

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 - 91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 19, 1988

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

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. Weekes, JP. (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. H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B., (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. B. M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.) MJ.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)

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)

Hon. C. V. Walker, (Minister of Education and Culture)

Mr. L. L. Brathwaite, J.P.

Mr. E. Bourne

Dr. E. A. Simmons, M.D.

Hon. W. W. Hall, (Minister of Tourism and Sports) 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. P. J. M. Miller

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, April 12, 1988.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Minutes of the proceedings of this Honourable Chamber for the meeting which took place on Tuesday, April 12, 1988 be taken as read and be approved.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no observations and corrections, then let these Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I have been in receipt of:

The Accounts and Statements for the month of February, 1988 as prepared by the Accountant-General.

PAPERS

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

The Annual Report of the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation for the year 1986-1987.

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

The Barbados Economic Report, 1987.

The Annual Report, Auditor's Certificate and Financial Statements of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 1987.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before we move to the Orders of the Day, Government Business, I move that the following orders be suspended, Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of the day's sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE ACT, 1988

Order No. 2 was called - To move the second reading of a Bill to provide for the establishment of the office of corporate affairs and intellectual property.

Hon. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to provide for the establishment of the office of corporate affairs and intellectual property and for the transfer of certain functions from the Registrar of the Supreme Court to the Registrar of Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property.

The Bill is quite simple, Mr. Speaker, in that, at Clause 3, it provides for the establishment of the office, and in the Schedule there are a number of Acts which have to be consequentially amended as a result of the setting up of the office to ensure that the functions may be performed by the Registrar of Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property.

The responsibility for this is under the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

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

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

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

Hon. M. A. KING: I move, Mr. Speaker, that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on this Bill.

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

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr. SPEAKER: As you are aware, the Chairman is not in his seat, and we will have to appoint someone to take his place.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the absence of the Chairman of Committees, the honourable Member for St. George South (Mr. R. P. Byer) I move that the honourable Member for St. Michael North East (Mr. L. L. Brathwaite) be appointed until the arrival of the honourable Member for St. George South.

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

The question that the honourable Member for St. Michael North East be appointed as Chairman of Committees was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee, Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE Mr.

CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1—6 inclusive were called and passed.
12.25 p.m.

The Schedule was called and passed.

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

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

RESOLUTION RE POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND
PROJECTS DETAILED BY THE
ESTIMATES 1988-89

Order No. 1 was called - To move the resumption of debate on a Resolution to take note of policies, programmes and projects detailed by the Estimates of Expenditure for 1988-89.

Hon. C. V. WALKER (St. George North): Mr. Speaker, the provision under the Ministry of Education and Culture provides for the functioning of the Ministry and covers areas relating to things such as the general administration of the Ministry, teacher training, which involves Erdiston College, local and overseas training; pre-primary schools, special schools, secondary schools and the assisted private schools; examinations, the University of the West Indies, the Higher Education Awards and the Barbados Community College, as well as technical, vocational and adult education dealing with the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Industrial Schools, Adult Education Programme and other educational programmes; School Meals and the lot.

Mr. Speaker, again this year we have provided provision for the nursery and improving the primary education which, as you know, is the foundation of the whole education system and the catering for secondary education. There is the process of expanding our teacher training, which includes a provision for the study leave of teachers, which will improve the morale and restore the confidence within the system.

In conjunction with all of this, Mr. Speaker we are reviewing the Education Act. Indeed, we have already reached the point where we have created with the unions what is called the Memorandum of Understanding, which, hopefully, will eliminate some of the problems which existed within the system, especially as they relate to Lodge School, among others, created by the previous Administration.

Mr. Speaker, we have voted in this House a sum which, if we look at the overall increase in the emoluments, both statutory and other, represents an increase of some \$13 million over the previous year. It is costing the Government and the people of Barbados approximately \$8.2 million more to pay for the staff of the Ministry in the year 1988-89, due, of course, to the approved salary increases, and, Mr. Speaker, no doubt in subsequent years it will probably cost more.

Mr. Speaker, to deal with a few of the specific areas in the Ministry, you will find that we have already put some programmes in place, especially in the area of training, both at Erdiston and overseas, and I will just highlight a few. We

have provided for the In-Service Diploma in Education and the In-Service Curriculum Programme. We have reinstituted these services because we consider that they are vital to the educational system of this country. We have instituted programmes relating to the traditional Easter Vacation Workshops, computer education and special education for the mentally retarded, and such things as Business Studies and Industrial Arts. Hopefully, in the next few weeks we will be starting with Guidance Counselling, among others.

I want to deal specifically with some areas as they relate directly to the field of education. First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have to pay close attention to maintenance within the whole school system, which we have discovered has been totally neglected over the last ten years. We have discovered that most of the school plant is in very bad condition, and we are attempting, through the funds provided through this Honourable House, to do something about that. We have to deal with some 106 primary schools and special schools, and we have to pay close attention to the maintenance and general repairs which are required, and, indeed, the replacement of the furniture, to maintain the status which we have grown to be accustomed to over a number of years. 12.35 p.m.

As far as the primary schools, Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said - and I would say, to a certain extent, yes - about the inability of some of the students within the system to read at a proper level. Those of us who have spent years within the educational system over the years as teachers will know that it is not what you bring into the school, but it is what you get out of the school, and what is given to you during that period which will enable you, no matter what stratum of life of society you may come from, that will give you a better feeling and direction in terms of your ability to proceed into the world of work and life.

