

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986-91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, December 6, 1988.

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

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. WEEKES, J. P., (Speaker)

His Honour J. J. PAYNE, (Deputy Speaker)

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

Hon. B. M. TAITT, B.A.(Hons.), M.P.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)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P., (Edin.)

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN, B.A., M.A., (Minister of Transport and Works)

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P., (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)

D. A. C. SIMMONS, Esq., Q.C., LL.M.

O. S. ARTHUR, Esq., 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)

L. L. BRATHWAITE, Esq., J.P.

' E. BOURNE, Esq.

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

Hon. W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.B.M., (Minister of Tourism and Sports)

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

C. LeR. TROTMAN, Esq., M.A.

R. L. MORRIS, Esq., B.A., Cert. Ed.

P. J. M. MILLER, Esq.

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

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

Prayers were led by Fr. Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, 22nd November, 1988.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Minutes of the Proceedings of this Honourable Chamber for the meeting held on the 22nd November, 1988 be taken as read and confirmed.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I am in receipt of Statement and Accounts for the month of August, 1988 as prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded! by the Cabinet and on behalf of the Minister of Finance to lay the following document:

The Exchange Control (University of the West Indies and the United States Agency for International Development Project) (Exemption) Order, 1988.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

1. Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of parcels of land at River Road, Pine Road, Collymore Rock and Culloden Road for the purpose of road improvement.
2. Resolution to grant the sum of \$7 047 000 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1988-89, Part II - Capital, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1988-89, No. 5, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.
3. Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Government of a loan of \$13 000 000 made by the Barbados National Bank to the Transport Board.

I also give notice of a Bill to amend the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act be read a first time.

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

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

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 84 is ready.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 91 is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am moving that the following Standing Orders be suspended - Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 - for the remainder of this sitting.

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

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

ORDER No. 1 - A BILL TO REPEAL THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE BOARD ACT

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to repeal the National Health Service Board Act, Cap. 381A and to provide for related matters.

I saw in a publication today that the House was going to be reading the burial rites. I do not know where they got the information, but sometimes these publications are very indicative of truth and today may have been one of those days. 12.25 p.m.

I did not come to bury anything; I come to lay finally to rest an episode in the history of health in Barbados and to put into practice a commitment which the party which now forms the Government and which I have the honour to represent made to the people of Barbados concerning certain aspects of their health care.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that there was a time in Barbados not so long ago when the administration, the Barbados Labour Party, determined that it would establish a National Health Service in Barbados. That National Health Service which was attempted to be based on the National Health Service of the United Kingdom, would have created, in essence, a version of the National Health Service in the United Kingdom.

Sir, the National Health Service in the United Kingdom has a history which I do not believe it is necessary for us to rehash, regurgitate or indeed to ventilate. To the extent however that it is necessary to put this discussion in the proper framework, one may have to refer to the National Health Service of the United Kingdom.

Essentially what we are doing here today is that we are repealing the National Health Service Board Act which set up a Statutory Board to administer what would have been the National Health Service, and for ease of reference, Mr. Speaker, I am going to refer to some of the things which the Act set out to do.

The purpose of the Act was to set up a Board which was responsible for providing general practice services for persons resident in Barbados and as from the appointed day for administering the Drug Service. That was clause 3. Clause 4 said that general practice would have been provided by participating medical practitioners whether at designated health care centres, approved premises or

elsewhere to beneficiaries whose names appeared on the practitioner's panel or in prescribed circumstances on another practitioner's panel in accordance with regulations, and who availed themselves of these services; and this set out a number of other general purposes. Part 2 of that Act established a Board. That Board would have been a body corporate and it constituted an overall agency that would have administered the service. And included in its functions would have been the ability to make arrangements for administering the service provided by the Act and the regulations; - to administer the Drug Service; to enter into agreement with medical practitioners for the provision of services by them whether at designated health care centres, approved private premises etcetera, to ensure that the beneficiaries receive a reasonable standard of treatment; to prepare medical lists; to prepare medical practitioners' panels; to inspect and approve private premises; and to advise the Minister generally on matters relating to the Drug Service.

As you know, Sir, the Drug Service went into effect in 1982. It came into existence in 1980, but essentially for all practical purposes it went into effect in 1982. The Drug Service continues to function, and I will have some more to say about that later. But the National Health Service Board Act also established certain financial arrangements. That is essentially what we have come to deal with today. Because that is what has to be dealt with in order to allow the Drug Service to be administered by the Ministry and allow for certain monies collected under the health levy that were to be dealt with by the Board to be administered under the aegis of the Treasury.

The fund which was established in Part 3 of the Act in 1984 would consist of contributions made as health service contributions in Part 2A of the National Insurance and Social Security Act, monies accruing from the operations of the Board and monies accruing or vested in the Board other than as specified in Parts A and B. The Board was required to keep accounts of its transactions; the Board was required to have its accounts audited. The Auditor General could go in at any time and on the direction of the Minister of Finance carry out investigations, and the members, officers and servants of the Board were required to allow the Auditor General, or, as the case may be, some one approved by him, to carry out such examinations.

The Board was required not later than 30th June in each year to submit a report to the Minister detailing an account of its activities for the preceding financial year and a statement of its audited accounts. And in the miscellaneous section of the National Health Service Board Act, the Minister after consulting with the Chairman of the Board, would give the Board directions in writing of a general or specific character respecting the policy to be followed in the performance of its functions affecting

matters that appear to the Minister to be of public interest, and the Board was required to comply with those directions.

The Minister of Finance was given authority under the Act to invest any funds in securities-, dispose of its securities and enter into any contract for the purpose of raising loans. And the Minister of Health was given the authority to acquire or dispose of any real property; assign, in respect of the office of Director of the National Health Service Board or Director of the Drug Service, a salary in respect of such amount as the Minister determines; appoint persons to offices specified; determine the remuneration to be paid; and make provision for the payment of pensions, gratuities, et cetera. The Board was required to hear complaints against participating medical practitioners which were made in a prescribed manner, and if the Board were satisfied that the medical practitioner had committed an act prejudicial to the efficiency delivered by the general practice services, the Board could censure the participating practitioner. The Board could impose a fine not exceeding \$500, - quite an innovation, Sir - and the Board would report the action complained of to the Medical Council. And then the Board could remove the name of the participating medical practitioner from the medical list.

The Board was also required to make regulations for a number of things. I am taking the trouble to rehash, if you will, some of these things so that we will know what was set out in the Act and so that any enterprising journalist who is going to be writing a column on behalf of any political party would be able to get the facts. Because it does not seem as though most of the journalists who write on behalf of certain political parties bother with such mundane things as facts.

I am not yet ready to discuss the merits or demerits of the respective journalists or the respective political parties. I am going to stay with the Bill first.

The Board, therefore, Sir, with the approval of the Minister could make regulations relating to the manner and form of the application by medical practitioners indicating an interest in providing general practice services and the determination of those applications, and a whole number of other things which the Board could make regulations for. 12.35p.m.

Notwithstanding that section, the Minister could make regulations prescribing the categories of persons who were to benefit from the services provided by the Act and the date of the availability of those services in respect of any particular category.

Then they had provision, for offences as they usually do in these Acts and then the Drug Service Act 1980 and the National Insurance and Social Security Act were

amended in certain respects. So the Drug Service, as I said, came into operation.

Mr. Speaker, the Board would consist of not more than 12 persons appointed to include the Chief Medical Officer, the Director of Finance and Planning or his nominee, a pharmacist appointed by the Minister, 2 medical practitioners, 1 nurse appointed by the Minister, 2 medical practitioners appointed by the Minister, one of whom must be a consultant of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and 4 persons appointed by the Minister representing community interests.

. The Director, National Health Service Board and the Director of the Drug Service could attend meetings but had no right to vote.

The Minister must appoint from among the members of the Board persons to be Chairman and Deputy Chairman. This was also one of the clauses of the Schedule.

The members would hold office for 3 years unless they died, resigned or had their appointments revoked but a person could have been appointed to fill a vacancy created by death.

The appointment, removal, resignation or death of a member had to be published and the usual arrangements for members of Boards could be found in the. Schedule.

They had a complaints committee. They had provisions for the general administration of the Act copied, generally speaking, from the provisions that could be found in the relevant United Kingdom legislation.

