances where the engineers had already committed themselves to a line of best fit, based upon, we would hope, a scientific study, and that alignment is subsequent to change, questions of patronage would arise, Sir, questions concerning how the new alignments affect the use of social facilities would arise and matters of this character.

In relation to the playing field, the original alignment was accepted because the playing field at Checker Hall, as we understand it, must have a buffer zone between it and the blasting quarry which is presently being utilised by the Arawak Cement Plant As we understand it, and this is the concern of the Opposition, the new alignment, by taking off part of the playing field, now forces the playing field to have to be, in a way, drifted more towards the blasting quarry with the potential dangers that are inherent in making such a movement This is one of the real concerns which are being raised by the Opposition as they relate to the

impact of the new alignment on the social facilities that exist within the area.

We also have to wonder whether certain residential benefits that have been conferred as a result of the change of alignment, which were predicated on the assumption that the residents would have to move, are, in fact, justified. There is a particular person in that Checker Hall area who has benefitted enormously from the realignment, but his old establishment has not been moved. 1.30p.m.

Aside.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: The Member for St. Lucy says that residents who have been affected by the new alignment have found themselves in a position where the old establishments have not been moved but they have been put into far better appointed conditions than they were in the first case.

I make that point, Sir, because, as I say, all kinds of questions of the distribution of patronage - some necessary, Sir, some unnecessary - creep into the discussion when the citizenry see a capital project proceeding within their particular environment, and it would do the Government well to indicate the nature of the evaluation which serve as the basis of this particular realignment, given that they had, in fact, been a scientific study that had been undertaken which served as the basis upon which the contract was awarded in the instance.

As regards, Sir, the situation at the St. Lucy roundabout, which I think might become the Charles Duncan O'Neal Circle, there seems, obviously, to have been a little bit of bungling involved there which will lead to increased costs. The problem seems to be that the circle in the roundabout was made so large that tractors drawing more than one cart could not safely get around the roundabout, and Government is now to be put to the necessity of having to destroy the triangles in order to put wrong things right But I would think, Sir, that the Opposition would have no difficulty of that circle being suitably a mark of the Charles Duncan O'Neal Circle, having regard to the outstanding relationship of the Charles Duncan O'Neal family in St. Lucy.

I certainly will be supporting the expenditure of funds. The road has done much for St. Peter. It has certainly improved that area stretching straight from Farley Hill to All Saints Church. My only regret, as I said, Sir, is mat the juncture of the road at Indian Ground has not been improved. Indeed, there are certain parts of the road where some of the improvements might even seem to be excessive, and if the Minister could give the assurance that that very dangerous corner could be improved, I would be happy on behalf of the constituency. The broad point that we are seeking to come to terms with however, is the basis for the realignment in the Checker Hall area, given that the initial alignment had been based upon a detailed engineering study to rind the best alignment, having regard to the existing residential configuration, use of land and the best and proper use of social facilities in this area.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I anticipated when I started that I would have had to get into this debate again.

The honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) made some suggestion about patronage involved in the realignment to the road. Before the realignment was decided on, repairs, movement and so on of the houses to which the honourable Member for St. Peter referred had already been decided on, and the changes were being proceeded with and had almost been finished. This was before the decision. If, something sticks in your craw, do not get angry with me. I could call some names, but I would not be so indiscreet as to call the names of people in Checker Hall who were expecting to benefit from the road in the original plan. It is because we changed it and they did not benefit that the honourable Member for St. Peter is behaving the way in which he is behaving.

Let me say further, if the honourable Member is going to talk about patronage, Sir, that as I understand it, sometimes when a road of this nature is going to be constructed, there are some people who will benefit from it and some people who will not benefit from it It is my understanding that a prominent resident of St Peter who owns a plantation will benefit considerably from the road going through his plantation, which has opened the possibility that he could sell his lands, when before there was no road going through there and his land was inaccessible. I went on that road and it is one of the most beautiful sites in that pan of the area. He will benefit from that. I would not want to say that that same prominent resident of St. Peter held a $100 a plate dinner for the Member for St Peter to raise money for his campaign. I would not want to say that, but if you are going to talk about patronage, let us talk about patronage.

Asides.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: How am I to know that it was more advantageous to you for the road to take the route that it took rather than going down through Mile-and-a-Quarter? I do not know. I am asking the question.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the honour able Member is, I think.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: First, lay the foundation. What do you rise on?