Mr. Speaker, I have also discovered that one of the frustrations within the primary system has been that people working within the system felt that they were somewhat neglected. There was no sense of purpose, and there was frustration. I am happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that in view of the fact that I discovered this to be a problem, in January this year we were able to appoint 16 headteachers and 41 senior teachers within the primary system to give them some credibility and feeling that they belong so that they can provide what is necessary to the children of this country.

In trying to combat the problem of reading, we have already introduced the Reading Assessment Kit within the primary schools. I say to the students and parents of this country that we are spending money, we have to spend money, and we will have to spend more money to maintain

the school plants in this country, and I am asking the parents and the students to recognise that it is their money and that they should refrain from what I have discovered to be the vandalism, which appears to be the norm within the society. We cannot afford to waste dollars repairing school buildings only to discover, in a matter of weeks or months, that it necessitates spending additional money to maintain the plants at a level that we consider to be the required level.

Mr. Speaker, in order for the country to clearly understand how the dollars will be spent, I would like to advert to some of the facts as they are. If we were to go back to the year 1968-1969, we would discover that in the primary schools, we had an enrollment of some 43 590 children. If we were to look at the roll as reported in the statistics for 1986-1987, we will discover that that roll was 29 323. In the secondary area, Mr. Speaker, we had in 1968-1969 a roll of 13 928 and in 1986-1987 that had increased to some 21 164. The number has stayed around 21 000 in secondary schools since about 1979. We must also recognise, Mr. Speaker, that in the private secondary schools there was an additional 8 569 students in 1968-1969, and this has decreased to some 7 028 students in 1986-1987.

Mr. Speaker, if we were to total the figures from the private schools of the 7000 and those in the Government schools, we will discover that in 1986-1987 the total school population was approximately 57 515 students. We will also discover, Mr. Speaker, that the actual primary enrollment has reached some 28 339 at the present year, which, in fact, Mr. Speaker, is a drop of some 5 per cent from the previous year. In other words, the school population is dropping. Whether it is due to an effective birth control programme or what, it is a fact of life.

We have to, and we are addressing, the problem of reading and literacy at the primary level. We are increasing the number of places in Government secondary schools. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the plans under the second World Bank loan will increase the numbers. The new Queen's College will move from some 760 to 1 050 students. We will be building the new Wotton School, which will provide for another 1 050 students, and we will have a St. Thomas school, which will have another 1 050 students. You will realise that we will be providing an additional 2 390 school places within the secondary school system at the same time as we are pointing out that the population is dropping. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will be able to accommodate the students who will be moving from the primary level to the secondary level within the next three to four-year period.

Aside.

12.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a comment from the other side stating "as the population drops." It is a fact I so stated.

In 1987, what did we have? We had a total number of 4 477 students taking what is called the Common Entrance Examination, or the 11-plus. Out of the 4 477, 3 851 of them were allocated places in Government secondary schools. If we do a quick calculation, that will give a difference of some 626 who were not allocated to the Government secondary schools. That number, however, was further reduced by some 451, who applied and were given bursaries paid for by the Government, who attended private secondary schools. That will only give us a shortfall of some 175 who then would have gone on to the senior schools. The projected increase of the 2 390 places will take care of that shortfall in due course.

We will have to implement a proper sequential testing programme within the primary schools. We will also have to maintain the upward mobility of the students from the primary and the secondary schools within the system to prepare them for the world of work, and indeed the world of living, and, Mr. Speaker, we will have to restructure the movement of students from primary schools to secondary schools. We will have to devise a plan to enhance education, and the whole thought process will require the involvement not only of those of us who may have the responsibility at a ministerial level, or indeed at an administrative level, but those within the society who will have the responsibility for teaching the children, those who have the responsibility within the unions, and those who have the responsibility in the various Parent-Teacher Associations. We will have to come together to ensure that the educational system, of which we are so justly proud, is enhanced. Most of the honourable Members of this House have spent some time standing before classrooms in this country with the sole objective of enhancing the educational system within this country. A policy will be formulated to achieve that goal, Mr. Speaker.

I think my time may be up. The other areas which I may not have the opportunity to detail include the transport of pupils, visual aids, the Archives, the National Library Service, grants and subventions to various areas, the Barbados Dance Theatre and the Capital investment, which is part of the World Bank Loan which will take us to develop, in the first phase, what we now refer to as Package One - and we have heard this in this Honourable House before - Speightstown School, Selah, the St. Matthias' and St. Augustine, which are in the process and, hopefully, will be in full stream in a matter of weeks. Package Two will include Bayleys School, St. Mary's School and the Mount Tabor. Here I am speaking of the primary schools. In the area of secondary schools, we have Queen's College and the Wotton School presently provided for, and in due

course, Mr. Speaker, we will deal with the St. Thomas School.

Part of the funds provided for this Ministry for the year 1988-89 includes the construction of the conference centre at Sherbourne. Honourable Members and other members of the public will have noticed the advertisement in the papers over the last few days. It is intended that that construction will be completed in time to host the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Meeting in 1989, and the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Conference in 1990.

Mr. Speaker, my time is up and I am grateful to you, Sir, for the opportunity to give a brief on the actions, requirements and the objectives of the Ministry of Education and Culture for the year 1988-89.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Speaker, this Resolution reads:

"WHEREAS this Honourable House has, by its vote approved an Appropriation Bill containing, under appropriate heads for the several services required, the estimated aggregate sums which are proposed to be expended, other than by statutory expenditure, during the 1988/89 financial year.

"AND WHEREAS it is expedient that this House have the opportunity of further consideration of those Heads of Expenditure which were passed without debate, pursuant to Standing Order 66:9.