Mr. Speaker, all of these things as they came to be discussed in the public place, led to the creation of, perhaps, the worst time in the history of health in this country. Because as a result of a breakdown in the negotiations between the doctors in Barbados and the Government of the day, one saw an almost complete destruction of the great relationships that had existed up until that time between the medical fraternity and the various Governments of Barbados.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the doctors on seeing the plans as outlined by the Government for the National Health Service had pointed out to the Government that a National Health Service was not considered by them to be desirable and/or necessary and, if so, not in the terms which were being outlined by the Government.

You will recall, Sir, that the question of the creation of lists of medical practitioners, the question of the catchment areas to be used for the list, and the capitation considerations (you will recall that all of these matters became hot bones of contention) and you will recall, also,

Sir, that it was during that time that the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners came into being.

It was as a result of the impending National Health Service that the doctors, recognizing that they had no choice under that Government but to seek to protect their interests, formed themselves into a trade union. "※"

- The Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners and the Barbados Government under the Barbados Labour Party of that day then went into a systematic examination of one another.

The Barbados Labour Party promptly withdrew the stipend that had been given to the Medical Council of \$5 000 a year. And the Barbados Labour Party, out of spite, nothing more than spite, Sir, - I perused the files and I have sought to find the rationale for the decision and I can find nothing on the files which would suggest that it was a reasoned decision... As a matter of fact, the Cabinet of 1974 * had made a decision that it would give to the Medical Council, as it was then called, a stipend of \$5 000 to assist with research.

The Cabinet decision of 1974 does not seem to have been rescinded anywhere. But the Minister of the day, aided and abetted by the Prime Minister of the day, determined that the first shot that they would fire with the new trade union was to withdraw the \$5 000.

I was so shocked to discover recently that that had been done. I must confess I did not even in those days believe that anybody would be so spiteful.

The Barbados Labour Party should never ever discuss anything to do with trade unions. Its history with trade unions, even a trade union as innocuous as the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, is not one that it would wish the world to know. *

Well, Sir, the first thing before we go any further... As soon as I discovered this I sought to have it restored. It is a strange and unacceptable way to deal with a professional organisation. So the first thing we are going to do is to restore the stipend. And the Cabinet has agreed with my recommendation that the stipend shall be restored to the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners from the financial year 1989 because it was in the Estimates, and, in the interim, any research which the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners must do before the end of the financial year will come out of the funds of the Ministry of Health. And we are going to double it too - from \$5 000 to \$10 000; because we feel that the Barbados Workers Union... We have increased theirs, you will recall. We know that the Barbados Labour Party does not like to recall these things. But you will remember we restored the Barbados Workers Union to its proper level. We have „

increased the stipend for the NUPW, I think, and we are going to put the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners on the same basis. That is the first thing we are going to do.

We in the Opposition at the time sought to come to the assistance of principle. We sought to discuss the matter of the National Health Service at the level of principle. The record will show that we have been consistent.

We first pointed out that the relationship in Barbados in health between the private sector and the public sector had always been good; and that we had elements of free medical service in Barbados which ought to be preserved and improved and increased where necessary; but that the National Health Service in Britain had not proved to be successful over many years and that a National Health Service in Barbados would only serve to erode the substantial gains that had been made up until then. 12.45 p.m.

We saw (after the opening shot by the Government against the trade union called the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners) a systematic attack by the Government on the persons in the Association as well as the Association itself. I recall the Prime Minister of the day at a public meeting saying the vilest and most heinous things about the then President of the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners.

I recall the Minister of Health of the day describing the doctors in a manner which could only be described as insulting. I am not even going to use the term because everybody in Barbados knew what he called them. I would let the Labour Party get up and say what it is he called them, if they wish. But I am not going to put it in the record because I do not believe it is worthy of this House that any profession should be treated in the manner in which the doctors were treated in this country by the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am ready for him today as long as he falls within the rules, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very much so. Very much so.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Once he is within the rules, I will take him on. If he goes outside, Mr. Speaker will protect me.

Laughter.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: To say that a sick-out is immoral is not to call anybody immoral.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: And since the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is an eminent barrister and Queen's Counsel who speaks the English language from time to time...

Laughter.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I know that he understands that. So to say, from his seat, that I called the nurses immoral, is "really to try to cast a little aside to steer me away from the deliberate destruction which I intend to demonstrate here today. The deliberate destruction of the medical profession by the Barbados Labour Party formed a substantial part of its policy during this time.

Mr. Speaker, you would be surprised at some of the things they wrote about the doctors. What they said is child's play compared with what they wrote about them. And all of that merely because the doctors sought to get the Barbados Labour Party to put their position, to put the whole question of health in Barbados in a certain perspective.

It is fascinating to me that the Barbados Labour Party today is discussing nursing and other ancillary health matters in certain terms. When they were setting out to bring - they said that they were going to bring doctors from wherever they could find them if the doctors in Barbados would not adhere to or kow-tow to what they were about to impose on them.

It was during that time also that they allowed the health service of this country to fall below the standards to which all of us had come to expect.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 25 years or so there has been a systematic ignoring of the cause of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and other institutions for maintenance of their equipment and maintenance of their services. And what has happened and happened in particular during the time I am describing is that the Government took the opportunity - most people do not remember - to cut the services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I believe they tried to give the impression at the time that the impasse between the doctors and the Government was resulting in certain activity on the part of the doctors which would lead to the reduction in services. I believe that is what was intended. But the fact is that during that period, you will recall that services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in the other agencies had reached a new low.

We gave the public of this country an undertaking when we asked them to give us a mandate to run the affairs of this country, we, the Democratic Labour Party Government. We were the Democratic Labour Party in Opposition men, Sir, and we asked the public to give us a mandate for our management of their affairs. And in the

area of health, Sir, we have been consistent. In 1981, at page 21 of the Manifesto this Government said then and I quote:

"The Party also pledges that upon attaining office, it will immediately carry out a comprehensive consultation with the health professions and with all interested sectors of the community with a view to developing and putting into place an affordable Comprehensive Health Coverage Programme that is widely acceptable and within the resources of our small country."

Mr. Speaker, that came after we had outlined our position. It came as a counter to the statements that had been made by the Government which suggested that the National Health Service was going to cost a very small fraction of what the real cost would have been. And we were able up and down the length and breadth of this country to demonstrate that and soon the facts became known after 1981. But this is what we said then, Sir:

"The party is fully aware that several countries have been burdened by sharp increases in expenditures for health and the health services. They have accordingly been searching for means by which such expenditures may be reduced in order to help restore a measure of economic stability. So-called "National Health Services"- have contributed greatly to the sharp increases referred to.

Barbados will be no exception to that trend. Already considerable doubts surround the proposed National Health Plan which has not been fully explained to the people. The Party believes that the cost of the plan will be far in excess of what has been revealed so far, and that the burden will fall squarely on the shoulders of the population through increased prices, increased national insurance, and increased taxation generally.

Indeed the B.L.P.'s Consultants on the Health Plan themselves give a sombre warning about this. After outlining the financing mechanism, they warn as follows:"

And they went on and we quoted from the Executive Summary which said and I quote:

"A cautionary note: The above indicated that the net impact on the employee is slight...However, in actuality, in the long run employees will shoulder most of the tax burden. Employers will probably raise prices to cover part or all of their tax burden, and the Ministry's position must come from increased taxes."

In view of the heavy costs involved we went on:

"The fact that the B.L.P. has already increased hospital charges, that drugs are not readily available, the administrative superstructure that is already building up, and the fact that the Government has been far from open and frank in its reports to the nation,, the Democratic Labour Party promises that it will reveal the true cost of the entire Health Plan, and scrap it." 12.55p.m.

Today Sir, we come to put the final touches to that promise that we made as far back as 1981 to scrap it. As you know, Sir, we were not successful in 1981. We had to wait another 5 years, approximately, because the Barbados Labour Party was able to convince the population on other grounds that they should continue running the country. So in 1986 we went back to the people and we said at Page 17 under Health:

"Like the economy the Health Services in Barbados have been developed as a mixture of private and public services with Barbadians being able to make their choice of these services freely. We are sure that Barbadians are desirous of retaining such a system. The right to health care is a fundamental human right and without it none of the other rights guaranteed to us under our Constitution can be attained. Every Barbadian is therefore entitled to comprehensive and adequate health care."

That is the philosophy which guides this Government, Sir, that every Barbadian has the right, a fundamental human right to health care. That without that fundamental right all the other rights guaranteed under the Constitution are but as nothing. That every Barbadian is entitled to comprehensive and adequate health care is the philosophy, commitment, and the unswerving clear path for this Administration.