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member is imputing to me very improper motives. I have indicated to this House that, as the representative of the constituency of St. Peter, I asked the

Government to undertake a study to determine whether it would not have been more beneficial to the people of St. Peter for the road not to go through Ebworth plantation, which belongs to the person to whom the Member is referring, and take it through a different part of the constituency. I think it is improper, Sir, and it is indecent, for me now to be charged, by implication, of being in collusion with somebody as regards to patronage.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, it is all right when the honourable Member wants to insinuate that this honourable Member is in collusion with somebody un-named - and I want you to call the name - to improve his property and benefit from his property out of the Government, but it is not in order if I ask a question. I only asked a question - how am I to know? 1.40 p.m.

In his archaic, innocent presentation, the honourable Member for St Peter wanted to give the impression that he knows what he is talking about He said that, as far as he is aware, there were a number of factors which were considered, and which are considered, when a road of this nature is being constructed. He said that one of the major points is where the road would have the least impact on residential districts.

Let us examine that, the least impact on residential districts. If the honourable Member for St Peter knew the area that we are talking about in here today, as he claims he knows, he ought to know that the route which the road has now taken had no houses on it - it was wide open pasture. Nobody lives between the point where the change was made and the Arawak Cement Plant on that route which was taken. On the other hand, if the road had gone down to the Checker Hall corner and then taken the roundabout, it would have disturbed a number of houses. A number of changes would have had to be made, and one or two houses, as I understand it, would have had to be moved. So in respect of the least impact on residential districts, as far as I am concerned, the route which the road has taken would cause the least impact on residential districts.

The second point he made is that it should not disturb social amenities, and he went on to make the point that, as far as he understood it, there was to be a buffer zone between the playing field and the quarry at the Arawak Cement Plant. Again, if the honourable Member knows the area that he is talking about, he ought to know that the playing field that we are talking about has already been marked out

Aside.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Okay, let me be charitable, as I always am to the Barbados Labour Party, and say that the Barbados Labour Party established the playing field and the parameters for the playing field. The new arrangement will not see the boundaries of the playing field move one inch to the buffer zone. The buffer zone is still there, and this will not interfere with the buffer zone.

As the Honourable Minister of Sports indicated when he visited the area, it was a very large playing field, too small for two playing fields and very large for one playing field, and the amount of land which was taken off, Sir, is a very small amount I really do not understand why the honourable Member is trying to resurrect the dead, because that is what the honourable Member is trying to do. It is absolute nonsense to talk about that, because it is a very, very small amount of land that has been taken off.

This realignment is a better one than what was originally planned, taking into consideration all the factors he has mentioned. I say again that the technical people were there and they have agreed with that.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate that the records of the Ministry of Planning will show that a request was made in my name, as the Member of Parliament for St Peter, for the Government of this country to re-examine the option of taking the Northern Access Road through the plantation of Ebworth. I want to let that go into the records of this House since the insinuation that a supporter of mine who owns Ebworth plantation is benefiting, or is to benefit, from the fact that a road is going through his property is at variance with my own particulars as to where the road should have gone. I want it to be entered into the records of this House that I specifically requested the Government to re-examine the option concerning the passage of that road through the Ebworth Plantation, from which the person is now to benefit

As regards the specific matter at hand, Sir, the issues that we want the Government to provide us with some answers on are very simple issues. Was an evaluation done on the realignment? What is the additional cost ensuing from the adoption of the new alignment in the Checker Hall area? How is that cost reflected in terms of the cost of actual road construction, as distinct from the cost of residential improvements? We are seeking answers to these very precise and specific questions. We also would want to know by how much has the road been extended as a result of the decision to move from one alignment to another.

It is not enough for the Minister of Trade and Industry to give the House the impression that all the residential problems that would have occurred in the area would have occurred with the first alignment The point of the matter is that when a decision was taken to pursue the second realignment most of the resiling of residents to be affected had already been undertaken. We are now in a position where, because of a second realignment of a road, additional residential costs are now to be incurred. It raises questions as to what basis are we to incur these costs of construction, as well as the increased cost of residential improvement

given that the original contract was based upon a very scientific engineering study. This is the issue that the honourable Member for St Lucy wants to run away *from*.