"BE IT RESOLVED, subject to the observance of Standing Order 28.11 in relation to the Heads of Expenditure which have already been debated, THAT this Honourable House take note of the policies, programmes and projects detailed by the Estimates of Expenditure."

Mr. Speaker, during the last debate on the Estimates, the Head of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries was not taken, but that Head was taken the year before and we had exhaustive discussions on that Head.

I need to say a few words on this Head, because the year under review has been a year during which some very negative pictures were painted by both daily organs of this country. I remember some of them. I remember one was headed, '-Whither Agriculture?' There was an editorial which implied that no increase in production in any agricultural yield was obtained over the last 20 years. Most recently, there was an article headlined that the cotton industry was moribund and should not be continued. There was a series of articles on praedial larceny and one on stray animals. Even the Shadow Minister for the portfolio, in the

Estimates Debate, I believe, used the word "catastrophic"; he said that the agricultural sector had a very catastrophic year. He went on to say that things that were imported this year were never imported, that the production of everything in Barbados was down.

If I were not operating in the Ministry, Mr. Speaker, and aware of the things that we were trying to do, one would have been completely daunted. But I am pleased to report that the Ministry has had some successes as well as some failures, and I am one of those Ministers who report as I see it, because it is in the interest of the country for me to report in such a vital sector of the economy as it really is. I propose very shortly to give a review of some of the sectors. I will highlight more the areas of failure and what we propose to do, and allow the Barbados Economic Report for 1987 to tell of any successes that we have had. It has now been laid, and I will only refer to one or two sections of it. 12.55 p.m.

I would like to look at some of the areas that still concern us in the Ministry and cause us trouble. You cannot debate agriculture unless you start with sugar, but I think it is now very well known, and I need not go into it very much, that the Ministry's latest position on sugar is that we should concentrate on a tonnage of sugar that would allow us to serve our preferential markets plus our domestic consumption, and have about ten per cent surplus. It is a deliberate policy of the Ministry.

I know there are schools of thought, and I am quite open to debate and to listen to those schools of thought - and some respected economists as well - that say that Barbados should grow all the sugar it can and export the surplus on the world market, enabling it to earn foreign exchange, and we provide subsidies for that. At the moment I am having that point of view researched. Last year we had 83 000 tonnes, and luckily for us, the Government and the people of Barbados, because of the policy last year and the strength of the ECUs, would not have to find any subsidy for the sugar industry for the 1987 crop. I would like to know what would happen if we had adopted that policy and now found ourselves with an additional 37 000 or 40 000 tonnes of sugar that would have been sold on the world market at that time at about US 10 cents per pound or US \$400 a tonne. I would like to know what would have happened between the differential of \$400 a tonne and the \$1 172 that they claim is the production cost of sugar, or some \$792 per tonne, and what would have happened when you multiply \$792 per tonne by nearly 40 000 tonnes, which a quick calculation would show that we would have been coming to the people of Barbados and asking them to provide a subsidy of about \$30 million.

As I say, it is a school of thought that has been put forward. I welcome it and would like to see it well documented so that I, too, would benefit from this school of thought in respect of the overall economic conditions of Barbados. But until such time as the Ministry and the Government as a whole is convinced that that is the way to go, the policy is that we will grow for the preferential markets plus ten per cent.

In the year under review, we manufactured about 83 000 tonnes of sugar. The total earnings from the industry were \$78.16 million, of which about \$63.04 million was foreign exchange earned and about \$15.11 million was the amount for the domestic supply. It is the first time for a long time that the industry, despite a reduction in acreage, earned so much money. This is due mainly to the fact, as I said before, of the strength of the ECUs against the United States dollar.

As far as this year's crop is concerned, Mr. Speaker, there are certain areas of disappointment to the industry and the Ministry. The first area of disappointment has been that the season is at least three weeks behind schedule, due to the difficulty in the industry of getting the canes reaped. As a result, the factories are operating at only about 60 per cent of their efficiency, which would naturally have some effect on the overall cost of production of a tonne of sugar, and therefore the industry stands to lose.

This year has brought the phenomenon, despite the high level of unemployment in Barbados, that there has been, and still is, to the best of my knowledge, availability of jobs in the sugar industry, but a shortage of workers. We find that the same problem was encountered in the cotton industry. As a result, the industry will have to look at mechanising as fast as possible to get around the problem of the shortage of sugar workers.

The only other thing I would like to say on sugar is, as I always say when I am discussing agriculture, that the Ministry's policy is not to go out of sugar, but to diversify around sugar. I think I need to repeat this every time I discuss agriculture, since it is very easy for people to conclude that the Ministry of the Government is determined to run the sugar industry into the ground etcetera, which is not true. I believe that the industry is very aware of the policy that we will diversify around sugar and not out of sugar. It is therefore in the areas of the other crops that I think we should spend some time, and I would like to highlight a few of the problems that we have had.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret now that for the past year or so the Ministry has been engaged in some very delicate discussions on the future of cotton. These discussions began against a background of some difficulty we had in the disposal of the cotton lint with the Japanese persons who

were buying that lint, and a further study by the technical people that the value added to cotton is tremendous when you go from the stage of lint, to yarn, through to cloth and the finished product. As a result, we started to discuss with some Japanese and Canadian concerns the possibility of capturing for Barbados some of this value added.