We pledged then that upon attaining office we would immediately carry out a comprehensive consultation. We have repeated what we said in 1981 about consultations with the health professionals and with all interested sectors of the community with a view to developing and putting in place an affordable, comprehensive health coverage programme that is widely acceptable and within the resources of the country.

I am going to take them one by one, Sir, and piece by piece. You will recall that the Honourable Member for St. James South became the Minister of Health upon our attaining office and immediately he set about to do precisely that. He set about and he had the consultations and immediately in this country the whole tenor of the delivery of health care was changed. The doctors, released from their bondage (a psychological repression), relieved of their persecution in their public and oilier offices, suddenly

felt a new air in the country and they were able to slart proceeding with the work of delivery of health care.

We immediately set about examining the policies that had been carried on in so far as structures had been created and we immediately started changing where necessary and implementing where necessary so that we could put an affordable health care system in place for the people of Barbados based on a thrust in the primary health care delivery for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago at a conference at Alma Ata in the Soviet Union the health authorities of the world met to examine the quality of health care then existent in the world and to make recommendations about how the world should proceed in the delivery of health for its citizens. They passed a declaration which is now referred to as the Declaration at Alma Ata in which among many things said was that it was agreed that family health care was desirable, it was affordable, but in any event it provided the basis for citizens, for people to participate in their own health, to participate in their own development.

Mr. Speaker, I never understood why this happened, as I said 10 years ago, and I have never understood why between 1977 and 1985/86 one never heard the phrase being uttered in Barbados to speak of. One never heard an utterance from the Government of the day suggesting how primary health care should be effected even though they had attended the conference in Russia. I do not know if they do not like people to know that they went to the Soviet Union. I do not see it as anything they should be ashamed of. They attended the conference in Russia. They went to the conference and they came back and they gave an undertaking that they would carry out the policy of primary health care, that they would seek with everybody else to acquire health for all by the year 2000 for the people of Barbados. They came back and far from attempting to provide health for all by the year 2000 they started off by trying to see if they could kill the doctors. Health for all does not require much more, Mr. Speaker, than commitment. It does not require much more than allowing people to understand what you are doing, to help them to participate in what you are doing, and to give the best quality service that you can give within the context of your own resources. So health for all for each country will differ from place to place because not each country can afford everything that is required in health.

We, for example, do not have the capacity for open heart surgery here in Barbados yet, although I would predict that it is only a matter of time. Not more than 3 years will go by before we are able to do our own open heart surgery, but that will come. But we in Barbados have the capacity and have had the capacity for some considerable time to aim for as an achievable goal in health for all by the year 2000. Health for all does not mean not being sick. What it

means is a totality, a holistic appreciation of the- human being. So that a healthy person is _one who is psychologically secure. I hope that my colleagues on the other side are psychologically secure.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I hope they are psychologically secure. I hope that the Members of the Barbados Labour Party will understand what I am saying and they will try and see if they can help their leader to understand some aspects of the political life of this country. I heard him talking about health in a manner which is quite disappointing, but I will get to that. I am going to put it in the record because he said it and we are going to put it in the record, but we will get to that.

Mr. Speaker, when the Democratic Labour Party became the Government we took up the Declaration. We have examined it and we are satisfied that we can achieve health for all for the people of Barbados by the year 2000. The only danger on the horizon has come silently, rapidly, and devastatingly by way of the killer AIDS. Mr. Speaker, before I sit down I am going to give you, Sir, and this Honourable House some indication of what we have done and what we are doing about AIDS. But I wish to continue to talk about this - why we are scrapping this National Health Service.

Mr. Speaker, when the powers that be in the Barbados Labour Party talked about the National Health Service, they led a lot of people to believe (and even as I say here the National Health Service has not been successful in Britain) they have led people to believe that we were either trying to mislead them or that we are unreasonable. 1.05p.m.

I am not going to put all of this in the record, Sir, because I do not think we will have enough days to put the negatives about various things in the record. But I will say to you, Sir, that in almost every serious publication that one can find in the United Kingdom that deals with health, the verdict is that the National Health Service has failed.

I have here, Sir, and I will make it a document of the House, an excerpt from the Spectator of January 9, 1988 and here is what it says, here is just a phrase from what it says: "A typical English hospital is smelly, unswept and sinking in a morass of bureaucracy." That is a phrase from a serious article written in a serious publication in the United Kingdom.

There is a story which is told here about the National Health Service, and I am not going to try to repeat it. But I will say this. If this system had been introduced in Barbados I have a suspicion that our health services by now

would have seen the elimination of a number of the services which we now provide.

I want to quote a little part here: "Since 1981..." Mr. Speaker, No, Sir, I am going to make this a document of the House. I don't think I wish to read this, because I would have to read the whole thing. Suffice it to say, Sir, that this article demonstrates without the slightest shadow of doubt that the National Health Service in the United Kingdom is now costing them three times as much as it did a mere ten years ago. Suffice it to say, Sir, that the National Health Service, as it is practised in Britain is deemed to have brought pain to those who practise it - the doctors, and those who are the beneficiaries, so-called, from it - the patients.

There is in the United States, Sir, an attempt at Medicare, called Medicaid, medical aid. They call it Medicare and they call it Medicaid. The cost in the United States is deemed to have multiplied four times over the last ten years. There is no reason to doubt then, Sir, that had the system been introduced into Barbados along the lines outlined in the Act we come here to repeal, we would be in a similar boat.

As it stands, Mr. Speaker, we have reorganised our health service along primary health care lines with a thrust in the polyclinic system. There are now some 11 polyclinics - I want to be certain, Sir, because these days you have to be extremely careful - there are now 11 polyclinics or subclinics as the case may be.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I have to give notice to the House, Sir, that I intend to take time to put this case. You see, Sir, now he is saying that I should be ashamed that I cannot say off hand how many polyclinics there are. Let him worry about my inability to say how many polyclinics there are. I am looking, Mr. Speaker, to tell you the cost.

There are two sub-polyclinics at Horse Hill and Belleplaine, Sir. Mr. Speaker, we found those, those are the clinics that are run by the Barbados Labour Party. The clinic at Horse Hill has some benches. Do you remember when you were going to school, Mr. Speaker, at elementary school a fairly long time ago? Those are the benches which the patients who go to the clinic at Horse Hill have to sit on. That is what we found, that is what we are replacing.

I do not really understand how the Honourable Members on that side can dare to look anybody in the face when we are discussing health. When you look at what has happened in the clinic at Horse Hill, Sir, it is not fit for humans to be going to it on an ongoing basis. When you go in there, Mr. Speaker, it is not a place that we should have in Barbados in 1988. That is why we are going to build a

new polyclinic in St. Joseph in due course, and that is why we are going to build one in Belleplaine in due course. But we have to build one first in Black Rock. I might not know how many we have, but I know how many we have to have.

They went and siphoned off a small piece of the Psychiatric Hospital, the Mental Hospital, and they then through - I will try, Mr. Speaker, to restrain-myself because . I am angry about that - they through a method that is not acceptable in public life allowed the Black Rock Polyclinic, so-called, to be constructed. And if you go down there... I know you know what I am speaking about, Mr. Speaker. The people who go to the Black Rock Polyclinic on an ongoing basis suffer almost continuously from the time they go in. The conditions under which they have to work are such that both patient and worker could become ill from going to the polyclinic.

We are going to build a new polyclinic in Black Rock and at Four Roads in St. John we are going to build...

*

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Not Four Roads? Mr. Speaker, Gall Hill. I don't know the country too well.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member, the * Leader of the Opposition knows more about St. John than I do. All of a sudden he knows about St. John. He just moved up to a plantation in St. John, so he can tell me I don't know the country because I can't remember the name of Gall Hill. But he is now living in a plantation in St. John so he knows the country. I admit to not knowing St. John too well. But I know this; the Barbados Labour Party systematically -allowed all of the facilities at Gall Hill to be run down -systematically. Because the late right Honourable Member for St. John, Errol Barrow, was the representative, not one cent would they put into upgrading or improving the facilities at Gall Hill, St. John. It is a shame. 1.15p.m.