In my initial submission, Sir, I was trying to make the point, and make the point simply, that in all capital projects some people will benefit and some will lose, and that you are going to get in this country continuous debate in a situation where some benefit and some will lose, and you are going to get increasing debate in a circumstance where a prior decision was taken on the basis not of random choice nor whim and fancy, but on the basis of proper engineering studies, affecting some people adversely and affecting some well, and thereafter, a secondary decision was taken which has an alternative set of reasons. 1.50p.m.

For that reason, I am saying that if we are to put this project on all squares - this is my plea to the House - let us begin to understand the bases for the change, because the first alignment was not an alignment taken by chance -we are not the persons responsible for making the change, you are to tell us - and as a result of the changes, this House is being called upon to approve further expenditures. The Opposition has a responsibility.

Asides.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: It is not a straight road. It veers off by Mr. Griffith's shop and had to come back in to go to the Arawak Cement Plant Mr. Chairman, these are the real and very serious concerns of the Opposition, and we would be satisfied if we could understand that these things are being done not at the whim and fancy, but on the basis of the best technical advice available to the Government

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Chairman, I happen to have been the Minister at the time when the decision was taken to re-route that section of the Northern Access Road.

Let me begin, Sir, by saying that I am a St Lucy man, and what is more, I know that area exceedingly well. My grandparents lived right at that spot My aunt now lives right there, and my father owns land there, part of which has been acquired by the Government for the purposes of the road.

What is incomprehensible to me, or to any person looking at the original alignment of the road, is how the road could have taken the route it had intended to take in the first place. I certainly do not know why that route was so laid. Immediately east of my aunt's property is my father's property, and a sizeable portion of my father's property, at the northern end, was taken off, leading straight into my aunt's house, and as soon as it reaches my aunt's house, the road goes in a different direction, and immediately it passes my aunt's house, the road come back in again and carries on westward. In other words, Sir, my aunt's house was sticking out like a sore thumb in that road. How that was achieved, one cannot understand!

Clearly, if ever a property should be acquired, it should have been that property. A decision was taken that the road should go around that property - for what reason, I do not know. Maybe, Sir, it is a substantial property and a fair amount of money would have been required to acquire it, but it would not have been the most substantial property acquired by the Government in that section of Checker Hall. What is more, Sir, anyone looking at the road as it passes by Mr. Griffith's shop which was referred to by the honourable Member for St. Peter, and looking at the road in relation to where the cement plant is situated, cannot understand why the road did not take a different direction.

When I visited the cement plant on the Friday before the late Prime Minister died, having left the cement plant, we were travelling along the Northern Access Road. We stopped at a point in that road which was a source of contention to many people living from my aunt's house westward. I showed the Prime Minister the route of the road. He was indeed surprised as to how the road could have taken that route, as any reasonable person would be surprised, because the land through which the road now runs, which the honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying is open land, was in fact land owned by the Government, having been acquired from the estate of Checker Hall Plantation.

Sir, if one wanted a shorter route to the cement plant, then one should have gone through those lands. It is clear and obvious. So it is not now a question of the additional cost of the project by changing the route, it is a question of how much funds are saved by changing that route, because, on the very spot that very morning, I was told by the contractor that, in fact, it would be cheaper to go that new way than it would be to go the route that had been originally intended to go. What is more, an engineer on the property told me that that was the original alignment of the road, but for some reason or another the road did not take that original alignment.

Sir; these are facts. They may not be the kind of facts that would satisfy the honourable Member for St. Peter, because he is looking for something else, but I do not know what he is looking for.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: When ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be \vise. The honourable Member is wallowing in his ignorance, and he can continue to *do* that Those who want to find me know where to find me and where my office is.

Aside.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am not Craig. He never had a secretary, far less a Permanent Secretary. I have two Permanent Secretaries.

I think we have now made the better of the two suggestions for routing that road in relation to that part of Checker Hall. In relation to the other sections of St Peter, I do not know.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I agree that it is a fine road, and it has opened up some very beautiful lands which probably would not have been opened up for the benefit of other people.