I have already reported on more than one occasion that these discussions are at a very advanced stage. Therefore, I thought it was most unfortunate when you can get national opinion being moulded to indicate that the Government is going in the wrong direction, that the industry is moribund, that the industry can go nowhere. And when you examine the information against which this opinion is being put, one becomes very suspicious.

Even in the most recent newspaper article that was headlined, "Fanners Appeal to Bring the Cotton Industry to an End", I was privileged, I must say, to be called by the person who was writing that article to react to it. My very first questions were: "Who are the farmers?" "What are the problems?" Unfortunately, the writer of the article did not feel he was in a position to tell me who the farmers were, but I reacted immediately by saying I found it a little bit alarming, since the Ministry has a fairly open door policy, that this was not brought to our attention.

What was brought to our attention, and what is being addressed, is the matter of an increase in the price for cotton lint, as was put by BSIL on behalf of the fanners. The problem is that the case as put by BSIL obviously had to be examined against their production cost. We have had to study them inside the Ministry, and we were not satisfied that the production figures as given by BSIL were correct.

More important, Mr. Speaker, is that we were alarmed that some of the production costs as submitted referred to fertiliser, etcetera, and it was within the Ministry's certain knowledge that the application of fertiliser, etcetera, as advocated and costed in the paper, was not actually done in the field. So you had a situation where they were making out a case for a costing, which included certain applications and practices, which naturally had a cost attached, but these applications and practices were not applied in every case in the field, with the consequential dropping off in yields. So you had a high production cost with a low yield. As a result of this, we said we had to examine it, and we looked at it extremely carefully and we were going back to BSIL to ask about it. 1.05p.m.

The other thing raised was that the rains came in and they could not apply for the control of the pest, and they made a legitimate point, which I have conceded in here before, the fact that the quality of some of the seeds were not the best.

I took the opportunity yesterday to enunciate the plans the Ministry has afoot to overcome these problems. An organisation, with the assistance of CIDA, has got a grant for us to do some research work on cotton. We will do some seed selection, breeding, agronomic tests, fibre tests, look at the whole policy and selection, and we will now mechanically delint instead of delinting by acid, as we did last year.

Until year before, the seeds for the production of cotton in Barbados were bought from Antigua. Antigua had not been growing a lot of cotton, but Antigua, at the Bombar Station, was responsible for the work and carried the germ plasm for the Sea Island cotton. Because Barbados has now taken the lead, we discovered that we could not get the cotton seed out of Antigua, and we had to start to put in place in Barbados the production of our own seeds.

Last year was the first year that we did not have a mechanical delinter, and we resorted to acid delinting, whereby some diluted acid water was used to remove the small fibres from the seeds, which inhibited mechanical planting of the cotton. One would discover that a better quality seed is the seed that has the thinnest shell, so, naturally, if you make any mistake at all with the solution for acid delinting, the first seeds that suffer would be the top quality seeds, the ones with very thin coats, and the seeds with thicker coats, which were not top quality, would be the ones to survive. The Ministry had some of that problem, last year, until we resorted to planting the seeds on delinting.

As a result, the productivity of some farms dropped this year in comparison with 1987. But you cannot discard a crop because you had one bad year due to rainfall or anything. I can cite many bad years for sugar, when production and yields were way down. I can go through every single item that you can think about, yams, vegetables. So you cannot just discard a crop, which has so much potential for foreign exchange earning, because of difficulty in one crop year.

I said yesterday that the Ministry is open. We are putting in place those things that we have enunciated before to get around the problem, and we would hope that we soon get around those problems. The Ministry is looking for an incentive payment programme, through which you would give an additional price for high yields in cotton, so that, once again, we would get the full co-operation of the farmers in Barbados.

I also said in the newspaper that if profitability is the only thing you look at, even in 1987, I have not known in the Ministry of Agriculture one single plantation reporting a profit on sugar. I am not saying they have not made a profit, but in reporting to the Ministry of Agriculture, not one

single plantation has reported a profit from sugar cane but we have never had any difficulty in getting them to grow sugar, for obvious reasons - they are familiar with it, but even more important is that they have grown and come around to believe that in times of difficulty, the Government of the day would come to their rescue. All I can say is that the Government of the day sees cotton as a strategic crop. For the same reason as the sugar cane - it is 100 per cent export crop. Every single pound of cotton lint that we reap in Barbados is exported and brings in foreign exchange. Unlike sugar, some of which we use on the domestic market, it is a 100 per cent export crop.

I have been doing a costing. With the average yield of Sea Island Cotton in Barbados at between 1 200 and 1 500 pounds, which would give you between 400 and 500 pounds of lint, at Bds. \$7 a pound, that is Bds \$3 550, or the equivalent of US \$1 750, that can be earned per acre from cotton. If you do a comparative study for sugar, even in the preferred market, even at last year's price, when we got about \$971 per tonne, they averaged last year a little over three tonnes of sugar per acre; so 971×3 is \$2 700 or US \$1 350.

The cotton crop forms a strategic part of Barbados' agro-policy for the bringing in of foreign exchange. I appeal again to the growers in Barbados for their co-operation, against the background that the Ministry would be the first to recognise the problems we have had. We are moving full force ahead to correct those problems, and like anything in agriculture, you cannot drop it the moment you have one little difficulty. If this had been the case in sugar cane, we would have no sugar industry, because I am positive there were years when we had problems in sugar back in the time when you had the moth borer.

Mr. Speaker, this Barbados Economic Report was laid in Parliament today, and I would like to read from Chapter 5, page 32, to start on the other part of my discourse. It says:

"In 1987, non-sugar agriculture grew by 9.1% after declining by an average of 2.4% in 1985 and 1986. Despite extremely dry weather in the first half of 1987, the output of vegetables was not adversely affected and conditions were favourable for a recovery of root crops, with the exception of yams which was affected by the disease."