When you get up to talk, tell the people of Barbados, ** tell His Honour, tell this Honourable House why they allowed the neglect that they allowed in St. John. We are going to build a new polyclinic, and we are going to start it this y°,ar because we cannot accept that anybody in Barbados is entitled to less than the highest quality of health care affordable by us. It is a shame what you did. You want to talk about the nurses? I am going to talk about the nurses; *• I have nothing but time, but I have to tell the people about you first.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition is saying from his seat that I have no sense. Now, Sir, he is either lying now or he lied before. You cannot say I do not have any sense now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Why is the Honourable Member...

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw that, Sir. I beg your pardon. You know I would never step out of bounds. The Leader of the Opposition is the repository of all the sense that there is now left in the Barbados Labour Party. That is why he comes out and says that he is going to fire five years before he gets the opportunity. Sensible.

But, Sir, I was saying, Gall Hill will get a new polyclinic. We are going to put new facilities in Holatown as well. But we are waiting until the police stations which the Attorney General of the day had promised the people that he would build, are built. You will recall that when the Leader of the Opposition was the Attorney General he promised that there would have been a new complex at Holatown, and that complex has not yet been constructed. And as soon as that complex is ready, we will include in the plans a section for the delivery of primary health care.

In the other polyclinics, Sir, we have had a very interesting set of responses. When the polyclinic system was set up, it was anticipated that a certain number of people would go into those polyclinics on a daily basis. What in fact has happened, Sir, is that people not even in their wildest imagination could have believed that the numbers that have gone into the polyclinics over the number of people who have visited the polyclinics over the last five years would have reached the proportions that they have reached. The result is, Sir, that the polyclinics have reached in many respects beyond their capacity. We will therefore have to re-examine the system.

What we did is that we have tried to put in an appointment system. An appointment system will allow for a better use of the facilities. We have 26 clinical medical officers; we have five medical officers of health all working out of the respective polyclinics. The polyclinics as you know are located at strategic points designed to attract people from a particular catchment area. We have at Wildey a polyclinic where an experiment is going on with the University of the West Indies providing family practice facilities where all of the persons who are on their list have continuing follow-ups by the doctors in the family medicine programme of the University of the West Indies. All of the other polyclinics are open to everybody. But we are in the process and we will during the next year expect to have an information system which will ensure that every single person in Barbados is registered in the data bank, so that movement between polyclinics will be more easily monitored, that reference from polyclinic secondary health care systems will be better monitored and will be facilitated, and as a result, Mr. Speaker, we expect that the resources of the country will be better utilised.

We expect, for example, that the sum which we spend this year of nearly \$126 million will not have to be

increased by more than a small percentage, because it is obvious that given the constant rise in costs, if we continue in the vein we have been going, we could end up with as much as \$150 million being spent per annum on the delivery of health care. What we are seeking to do therefore, by having a primary health care thrust, is to use preventive medicine wherever possible, to use prevention rather than cure, so that we will be able to contain our costs within the ability of the country to pay.

Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed the health care system for the development plan which will soon be published, and in due course we will outline in this House the details of our development plan. But what we are able to say is that we have in Barbados now a change of the pattern of existence where 11 per cent, if you will, of our population is now over 65 years. We expect that to almost double in the next twenty years. You can see, therefore Mr. Speaker, that it is necessary for us to plan for the geriatric services in this country.

When the Honourable Member for St. James South became the Minister of Health and he did what we said we would do and started to examine the facilities, one of the things which literally brought tears to his eyes was when he saw the conditions which existed at the St. Michael Hospital, the St. Michael District Hospital which used to be called the Almshouse.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that Dr. Caddie when he was Minister of Health many years ago when the Democratic Labour Party had the Government, started a process of trying to de-institutionalise people who found themselves either indigent or having to be ill or who were geriatric - not only the geriatrics but generally speaking all those persons who were shut-ins. The idea was that if we could extend the areas where these people could live, they would be able with their families, with guidance, sometimes to live a very fruitful life, because they would feel more like individuals rather than institutionalised ciphers.

Soon after he attempted that the Government of the day fell and the Barbados Labour Party became the Government. Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to speak about these matters without raising questions about the attitude of the Government of the day. I said, Sir, that he found conditions that caused him to shed tears and he came to the Cabinet and outlined those conditions and some of us did not believe him. Frankly we could not believe it could be so, but in truth, Mr. Speaker, at the St. Michael District Hospital which we called the Almshouse, the situation of dilapidation had reached a point where the people who were functioning on the bottom floor would constantly have drippings from the top floor on to their heads, and much of that dripping, Sir, came because the upper floors were urine saturated; so that while people were serving food - Mr. Speaker, it may be unpleasant but it is true - on the lower

floors of that geriatric hospital, it was not unheard of for drippings to fall on the heads and in the utensils and in the food. 1.25p.m.

So that even though we were preparing a project to go to the Inter-American Development Bank to assist with our geriatric programme, a comprehensive programme which I will tell you a little about in a minute, the Democratic Labour Party Government had to make the decision that we could not wait until the project was formulated, we would have to proceed with the refurbishing of the Geriatric Hospital.

The programme for refurbishment has started and I invite Honourable Members to go to the Geriatric Hospital and to see what has been completed.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It must be hurting that the three of you are grumbling like that.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not hearing the asides but I would ask the reporters not to record them.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the facts are there. The Honourable Members are free to go and ask anybody in the hospital. I am not discussing how much money was put in any Estimates. I am discussing urine dropping from one roof on to the floor of another. That is what I am discussing. I am not discussing any Estimates.

I will not have anybody *sotto voce* or otherwise saying that I am lying when I am talking in this House. Now you say that I am a liar. You get up and say so. Get up and say that I am a liar.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You go outside? I will not have you or anybody else over there saying that I am lying. You go and ask the nurses.

The trouble with the Barbados Labour Party is that they are so contemptibly dishonest that whenever they hear anybody discussing facts they assume that the person has done exactly what they do, sit around in a corner and say, "Let us go out and tell lie A or lie B". We do not have to do that in the Democratic Labour Party. We do not have to do that in the Government. We do not have to sit as you do weekly to determine to say what you are going to say next. We do not have to do that.

What I say about the Geriatric Hospital any Barbadian can go and ask any nurse or worker in the Geriatric Hospital if it is true. But, Sir, we are going to change that. We are going to have a project for geriatric care in this country which will see a complete transformation of the Geriatric Hospital along the lines of the first wing.

We are then going to see a complete transformation of the St. Philip Hospital in which we will see a transformation along the lines of the Geriatric Hospital.

We will then seek to have a series of group homes and halfway houses where those who are ambulatory can go. With assistance from leaders and guiders they will be able to live their lives in a home atmosphere as they should and coupled with the improved Home Help Programme, we hope that geriatric care in this country will be elevated to the level that is necessary and commensurate with the standards of living which we hope for in the 20th Century. With 12 years to go before the end of this century, we believe that it is necessary that we have a high level of geriatric care in this country and, at the same time, we are going to do a similar programme for psychiatric care in Barbados.

There are about 623 beds at the Psychiatric Hospital, Sir. Of those 623 beds 300 of them are persons who could be home. There are 300....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You hear what he is sitting down there saying, Sir? He is sitting down here saying "when you get up..."

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not hearing the Honourable Member.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I am telling you what I hear. I am hearing him say, "when you get up to speak you start off by saying nobody believes you. If you keep saying that then they will pick it up and they will put it in the Press." That is what he is telling him, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir.

The Minister is attributing statements to me which I have not made.

Mr. SPEAKER: Neither have I heard them in here.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: So do not let him write them in the records because I never said anything about that. All I said was that I would do him like Don Blackman used to do. I said that, Sir. "Nobody believes you man. Shut up." That is all I said, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You see, Sir. The circumstances are right. He admits that they were speaking. Secondly he admits that most of the words I used were used. Thirdly, Sir, he got up and said that he did say it. If I were you, Sir, I would know what happened. I do not have to worry about you. Everybody will believe the facts. They do not have to believe me or you. They will believe the facts.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: That is another lie. You get up there and said that we had 350 people at a public meeting? •

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot accuse a member of lying? You just said that that is another lie by the Honourable Member.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I did not say by any Honourable Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Clarified.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: All I said, Sir, was "that is another lie" and because I heard we had 350 people. You get down there.. .

Mr. SPEAKER: You know the Chair has to be very careful.. .

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I agree with you. They said that we had 350 people at a public meeting. Well, if they were 350 people I hope that we have many more 350s. It seems to me that it was more like 3 500 but that is neither here nor there. But never mind.

Mr. Speaker, psychiatry. The Psychiatric Hospital has about 623 beds and of those 623 beds, 300 of those persons could be at home. If they had homes to go to, they could be at home.