I think we have now chosen the better route for this road in the Checker Hall area. It is something by which we stand, and I am prepared to defend it at any time.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, to start with the last point made by the honourable Member for St. Peter, the critical item in the additional costs which have been incurred, as I stated in my opening remarks, is the increased excavation and marl fill. This is approximately $2.4 million of the $4.2 million that the contractor is going to get. I think that you should get the idea out of your head that the critical cost has anything to do with the readjustment or realignment Readjustment and realignment obviously increased the cost, but far less significantly than the excavation costs which have been incurred and which I have some reservations about

I believe that roads, buildings or anything else planned by men cannot be perfectly planned, and, quite obviously, as a road project is constructed, the persons working on it can see better the mistakes which they have made when the project was at the level of conception. I am not at all quarrelling about the increased costs which came as a consequence of the adjustments. I am expressing reservations about a particular item, which, it seems to me, the application of some foresight might have substantially reduced. 2.00 p.m.

I believe that it makes good sense for the Ministry to make adjustments and ancillary improvements as the road work progresses. It is within this context that I would have no difficulty at all in looking at the juncture of the road at Indian Ground. If we believe that the entire project could be substantially improved by eliminating the hazards to which the honourable Member for St Peter referred, it would be consonant with the policy of the Government to effect these ancillary improvements as the project unfolds.

Initially, the project was contemplated to be completed at a cost of $30 million, but it was scaled down by the previous Administration to a cost of $25 million, for reasons which are not at all clear to me. Some of the improvements and adjustments which have been effected were taken out of the original plan. This Government has restored them, as I said, in executing a policy consistent with dealing with ancillary problems as they go along.

There are other costs which will bring the total cost of the project over the $25 million which was budgeted forit I do not know as yet what the final cost will be. Yesterday, I had a meeting with some of the Ministry's engineers and they estimated - it was a very rough estimate - that the final cost of the road will be $28 million, just $3 million over the sum which was budgeted for the project

In so far as the contract itself is concerned, I have not seen the contract, I have not perused it I do not know what methods have been used in costing. That is a specific question which I put to the engineers within the Ministry to whom I spoke yesterday. Up to the present time, they have not got back to me with that information.

(Aside: Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Specifications.)

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Let me assure you, Mr. Chairman, that modifications of projects are just not effected in an arbitrary manner. All of these major projects pay qualified consulting engineers to supervise the work of the contractor, and whenever changes are proposed, it is the responsibility of these engineers to say whether the changes are feasible and cost effective. This is a normal part of the process of modifying any construction project.

It is entirely inconceivable that any politician, no matter how mighty he is or what title he bears, could wave a wand magically and bring about changes in alignment Such a person, if he is acting responsibly, as I am sure the late, lamented Prime Minister did, would have to make a proposal, and the proper method would be for the consulting engineers to examine that proposal and report to the Ministry as to whether it is feasible on a technical level, and after that to determine what it will cost That is the way in which projects are executed.

So it is entirely misleading, Mr. Chairman, to imply that projects are modified capriciously by politicians. It is said that that did not even happen with the mysterious road that appeared in juxtaposition to a certain plantation in the parish of St Lucy.

Laughter.

(Aside: Hon. E. E. GREAVES: It was not in juxtaposition. It was through the plantation lands.)

(Aside: Are those your instructions?)

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Those are my instructions. And this Honourable House found there was no wrong doing.

Mr. Chairman, that is about all I have to say. In so far as the road crossing the playing field in St Lucy is concerned, I think that the Member for St Lucy dealt with that adequately.

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

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREWES, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAUT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of two money Resolutions in Committee of Supply, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

QUESTION TIME

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I move, Sir, that Question Time be now taken.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections, Question Time be now taken. 2.10p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Thomas and Question No. 74.

QUESTION RE TASK FORCE REPORT ON UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Question 74 is as follows:

To ask the Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development: (1) Is the Minister aware that the Report of the Task Force on Unemployment was laid in this Honourable House in March 1987? (2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister state why the said report has not been circulated to the Honourable Members for study?

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Reply to Question No. 74, asked by the Honourable Member for St Thomas is as follow:

"The Minister is aware that the Report of the Task Force Committee on Employment was laid in the House of Assembly on 16th March, 1987.

The Report has now been circulated."

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Christ Church East and Question No. 60.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request permission of this Honourable House to lay the answer to Question No. 60.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: So be it. That

brings us to the end of Question Time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I move, Sir, that the House do now adjourn until November 24, 1987 at 12 o'clock noon.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until November 24, 1987 at 12 o'clock noon, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 2.15 p.m.

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