This was anthracnose, and we have put in place a multi-disciplinary research team to look for it.

It continues:

"However, real value added in the agricultural sector fell by 11.2% in 1987." This is a direct result of the policy taken on sugar.

"The decline was due entirely to the disappointing performance of the sugar subsector."

I would like to disagree with the words "disappointing performance" because, as I have said before, it is a deliberate policy decision by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government, for the time being, in dealing with the sugar sector.

It also said that agriculture output reached its highest level during 1987, contributing \$171.6 million to the nominal GDP.

I only say this to point out that despite what was said during the year, the non-sugar sector of agriculture did perform very creditably. We went through certain areas of difficulties; one with the yam crop due to the anthracnose, then the first part of the export programme, which we have discussed at length in Parliament here, where we had difficulty with one or two of the crops. I am pleased to say that from the beginning of the year we have seen a tremendous improvement in that, and we are now exporting fairly sizeable quantities of sweet potatoes and other crops. 1.15p.m.

The other sector is the livestock sector. This has performed very creditably during the period under review. The poultry sector led the way, and I noticed in the newspaper some time ago that the poultry men themselves said that the sector brought in about \$54 million from poultry and eggs.

The dairy sector has been improving, but we had some difficulties. There have been shortages in fresh milk due to the increased demand because of the programme carried out by the Pine Hill Dairy. In an effort to counter this increased demand, there has been importation of about 160 head of cattle from Canada. Unfortunately, I would say, most of the farmers did not have as good a deal as they would have hoped with some of the cattle that came. The delay in the programme has caused some of the animals that came to Barbados to be duplicated, and the exporters, as far as I am told, did not select any top quality animals, as the original selection team indicated. So we have some difficulty with some of the animals in Barbados, but we are currently addressing this problem.

The pig industry has settled the glut problem, because they are trying to regularise the industry. It is not as obvious as before, and we continue to work very closely with the processors of this country for them to take bigger and bigger portions of their requirements for processing from the local pig industry. We are at the stage where the processors are now using about 65 per cent from the local

industry, and in a programme drawn up between the pig people and the processors, they are working continually towards reducing this.

Over the year, the Barbados Agricultural Society imported new stock to improve the breed of pig in Barbados. They have been having numerous seminars on pig management, particularly to reduce the back fat and make the pigs better for processing, and for them to have better growth. The fanners in Barbados in the pig industry are beginning to learn quite fast, and their management is a lot better than it has been in the past.

The other sector that is beginning to show some signs of growth is the beef production sector. One or two of the fanners are beginning to look at beef production as an area that they can get into, and that area is growing fairly rapidly.

There is one constraining factor for the production and further improvement of the livestock industry in Barbados - the provision of a new and up-to-date abattoir. The existing abattoir does not lend itself to a situation in which you can increase the turnout very much more. Even more important, we do not have the facilities in the existing abattoir where you can age meat and have it cut and packaged properly for the market. These are things that would be absolutely necessary if the livestock industry is to gather ground.

We have on the Ministry's drawing table a proposal for a new abattoir. We have referred it to one of the international agencies for funding and we are waiting on the results of that application. I am hopeful that we would have a favourable reply which would allow for the construction of a new abattoir in Barbados.

There are two statutory corporations that my Ministry has responsibility for, the first one is the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation. From the 1986-87 Annual Statement of Accounts that I have seen in draft, I am pleased to report that they have been able to reduce their operational loss by some \$1.5 million. Speaking from memory, that operational loss is now down to about \$402 000 for the year 1986-87. That also showed that, for the first time for a long time, three of the plantations in the group declared an operational profit. I believe that that trend will continue as the management and board of ADC continues to tighten up and bring about more effective management.

We still have difficulty with the millstone of a considerable bank loan that is around the neck of ADC. In 1986, when I took over the Ministry, that sum was some \$6.8 million. Despite the fact that ADC has been performing better, the cost of that loan is still having a toll on ADC, and it continues to be a source of worry for us.

The other corporation is the Barbados Marketing Corporation. They have been engaging themselves more and more with perfecting their ability to do export farming. They are not only acting as a back house for ATCO, they are now actually in export farming. They have had some of the difficulties which we have discussed before, but they have ironed them out. I am also pleased to say that they are projecting an operational profit for the year of about \$700 000, moving from an operational loss in the year before and in the years before.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that despite the numerous gloomy articles and negative approach by the newspapers, which even indicated that payment to the agricultural sector is low and asked people not to go into it, - I believe they have to understand that Barbados is already a high price producer in primary produce, because of the cost of labour in Barbados -

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Minister must remember that in the Other Place during debate on the Appropriation Bill, the Minister of State -1 do not know how you describe him

(Aside: Clarke.)

(Aside: Yes.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office did call for higher wages to be paid in the sugar industry, Sir, as one aspect of the agricultural sector. And he, I believe, is a member of the Cabinet, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I am still saying that in the agricultural industry in Barbados we are already a high price producer. If you examine the agricultural wages in Barbados *vis-a-vis* the other islands, you will see that agricultural wages in Barbados are far above the wages in any other Caribbean island. Unless we can get consequential improvement in production, we will have a problem.

Very quickly, Mr. Speaker, ...

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope you will be.