A study of the Randall Phillips Polyclinic demonstrated that most of the problems which present themselves in the polyclinics as primary problems can, in fact, be traced to issues relating to stress, among other things. What we are going to be doing is creating a community based programme that will see us reduce the Psychiatric Hospital from 600 beds to 300 beds in a modern setting and with modern facilities.

Mr. Speaker, that, coupled with the improvements which are being made at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, should guarantee that within the next 5 to 15 years the quality of health care in Barbados will be second to none anywhere in this region.

Bui, Mr. Speaker, in order to do these things and many more which will be outlined when we come to look at

the Health Plan, we will need to have persons. We will need to have professionals. We will need to have people.

Over the last few weeks there has been a concerted and sometimes trumpeted outcry about the conditions of service under which the nurses and other practitioners have to work. There has been a statement or many statements about the shortage of nurses.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the question of the shortage of nurses especially in view of the fact that certain propagandists have sought to suggest that what we are saying about the shortage of nurses is not true or that we are misrepresenting.

Mr. Speaker, in 1979 the Government of the day made a decision that there were too many nurses in the system and they, therefore, ceased taking any applications for training. 1.35p.m.

In 1979, they did not accept anyone for training in mental nursing, and they never accepted anyone thereafter. And in 1979 they had no intake for general nursing. And from 1979 right down until 1986 they either in some years took no persons at all or they took a substantially reduced number.

The result has been, Mr. Speaker, of this very shortsighted and foolish policy that they had too many nurses in 1979 and therefore they did not need any more is the whirlwind which we are reaping now. Because, even as the services were expanding, private doctors were going into their own practices, their own groups practices, polyclinics were growing up everywhere, the services are expanding here and there, left, right and centre but the Government of the day makes the decision that it will not train workers.

The result is, Sir,...

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: These facts are incontrovertible, Sir. Even this year, 1988, there will be no graduate. This year, 1988 no one will graduate from nursing. No one has graduated because they had no intake three years ago. Mr. Speaker, it takes three years for a person to become a nurse; and we can find throughout the period from 1979 to 1988, and the record is clear, one does not have to belabour the point. It is a foolish point.

And I do not understand how the Barbados Labour Party could seek to justify a silly decision. Mr. Speaker, the nursing profession is one that requires replenishment. In the 1960s Barbadians were leaving and going to the United States and going to England. Barbadian nurses have gone away from time immemorial.

Let me make my position clear. I am never going to stand in the way of any nurse who feels that she wishes to go to the United States or elsewhere for her edification or for her advancement. There are many of us sitting in this Honourable House who have had the opportunity to go away and we came back. It is the duty of the country to make provision for its services, especially its health services without reference to what any individual will or will not do. I would say in passing, that if a woman can come from Florida and say that somebody is going to get \$21 000 a year in New York and that that is good and people are saying they are satisfied, I would advise them to check again, because \$18 000 a year in Barbados is a higher quality life than any \$21 000, \$22 000 and \$23 000 a year in New York City. And many of the nurses in Barbados earn \$17 000, \$18 000, \$19 000, \$21 000 a year and some of them are beyond that. There are very few nurses in Barbados who earn less than \$18 000 a year. But I am not going to discuss this in those terms.

What I am saying is that if they wish to go to New York, nobody can stop them. If they wish to go to London, nobody can stop them. What ought to have happened is that the Government should have made provision, as Governments before had made provision, so that those who wanted to go, if they went, would not have left the services bereft of hands.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we had the decision to move nurses' training into the Community College. Once you move nurses' training into the Community College, you remove the student nurse from the ambit of care that the student nurses of old used to be able to perform, because they are now in a separate and distinct area removed from the hospital and they only come to the hospital for their clinical training. Mr. Speaker, that too will add to the shortage of hands on the ward.

And on this question of stipends for the student nurses, the Democratic Labour Party soon after it became the Government made provision for student nurses in 1986 to receive a stipend. But we had a problem, Sir. The student nurses now forming part of the division of Health Sciences at the Community College were being perceived as separate and distinct on the one hand, if they got a stipend, but when they are in the Community College, they are just like any other student. The Ministry of Education is not going to give other people a stipend who are in the Community College. So it presents if you will, Sir, a logistical problem. It presents a problem. How are you going to single out one set of students and give them a stipend. The Honourable Member for St. James South came to the Cabinet and the Cabinet agreed and certain expenses were returned to student nurses in the year 1986 as part of a stipend. These facts have to be known.

Even now in the Ministry of Health, there is a paper which has been going back and forth on how to find a way

to give student nurses a stipend. The Government is not opposed to giving student nurses a stipend but we had to find a system by which the student nurse comes under the jurisdiction of the hospital while she is functioning there, if the Ministry of Health is to give that student nurse a stipend. We have to find a system that is equitable, and we have to find a way that we can do it that will not create hardship and/or bring calumny on the heads of the administrators simply because we have chosen one set over another.

I would make bold to say that some system for rewarding those student nurses who are put on specific duty will have to be found. And it is being found and will be found. But it is dishonest for people to give the impression that the Democratic Labour Party has callously turned away from the students. Students were at the Community College for some substantial time. The Barbados Labour Party never gave the students a stipend. How come none of the columnists wrote then saying that they should get a stipend.

It was this Government that gave students some kind of stipend and started the concept of getting a stipend for students. We have no quarrel with it. It is a question of methodology. But it is dishonest for people to be giving the impression that we have turned away from the students. We say that we gave them a stipend and we are searching for ways to make it equitable.

On the question of training, Sir, one of the things which I have read is that nurses are saying they wish us to return to training. What has happened is that whoever put these things in the newspaper or whoever says them really is referring to the communication that had been sent when the Barbados Labour Party was in office. Because one of the things which can be said with impunity by this Government is that soon after we became the Government of the day, training was resumed throughout the Service but in particular in the health services, Sir. We have ensured that training has been made available from the Matron all the way down to the lowest level. Even as I speak to you, Mr. Speaker, there are four Barbadian nurses at Greater South Eastern Hospital in Washington. They are on a six months' course to enhance their particular skills in certain specialities. Even as I speak to you, there are three Barbadian nurses doing their advanced training in the United Kingdom at the end of which they will take an examination with the Nursing Council in England and they will get the advanced certificate and it will make them eligible to be appointed to the senior ranks of the Health Services. Mr. Speaker, we have sent persons for training in all of the specialties, ophthalmology, neuro-nathology, burns. We are opening a new burns unit and we have been sending teams comprising doctors and nurses and ancillary workers as a team. They have gone to hospitals in Washington, they have gone to hospitals in Toronto, they have gone to hospitals in the United Kingdom. Mr. Speaker, if it is one

thing that this Government can be proud of, it is the effort that it has made to restore training as part of the conditions of service of the people who work in the Public Service. 1.45 p.m.

And we have allowed persons to go up to Cave Hill. We have allowed persons to go to Cave Hill again. We have allowed them to go again. We have allowed them to go again; so they can get leave. What I am saying for the Ministry of Health is holding good for the other Ministries. So that training is not one of the areas in which this Government can be faulted. The problem is that the Barbados Labour Party Government stopped all training to speak of from 1983. So that like you open a gate where the crowd has been pressing to exit, the first group that is at the gate will tumble and tumble over one another, Sir. There has been such a large application for training since the Democratic Labour Party came back to office that as a result, Sir, there are some who will feel frustrated. You can quote from the Torah. I have the files. You quote from the Torah and I will bring the files, and I will show you that the Barbados Labour Party's Ministers systematically deprived the people in the Public Service of the opportunity to grow. You have no credibility in the area of training. I will not allow the Barbados Labour Party to give the public of this community any indication that you have credibility in this area.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: That is what it is for. You are able to reply and then we will give the facts. We will give the additional facts. You reply. That is why we are here.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, you probably cannot hear the Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Neither are they in the records.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: They are not in the records, Sir. Sir, we applied for CFTC Training Courses - radiography, physiotherapy. The CFFC came back and told us they could not give us all of the courses. We asked them - I personally spoke to the Secretary General, Sir, and explained that we had been bereft of training for so long, and we were able to get a couple more. But Mr. Speaker, the area that I find the most offensive from the Barbados Labour Party and from those who would push their case is when we talk about appointments. The question of getting appointed in the Public Service was a political tool of the Barbados Labour Party. I charge that, Sir. I am saying that the Barbados Labour Party's Ministers personally got involved in ensuring that people did not get appointed. I am saying that there is evidence of victimisation in the question of appointment, just simple appointment.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more reprehensible than a person applying for a job, being qualified, getting involved, working and 10 years, 12 years, 15 years can go by and that person is still "temporary". That says immoral. That is immoral. It is immoral, Sir. I believe that the civil/cns of this country are entitled if they go into a profession, especially one where the Government is the employer - I believe that they have every right to expect that if they perform reasonably they can be appointed within a reasonable time. How can anybody in the Barbados Labour Party explain a person working for 10 years and not appointed? How can you explain that to anybody? The Leader of the Opposition, this great deliverer, and redeemer of women, sat in a Government and allowed them to take advantage of women in this country for 10 years. Not one word from him. Now you come in here talking about...

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. You know the points of order. The Honourable Member, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: Now before you make a point of order, there are certain remarks I want. . . as long as those remarks are withdrawn and struck from the record, I shall hear your point.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Member has withdrawn it. He is accusing me of taking advantage of women for 10 years.

Mr. SPEAKER: Imputing improper motives.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He has withdrawn them, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Fine.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Once he has withdrawn them, Sir; it is those words I am objecting to.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I said was that he was part of a Government. I did not accuse him but since he said so I am now saying that he took this advantage. I am saying that.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am objecting to the Honourable Member's remarks. That is what I am objecting to.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: He would not take advantage of any women during the last 10 years.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the point. The point is the Honourable Member is objecting to a remark alleged that you have made in respect of him. If we cannot get it clarified I would have the notes be read so that I can get a clarification that the remark was not directed • to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. If you can recollect...

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, I recollect very well, Sir. What I said, Sir, I was making the point that the Government allowed the people to be acting, to be temporary for 10 years and more, and I said that he was part of a Government that did that. That is a fact, Sir. That is what I said and I stand by it, Sir. If Your Honour tells me that I cannot say that, I will withdraw it. But I have not said anything that is not true, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understood the Honourable Member to be saying that you were imputing improper motives.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I do not impute any improper motives to the Honourable Member, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Therefore, if that is not the case then the Honourable Member may proceed.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It is not the case, Sir. I am not imputing improper motives. I am saying that he was part of a wicked, vindictive Government. That is what I am saying. He was part of that.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I am objecting to the words. If the Honourable Member is saying that, he is implying that I was wicked and vindictive and it can be nothing clearer than an imputation of wickedness and vindictiveness. That is absolutely clear.

Mr. SPEAKER: Having mentioned the Honourable Member as a part, I think it is a specific indication that you are implying that the Honourable Member also is part of the statement you are making and I am going to ask the Honourable Member to do 2 things, either withdraw it or rephrase his statements.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I would like some guidance from you Honour, Sir. It is possible, Sir, that this Government could be wicked and vindictive. It is possible that this Cabinet, Sir, could be wicked and vindictive as a Cabinet and one or 2 not be wicked and vindictive, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you have said he is. He was part of that Cabinet. You specifically mentioned him.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Sir, let me explain what I am saying, Sir. I am saying that the Cabinet of which he was a part. Let me get the subject right, Sir. The Cabinet of which he was a part allowed a number of things to happen in this

country. I have concluded Sir, that the Cabinet of the day allowed persons to remain in jobs....

Mr. SPEAKER: But you are not specifically saying

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw any imputation to the Honourable Member's character, Sir. I withdraw that, Sir. Your Honour, you know Sir that I hardly ever get into any rows with you. But I feel a certain anger at the Barbados Labour Party Government in its treatment of public officers when it is trying to give the impression across this country that it was treating them well. It is now trying to give the impression when this Democratic Labour Party has had to lift off the whole world from the shoulders of the Administration. We have had to take all of the public officers one by one and several of them in groups and let them understand that they are free to be public officers again. Ask any self-respecting public officer and he will tell you, Sir, and she will tell you, that they have a feeling of relief during the last 2 years. They can walk. They can march. It is a free country. You 'can talk in this country. Nobody can lock you up. The first thing we did when we became Government was to put Elombe back on CBC. That is the first thing we did. You banned him.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Well, you would know more about wire lapping.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am asking Honourable Members to be silent and let the Honourable Member speak.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member would know more about wire tapping than I would ever know. He was an Attorney General. He would know about wire tapping. If he says that he wire-taps, I would believe him. If he says that he knows where the equipment is, I will believe him. I have no difficulty with that. He knows a lot about wire-tapping. He should. He was an Attorney General. I know nothing about it, Sir. 1.55p.m.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: That is your privilege. In this House as long as we are within decorum everybody can speak, once you get in. There are some who can't because they are not in yet, Mr. Speaker. They can write, but they can't talk, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of appointments and promotion. In the Democratic Labour Party's Government we have appointed 180 persons in the health field between

1986 and now, and recently we appointed every single person that should be appointed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We appointed one Assistant Matron, six Senior Sisters, 20 Sisters and 47 Staff Nurses, Sir, one time. We are going down to the Psychiatric and we are going to appoint everybody. We are going to the Geriatric and appoint everybody and we are going into the polyclinics, and I can tell you now, Sir, from this floor of the House, any member of the polyclinic system, any member of the services in the Health Ministry, or indeed any Ministry, but I can speak for the Health Ministry, any member of the health services who has been working....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, they will need to go for their books and show us what they did. We are asking why didn't they do what they should have done now? We are going to appoint those who have been there for ten years. Why didn't you appoint those? Show me where you appointed the people in the polyclinics who have been there in temporary jobs for ten years?

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Yes.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: All right. Anybody in the health services. Don't let us get hung up on polyclinics, I am going to show you....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It is factual. I am saying, Sir, that there are persons in the polyclinics...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not permitting shouting from one side to the other.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, they are trying to put me off, I say that there are people in the polyclinics now who have been working for the Barbados Government for more than ten years and they are still temporary. How in the name of God can anybody be temporary after ten years? Have you no shame?

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Well if we committed sins in the past, the Lord sent you to correct the sins and if you did not correct the sins, you are doubly worse than we were. Don't tell me about what we did, tell us about what we are doing now.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, because you are always out telling everybody what you did; you are agitating people; you are telling them to infiltrate. You are an infiltrator. You are telling people to infiltrate.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You see I told you he knows about wire tapping?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have said I am not permitting any cross-talking.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas were ordered by the Speaker to be expunged from the record at this stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am permitting each member his legitimate time to speak and I will not allow another person to unnecessarily interrupt the speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a good juncture for us to have a break for lunch, and I move that this sitting be now suspended until 3.00 p.m. today.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 2.01 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we left I was giving the House information on the services which we have provided and the plans which we have for the development of health.

I was a little surprised to hear the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, when I made a reference, saying not only must they infiltrate but they must infiltrate and overthrow. I hope that the Honourable Member is aware of the significance of that statement he had made about overthrow, but I am not going to spend any time on that.

What I want to continue doing is to outline how we see the psychiatric services. I was saying, Sir, that the Psychiatric Hospital has 623 beds, and of those 623 beds a study we have done indicated that 300 of those persons

could be at home. They would be at home if they had somewhere to go, if there was someone to go to; but, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Psychiatric Hospital in Barbados provides not only psychiatric care but to a large extent it is providing a housing care. It is in fact providing housing for a large number of persons.

It is strange, but true, that we could send those 300 persons home at a substantially lower cost to the country as a whole and so the psychiatric policy which we are going to be following - and I should really say the mental health policy - would be to allow as many persons as are able to reside in and function from homes that are not necessarily institutions, and not designed like the hospital (which, after all, was designed in the 19th century, and was relevant at a time when psychiatric care, when mental health care was seen as locking up or removing from society stark, staring, raving maniacs).

In the 20th century, and certainly in the last 25 years, the approach to psychiatric treatment, the approach to mental health sustenance, has changed considerably and there is now no longer, or there ought not to be, that fear of mental breakdown if it is recognised that mental breakdown is nothing more than illness of the mind in the same way that lumbago or cardiac problems or any other physical ailment is a breakdown of some aspect of the physical being.