Laughter.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, if you examine the hourly rates in the cotton industry, I know of people picking cotton for five hours of the day, and most days they would be going home with between \$45 and \$50, which is about \$9.00 an hour. If you apply that rate to many of the

white collar jobs in Barbados, you will find they are not so badly paid after all.

In summary, despite the gloomy picture painted by all the media for the past year about agriculture, you would see that, for the first time, we have contributed about \$171 million to a nominal GDP. You will find that the share has grown from 6.4 per cent to 6.7 per cent. There has been an increase in non-sugar by 9.1 per cent. The sugar industry this year, due to a number of favourable things, has brought in more money than it has done for the last year. We are beginning to get some expertise in the exportation of non-sugar crops, and we will continue during the next year to do whatever we can, with the assistance of the farmers of Barbados, to make sure that the agricultural sector continues to add to the economy of Barbados.

Thank you very much.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES (St. Lucy): Mr. Speaker, like the Honourable Minister of Agriculture who has just sat down, I would like to make a brief intervention on this Resolution, bearing in mind the purpose for which it was introduced into this Chamber, that is, to provide an opportunity for us to at least give some general indication as to the kind of direction which is taking place, or which is likely to take place, during the year for which money has been voted. 1.25 p.m.

We in the Democratic Labour Party consider the work of the Export Promotion Corporation as an integral part of the work of the Ministry, in that this agency is charged with the responsibility for promoting exports from Barbados. I think that the record would indicate that Barbados has passed through a fairly difficult time in the area of exports. There are a number of reasons for that which, I believe, are well known. In the first instance, if one were to examine the impact of the closure of three large enclave industries that we had operating here in Barbados, one would see the kind of impact that it had on exports and, indeed, on employment. I am talking of the closure in 1985, I think it was, of CORCOM, which at one stage employed over 400 people and which added significantly to the exports of Barbados, the impact of which we began to see in a very visible way in 1986. Then, of course, there was the closure in 1986 of Intel and Playtex. I do not think that I need to indicate in terms of quantities the kind of negative effect which the closure of these three industries had both on the employment situation in Barbados and on the earning of foreign exchange for this country. Intel and CORCOM were major contributors to foreign exchange earnings. In 1987 Belltronics closed its doors temporarily, but reopened in 1988, I think it was in January. But this was all to do with the vagaries of the market, certainly the electronics

market, in the first instance. I think Playtex withdrew, obviously, for another reason.

We have these particular problems, but we are not sitting in our laurels. The Export Promotion Corporation and the Industrial Development Corporation are trying to use approaches which will have the effect of an increase in our exports, in the first instance, and of attracting additional business to come into this country.

One has to understand, certainly I understand this, that there is no agency, no activity for that matter, against which criticism cannot be levelled. So, from time to time, I know that the Industrial Development Corporation will be criticised for, maybe, particular approaches. The Export Promotion Corporation can indeed be criticised, and will be criticised, for not doing enough. But this is the nature of things, and I accept that. I like to think that any criticisms which are levelled at any of these two institutions are criticisms which are designed to improve their operations and to give some kind of direction which these organisations should follow, bearing in mind that, in the final analysis, they are organisations designed to improve the quality of life both, in terms of providing employment opportunities and assisting in identifying areas where we can earn much needed foreign exchange.

The Export Promotion Corporation is involved in market surveys. I think that during the Estimates Debate the honourable Member for the City (Mr. P. J. M. Miller) referred to the fact that a survey had not been done of the Canadian market for sometime by the EPC. I do not recall if a survey of the possibilities which exist in Canada has ever been done. This year, the EPC has as one of its objectives to do a complete survey of the Canadian market to see what possibilities are there. Our feeling of the situation does suggest that there are a number of possibilities. Indeed, I think that the Barbados Marketing Corporation and the Agricultural Development Corporation have been testing that market for the products which they have.

There is a big market in Canada for cut flowers. There is also a big market in Canada for agricultural produce, and in testing the Canadian market, one of the things which we certainly would like to see is the exploitation of what we call the "ethnic market". We would also like to see the ethnic market in the United States of America and England being exploited, because we believe that there are tremendous possibilities there amongst Barbadians, in the first instance, and West Indians, in general, for products which we have here. Our initial feeling of the situation suggests that there are possibilities there and I would encourage, and have encouraged, the Export Promotion Corporation to go in that direction and build on that

I believe that some of the best sales people we could have promoting some of our products, particularly products which are indigenous to Barbados, are Barbadians. And I would like to think, Sir, that not only would we be concerned with this exporting, but in identifying persons on the other side who would be able to have the wherewithal to import our products and market them in these countries. So market surveys will then be one of the major things.

The Export Promotion Corporation will also be doing a number of surveys in the Caribbean market, CARICOM, and beyond. There will be a mission going to Antigua later on this year. We will be doing some missions in the Eastern Caribbean. There will be an effort made to test and survey the market in Suriname and in the other Dutch colonies, because again our indications suggest that there are possibilities there. 1.35p.m.

The Export Promotion Corporation also, by its very nature, provides a variety of assistance to exporters. We hope that this will continue, and that exporters will continue to use the knowledge and the information of the EPC in ensuring that they have the kind of market information which is so vital when we get into exports.

From time to time, statements have been made about the utilisation of our embassies abroad to assist in the promotion of trade. I think we have to use our embassies in a much more effective manner than we are using, and that we have ever used in the past. If you take the United Kingdom, Canada or the United States, the embassies which they have in Barbados have very active trade sections. These sections have the responsibility for promoting trade from the respective countries to Barbados, and I think that we have to ensure that our embassies abroad play a more effective role in the promotion of trade opportunities, identifying where those trade opportunities are, and promoting Barbados' trade and Barbadian products as much as possible. I would certainly like to think that we will be able to give some meaningful effect to this line of thinking during the course of the year.

It is clear that manufacturing and exports are linked in a very close way. One of the things which have been bothering us - and I think that, more and more, one is seeing somewhat of a change in this direction - is that when you examine the indigenous manufacturing sector, and indeed examine the whole commercial scene in Barbados, you will find that the persons who have been successful in business have tended to be in the trading side of business and not in the manufacturing side. We would like to see a closer link between the commercial trading sector and the manufacturing sector.

You will recall, Sir, that during last year's Estimates, I made reference to the fact that a large company like Banks Breweries, which has a very good product, did not seem to us to be particularly interested in getting themselves geared for the export market. I was very pleased to read only last week that they have signed an agreement, which will mean that they will be adjusting and altering their plant to accommodate the possibilities for export. I would like to impress that on other companies in Barbados which have the wherewithal in terms of money to finance that kind of development, companies which have the knowledge of marketing and the connections, both regionally and extra-regionally, to utilise those connections, because in the final analysis, what we have to be concerned with primarily are enterprises which will provide that kind of link, and will provide us with the kind of foreign exchange that will allow us to continue to develop in the way in which we would like to see this country develop. To me, a lot of emphasis is placed on trading rather than on manufacturing, and I use this opportunity to appeal to those in the commercial trading sector to use their expertise, finances and connections to develop linkages with the manufacturing sector with a view to further promoting our exports, both regionally and extra-regionally.

Sir, over the past year the Industrial Development Corporation has had a number of requests for factory space, and every effort is being made to ensure that this demand is met as expeditiously as possible. What we propose to do this year, in the first instance, is to construct a factory which will be devoted to those companies which are operating in IDC buildings, and also those companies which have been requesting space, in the production of food and food-related goods. Those kinds of operations at the moment are accommodated in factories which were not built for those purposes, and we want to raise the standard of production in Barbados. If we are going to really encourage the production of food-related items to a standard that can reach beyond the region, and indeed also to satisfy the high standard which we have here in this country, the conditions under which these goods are produced must be able to satisfy the highest level of requirements for the Ministry of Health, not only locally but also in the extra-regional markets. So this is one of the factories which we will be constructing, and it will be in Wildey.

We are also going to be refurbishing a number of factories. There is one in the Harbour Industrial Estate which is almost completed, and there is one in Newton which is also going to be refurbished. We will, of necessity, have to look for some additional areas where we will have to put up some additional factories, based on the kind of requests which we have had. I think it is a matter of record that we have agreed to give up the area of land which was partially developed in Six Men's, St. Peter, for housing. We

will obviously have to seek to get that replaced so that we will be able to get the additional space which we require.

Aside.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I know that the Leader of the Opposition will say that the Barbados Labour Party developed that site and all sorts of things. It was developed for factory purposes, but my information from the Industrial Development Corporation suggests to me that there were no enquiries from manufacturers for this site, and that is why nothing was done about it. The IDC could not get people interested in going into that particular direction, so we thought that the best use that could have been put to that was to hand it over to Housing for developing a housing area and get an exchange, or get another area of land which would be suitable for manufacturing.

One of the major thrusts which we have embarked on this year is in the area of data processing. Barbados has a lot of advantages in this particular area, and we have some major companies operating here in data processing. We have Caribbean Data Services, International Demographics Lifestyles and Offshore Keyboarding, which is a subsidiary of Cable and Wireless, along with some other smaller operations. They have indicated very clearly that they requirements for 1988 will be an additional 400 workers, and the Industrial Development Corporation has embarked on a training programme to assist in the preparation of the workers for this kind of activity. 1.45 p.m.

Last Tuesday, we launched the training programme. Already, there are 60 young women who are involved in this, who I am told are assured of jobs as soon as they complete the training. Another 60 will be going into training at the end, I think, of May, or the middle of May. It is a co-operative effort in which we are involved, because the IDC has provided the space and have co-ordinated the training course, but the companies have provided the trainers, furniture, and the computers for the training on this particular programme, and I think that it is a tribute to those companies which are involved in this training programme to be working hand-in-hand with the Government in this exercise. We are hopeful that certainly the kind of information which we have will demonstrate very clearly that we have made the right decision at this moment to go in that direction.

Of course, the point has already been made that we have to look at additional facilities, for example a teleport, which is crucial to the future development of this particular area. I am told that there is some fairly prominent consideration coming out of BET in this particular direction. We have to always bear in mind that Barbados is not the only country in the world seeking to exploit

possibilities in data processing. We have competition from Jamaica, which has already established a teleport, and the Dominican Republic, which has already established one, and if we are going to be able to maximise our efforts in this area, it seems to me that we will have to go in that direction and to have a teleport established. I hope that we would be able to get some positive response in this direction, because our telecommunications would be linked in this particular development. That is something which I thought I should speak on so that people would get some general idea about the kind of direction in which we propose to go.

We anticipate that there will be a number of other operations which would be given their status to begin operations some time in the not too distant future. I am sure that the companies concerned will be making the announcements when they are ready to begin their operations, but I know that there is one company which is expected to start soon, which will be manufacturing costume jewellery with a well-known brand name, which I would not bother to call. That will start, as I understand it, with probably 75 or so workers who will be required.