Mental health requires nurturing and sustenance in the same way. And what we are proposing to do and what we have been doing is to allow mental health to be seen.... and what we hope we will be able to get the community to accept is that a person's total health includes both the mental aspect and the physical aspect. If that is accepted (and it is our philosophy) then, Sir, the cost of care is going to be considerably lower because we will be able to utilise the home. Just as I said about geriatric care, we will be able to utilise halfway homes and group homes for the mentally ill in such a way as to permit greater use of the resources which we have, and therefore the unit cost will be lower. 3.05p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that if one examines what happens in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, for example, it now costs in the vicinity of \$200 per day per person in order to provide the service, whereas in the geriatric hospital and in the psychiatric hospital it costs less than \$100, \$67 in one case and maybe \$48 to \$50 in another. Now we have found that if we could remove a substantial number of these persons to houses, to homes, to places like what we call half-way houses, what we call group homes, the cost per unit is going to be reduced to the vicinity of \$35 to \$40 and in some cases even lower. What that seems to suggest is that we would be able to utilise our trained resources.

Mr. Speaker, regrettably over the last few years, as a result of the policy on training in psychiatric nursing, for a substantially long time we have had untrained persons functioning in posts that were created for trained persons. We have had at the psychiatric hospital over the years a number of untrained persons working, and one of the things we have been able to do is to restart a registered mental nursing training programme to allow persons to become professionals who had no hope since 1979 of ever reaching that level, because, Sir, when once you have moved nursing care to the Community College, the entrance to the Community College is the same for everybody, so the requirement in the first instance is five "O" Levels and some number of "A" Levels, but in the case of health services five "O" Levels; that requirement obviously is not one that many of the persons who work as warders or nursing assistants would have been able to meet.

What we have done, however, is to take a number of persons who had been exposed over the last many years either as nursing assistants or as untrained persons in the psychiatric hospital and give them an opportunity to take a three year registered mental nurses course. And so they will be able, once they have passed the exam of the General Council, to register as registered mental nurses and therefore they will become professionals in the same sense that the general nurses are professionals. They will be simply trained but some of them will go on to be generally trained.

Mr. Speaker, the difference that that is making to the system will become even more apparent in the next year or two. But in any event I believe that no untrained person should be allowed to administer medicine to the citizens of Barbados; and when you have situations as we had during the past ten or twelve years, when you have situations where untrained persons were by force of the absence of trained persons left to look after wards, one could not other than recognise that we are going to have what I call illegality. It is not illegal in the sense that somebody has committed a crime although it is contrary to the rules, but the fact is that it ought not to be. We are taking steps to correct that.

Now, Sir, I said earlier that there were no intakes of nurses since 1979, and it would be interesting to observe the actual details. I will give any Honourable Member of the House those details, but let us take the general nursing. In 1976, to go no farther back which would be a reflection on the kind of intakes which were made during the time of the Democratic Labour Party administration, we had general nurse graduations of this order:- 34 in 1976, 41 in 1977, 50 in 1978, 43 in 1979, 31 in 1980, and then, Sir, we get the beginning of the problem. In 1981 only 21 persons graduated. In 1982 only 11, in 1983 none at all, in 1984 there were 16, 30 in 1985; in 1986 there were 22, in 1987 none, but four who failed the year before resat the exam. In

1988 we had none in the intake. What we had was eleven from the shortened RN course; that is a special course that was put on for those persons who were enrolled as nursing assistants. In 1987 therefore we had none and in 1988 we had none.

Now, Mr. Speaker, from 1983 we had no one graduating as a mental nurse, nobody at all; and indeed in 1980 we had 6; 5 in 1981; 6 in 1982, and after that we have not had a single person graduating as mental nurses. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that even if you are keeping chickens, when you sell off the fowls you have to put in a new stock. If you are training nurses therefore, you have to take in some if you expect to get some at the end of a three year course; and I am disappointed that somebody who writes on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party is so ignorant, Mr. Speaker. I do not mind if a person does not understand ordinary English; but if the person purports to be writing on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party.....What he said was that there were a lot of nurses in 1979, so they justified not taking in any more nurses. It is a backward policy, but apart from that it has left us in great difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, no statement from anyone on the Barbados Labour Party side can justify the sheer stupidity of that policy, and I stand ready to discuss with any member on either side this question. But the Barbados Labour Party should have known better. What I do not understand is how they expect to defend it. I am not going to spend any time on that article because it does not make sense. But I would like to think that the Barbados Labour Party is going to get spokespeople to speak for them to the public, who are at least reasonably intelligent. Surely there must be people in the Barbados Labour Party who can take their point of view from an intelligent standpoint. Surely there are people who can write against the Government with some sense and understanding. What you have been doing recently is allowing children with matches to go inside a factory that is producing fireworks. You cannot do that. He that hath cars to hear, let him hear. 3.15p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there is another aspect to the health care system that I want to talk about which relates to the National Health Service.

A National Health Service assumes that certain basic diseases have been eliminated from the society. In Barbados we still have, in spite of everything, a good health care system. But there are some people who seem hell bent on destroying it.

- Take Sir, the environmental aspect of our health. There is a report that has just been written. It will be analysed in due course. But one of the things which has been demonstrated is that the sewage plant would satisfy its

requirements. There would be no stench; there would be no odour; there would be no back-up; there would be no problems if the simple system of maintenance that had been identified for the plant had been carried out by the Barbados Labour Party administration.

This attitude of culling back (and that is really what I am speaking to, Mr. Speaker) In the same way they cut back on the nurses, in the same way they cut back on the refurbishment of the hospital for all of those years; they cut back in the sewage plant in Chchapside and the same kinds of information have come to the fore.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to read from the document because it is not yet an official document. But suffice it to say that the evidence is clear that systematic neglect to maintain the sewage plant is the cause of the problems which they are having now and, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing calculated to interfere with the health of a community like sewage gone mad.

The sewage plant has its capacity. There is nothing wrong with it as a plant. But there are areas that were set out in the most simple terms which have been systematically ignored by the administration before us. We now have the trouble of correcting before we can press on. All of that is what is going to be hanging on us. And even now from time to time you pass by the sewage plant and you find that the problems down there are immediately apparent.

In due course, if the Labour Party wishes us to, we will read the document of what the officials, what the experts, (not the Minister of Health, not the Deputy Prime Minister, nor a member of the Cabinet) have said. The experts have said that ordinary, regular maintenance of the plant would have saved us all of the troubles we have. And that is the history of the Barbados Labour Party as it approached the question of health in this country. The record is there and we will read it out if you wish. All you have to do is to ask us to do it. We are not here trying to be contentious; but we are stating the facts. The record is the history of neglect, contempt and, in some cases, ignorance; an unwillingness to listen to or pay attention to the advice that has been given.

My colleague from St. James South can confirm that he sees constantly in the Ministry, evidence of ignoring the recommendations that have been made. Even so, Mr. Speaker, in the last two years we have been able to bring a substantial measure of order to the way in which our health services will proceed.

We have been able, in a relatively short time, and in the face of some untold difficulties, to bring the people to understand what the overall objective, what the macro goal must be, to provide health for all by the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, to have said all these bad things about the Barbados Labour Party and not find something that was good about what they did might seem strange. So let me talk about the Drug Service.

The Drug Service has been a success story from its inception to the present. Everybody is agreed that having got rid of the initial difficulties in the first two years (when again they were being wrong-headed and hard-headed, when they refused to take advice), when once they had put in place an officer who understood what he was doing and was committed to it, the Drug Service has gone well. It has gone well in the sense that it has done what it was supposed to do.

You could spend a lot of time designating the Drug Service a success. But it is not for me to discuss that now since, in due course, we will have Estimates that we can look at. But suffice it to say that the Drug Service has been able to satisfy the country's needs for drugs.

The area in which we have had problems is the question of the relationship between the private sector and the Drug Service and the ability to pay promptly and in a way that is acceptable to the private sector. This is probably the one aspect of the Bill which is before this House that is crucial.

It is crucial that we pass this Bill because if the Bill remained unpassed, if we did not bring this Bill to repeal the Act and so make provision for the Ministry and the Minister to take full control of certain aspects of the Drug Service operation, we would have some little difficulty. But the Drug Service uses a relatively modest number of drugs. The different drugs range from 29 to 60 per doctor in Barbados. The prescriptions that doctors use... The number of drugs... The range does not go any further than 29 to 60 on average, a mean of about 47. So that the Drug Service in Barbados does not require any great genius to understand. But because the payment to the private sector has to come on the basis of information submitted, there was a foul up during the last few years on the speed with which those in the private sector could receive their payment. This has been a bone of contention in the Drug Service.