I think that one of the important things that we have to continue to stress is the need for training at the management level, both at the top and in the middle. This is one of the major areas of weakness which we have in the manufacturing sector in this country, and a study which has been done by the IDC demonstrated this very clearly, and we would like to think that we would be able to concentrate in finding some technical assistance in this area.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am having difficulty in hearing the honourable Member.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Sir, I should like to move on to a few other areas, because I am positive that we are running against time.

There has been a programme of expansion in the area of co-operative development. If one were to look at the figures, one would see what I am talking about. We do not necessarily have to go back to the last five years. Between March 31, 1986 and March 31, 1987, membership in co-operatives moved to 28 143, an increase of 4 553 persons, and the savings of members showed a significant increase from \$36 639 383 to \$58 500 440. Total assets increased from \$45 140 150 to \$69 544 730, or 54.1 per cent.

Most of the growth has been in the area of credit unions, but if one were to examine, for example, the staffing of the department, one would find that although the activities have increased since 1961, we are still operating on the same basis as when the co-operative movement was a little more than a kind of penny savings society. The co-

operative movement in Barbados is now a multi-million dollar business, and, therefore, we have to gear the Co-operative Department to match the growth of this particular area. We have already submitted to the Establishments Division recommendations for increasing the staff, both in quality and quantity, that will be entrusted with the responsibility for managing the growth of the co-operative movement, and also ensuring that proper procedures are followed by the various societies in managing the monies which have been entrusted to them. I think this is a fundamental point, one which we have to respond to, and I am hoping that we will get that through as soon as possible.

In addition to that, the Act which governs Co-operatives is an Act which has been on the Statute Book, I believe, from 1948, and is in need of modernisation. We have established a committee which is charged with the responsibility of looking at it and bringing it up-to-date so that we can have a modern Act, and we are hoping that by the middle of the year we will have this legislation ready. I think that it is important that we get these two aspects of development in place so that we would be able to respond to what, obviously, is a very important development in the area of savings in this country. 1.55p.m.

Just let me say a few words, finally, on consumer affairs, for which we also have responsibility. I think that a policy on consumer affairs is critical to this country. I think that we have reached the level of sophistication in this country now where consumers are beginning to question the quality of goods and, indeed, the quality of service which is meted out to them and there is need for legislation in this area.

There is need for active consumer associations in Barbados. We are looking at providing a unit which would be able to deliver the kinds of services in terms of receiving complaints, pursuing them and, hopefully, getting some kind of settlement in this particular area. It is true that it is still an area in which there are a lot of legitimate complaints which are levelled, and can be levelled, both from the point of view of service and the quality of products which are sold in this country, and I hope that, in the course of the year, we would be able to relate further plans to this House and to the country which will show the intention of the Government in this respect.

Sir, I know that the bell has sounded, and I would not want to overstay my time on this particular debate, and, therefore, I would conclude at this point

Thank you.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD (St Michael South): Mr. Speaker, I believe most Members who would have wished

to participate in this debate have done so, and I will, therefore, wind up the debate on this Resolution.

I think, Sir, that this Resolution is a very significant one, and it will be considered as such in retrospect when we look at our arrangements for examination of the public finances, in particular, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, because for the first time in the history of our parliamentary practice, as far as I can recall, and as far as my researches indicate, this is the first occasion on which this House has had an opportunity, over and beyond the times set for consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure under the Appropriation Bill, to allocate time for the further consideration of heads of expenditure. I think that this is very important and significant, because in the past, there have been comments that the House was, perhaps, not able to perform the kinds of functions in relation to the examination of revenue and expenditure that it, perhaps, should, because quite a number of heads passed under the guillotine arrangements before discussion could take place. I think it is part of the innovative approach to the management of public affairs in this country and in this House that this Government is imparting to such matters, that additional time and avenues could be provided for consideration by the representatives of the people of allocations of expenditure.

When we discussed the Appropriation Bill, Sir, I indicated that that was phase I of the budgetary process in the country. We have now come to the end of that particular phase, having given very full consideration to the expenditure side of the public finances.

The time has now come, Sir, when we have to give consideration to the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals to complete that process which was started towards the end of March. In this particular Resolution, we have looked further, and there have been very excellent contributions outlining the role of the Government in seeking to use public funds in the most efficient manner for the further development of this country.

We have now, today, laid the Economic Report for 1987, and we have laid in very timely manner the Annual Report and related documents of the Central Bank for the year 1987. Everything, therefore, is now in place for the

making of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals.

I propose, Sir, to make the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals on Thursday, April 28, 1988 at 4.30 p.m. As usual, the official reply will come on the following day, and as is our practice, the debate will continue on Friday April 29. The final day of the debate would be Tuesday, May 3, 1988.

Those are the arrangements that we are proposing to adopt, and I am pleased to advise the House of those particular arrangements. 2.05 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I almost got lost with the statement made by the Honourable Prime Minister in view of the fact that I forgot the time, and that I should also put the Resolution.

Laughter.

(*Aside:* Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Prime Minister got lost in the Resolution, Sir.)

Laughter.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, that takes care of Government Business for today. In view of what the Prime Minister has just said in respect of the Budgetary Statement, I now move that this House do now adjourn until Thursday, April 28, 1988 at 4.30 p.m.

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

The question that this sitting stand adjourned until Thursday, April 28, 1988 at 4.30 p.m. was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly. 2.08 p.m.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

FRANKLIN, Hon. W. O. (St. Philip North)
GREAVES, Hon. E. E. (St. Lucy) KING, Hon. M. A. (Christ Church West Central) SANDIFORD, Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South) WALKER, Hon. C V. (St. George North)