What we have done is a very simple matter. When we came in there was a backlog of 2,3 to 4 years work of bills outstanding. There had to be a reconciliation between the drugs dispensed and the claims made to the Drug Service. What we did was to agree on an honour system where we are paying the submissions on the face of what has been submitted and then doing the reconciliations later. This is to ensure that the private sector does not suffer at the hands of

any bureaucratic imbalances or any bureaucratic difficulties.

What is happening now, in spite of some things I have seen in the public arena... I have seen things written in the Press which suggest otherwise. But the fact is that I have perceived a general satisfaction among the private sector pharmacies with the way the Drug Service is going. I have - perceived, based on discussions with them, and based on the reports that are coming to us, that the private sector is now satisfied that the Drug Service is working in a manner that is acceptable to them.

Mr. Speaker, we are computerising the Drug Service; it has been computerised. But a private computer company was advising the service and we have found that we can save money by allowing the Drug Service itself to perform these functions. They have, in fact, put the people in place to do the basic work and they are proceeding apace.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to spend unnecessary time talking about matters. I will wait to see which of the matters the Honourable Members in the House might wish to raise. 3.25 p.m.

But I want to say this. We spent \$10 million on drugs last year and one of the problems which we were having ** was the question of prescribing practices. Again we have taken a scientific approach to this and we have done a study. We have done an examination of the prescribing practices of a given set of doctors and after consultation, from the results arising out of the study, most of these doctors, indeed all of the doctors, have now agreed that the prescribing practices needed some changes in some areas; * and by and large there seems to be agreement between the doctors and the Drug Service.

We have recently implemented a system which requires some identification when people go to the polyclinic. Because you know what we discovered, Mr. Speaker? There were persons coming from outside of Barbados, some who had been able to get ID Cards in a * manner that we cannot identify. Some people have ID Cards in Barbados and that is all they have. They cannot produce any other evidence. And some of those ID Cards were a little suspect. But, Sir, we know what happened at one point in our development in this country. We know that they were some adjustments in the system which even now are not reconciling with the reality. We see, for example, « that the electoral chief according to the newspapers is saying that the numbers continue to be reduced. So we had fewer voters in 1986 than we had in 1981. I am not even going to try to establish the cause of that, except to say that we spoke about it at length. Some holders of those ID Cards and some other people coming in from outside of Barbados started to use our Drug Service for their own benefit.

Now we should have no difficulty with a person who is in Barbados who gets into an emergency situation and we have to administer them. But where systematically people are coming from outside of Barbados to use our free drug system in a manner that will be detrimental to the total society then we have to pin a stop to that.

But in any case, in most developed countries, North America, Europe, the use of the Identification Card, in the case of the United States the Social Security Card is a normal practice which it would be good for us to get accustomed to. And the requirement that a person should show his Identification Card before a prescription is filled, if they are going to be getting free drugs, is not too much to ask. I mean the Honourable Members on both sides of the house have got accustomed to using a piece of plastic to pay for their expenses in certain circumstances. Everybody knows about the American Express Card, et cetera. So that the requirement that you have to show your ID Card to get free drugs, I do not think that that is too high a price.

Once again I have seen one of the peripheral people of Barbados writing in the newspaper saying that it is unfair for the Ministry of Health to require people to show their ID Card. Mr. Speaker, there really is no difficulty as far as I am concerned; but in any case, it is saving the taxpayers of Barbados money.

And so we have taken - we made the decision about five months ago to introduce the system - but we have taken the last four months to advise the public and to let them get accustomed to the idea that when you come to the pharmacy, when you come to the clinic, from the clinic to the pharmacy that you have to show your ID Card.

Mr. Speaker, you know what kind of system we have in this country? Let me tell you what kind of society we have. One of the people who went to a polyclinic and whose ID had to be shown had a relationship or is close to a journalist. You do not know that we got cursed in the press because we asked for the ID Card. That is what happened. And so the Ministry and the Government were castigated because we asked someone who was a non-Barbadian to show an ID Card at a pharmacy in order to get free drugs. That, Sir, would not be called corruption unless it had been done by a politician. If that had been done by a politician, that would be corruption but if it is done by another citizen, it is not labelled corruption.

Well I had to say to the person who called me, if you were born in Barbados, you would not have this problem. You were not born in Barbados, and if we ask you for an ID Card, it is what they do to us when we go elsewhere. So there is no problem. In any case I am told that the system is working reasonably well and that persons over a certain age will be required to show an ID Card.

But what we are doing for the children is that since each child born in Barbados gets an automatic number, an automatic ID number, thanks to the Barbados Labour Party, we will now get the Electoral Office to issue them with the cards. I do not know if you are aware, Mr. Speaker, that children are issued with ID Cards if they wish, and so those children that have to go to the polyclinics or to the pharmacies for their drugs or to the private pharmacies will be able to do so. But in the meantime we are not requiring children to show any ID Cards. We are requiring their parents to show the ID Cards.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the services which we are offering in the polyclinics and the pharmacies and the Drug Service generally speaking are second to none anywhere in the world. There is no place in the world where the quality of Health Services which we are delivering today in Barbados for free can be found, except possibly in the United Kingdom with its National Health Service and the cost which they have to pay in the United Kingdom, I have already touched on.

But I am not going to attempt to repeat what I said earlier that the problems related to the National Health Service in England are now endemic to the point where Mrs. Thatcher has declared war on the National Health Service.

The point I am making, Sir, is that here in Barbados without going through all of the elaborate and costly exercises which this National Health Service Bill would have put us through, we have been able to produce in this country, a system of health care delivery that is second to none, even if I say so, Sir, and that is allowing our population some benefits. But there are some disadvantages. There are some areas in which we still need to pull our socks up.

One of the things which I would like to see happen in this country is that all of the people who deliver health care can come to regard all of the other people who receive health care as humans, as people, that we can begin to exercise some level of love, for, Sir, as we dispense health care. We hear one side of the story continuously but there is another side. The people of Barbados who go to receive these so-called free benefits are not beggars. I make it very clear to the people who work in the Ministry of Health, from the consultants right through the nurses, the pharmacists, the orderlies. I wish them all to understand that the people who come to the Hospital, the people who go to the pharmacies, the people who generally apply for health care services are not beggars and therefore must not be so treated. These health care services are paid for by all of us collectively. I do not expect therefore that when they go for these services that anybody should treat them in a manner other than is deserving of ladies and gentlemen.

In this country, thanks to the Barbados Labour Party's Administration over the last ten years, the standards with regard to common courtesy have been falling and may have in fact reached rock bottom.

You ask why I attribute it to the Barbados Labour Party? Let me be the first to tell you. You had some arrogant Ministers in the last Administration. You see when you are walking around saying that the Kingdom of God is at hand and you will soon be the Government, you have to remember that you were only recently the Government and the people still remember. You had some arrogant Ministers who throughout the length and breadth of this country behaved as though they were Roman legionnaires in a conquered land. 3.35 p.m.

The people do not easily forget that. They will forgive us one or two of our failures, (if you call them that) because we have demonstrated that we are human and therefore your going around and trying to incite the population to turn against the Democratic Labour Party Government as though we have not produced, will only work if you can produce facts. But as my colleague said recently, eighty per cent of the commitments we made to the people of this country have been fulfilled and we will battle you and face you, and take you on, and wrestle you to the ground, because our cause is reasonable and fair. We do not have to worry if you get a number of so-called writers or so-called propagandists to get together and heap scorn on some Members of the Democratic Labour Party. The attacks which you have been leading in the final analysis attacks on yourselves; because if all you can find is some of the trivia which we have been seeing, then you are saying that you are not able to tackle us on substantive matters. We challenge you to tackle us on the issues of health, the quality of the health care, and in that respect the Leader of the Opposition spoke. He said that he has been going to the Hospital, (so I read) and recently he asked the question.

Mr. Speaker, I could not believe my ears when I the Leader of the Opposition asking the question, "Will someone have to die before we do something about the shortage of nurses?" Mr. Speaker, only a person who had taken complete leave of his senses could have asked that question if that person had the experience and had participated like the Leader of the Opposition did in a Government 10 years before.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot go out, like you can ask for a general worker, and hire a nurse. They do not line up. When you say "Nurses wanted!" people do not come down like if you say "School meals workers wanted!" Nurses, have to be trained. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are nurses outside of Barbados who want to come home. I have been meeting with nurses in London - Barbadians and other West

Indians. I have been meeting with Barbadians and other West Indians in the United States. Yes, I personally have met with them. I have outlined the programmes which we have. I have told them about the excitement which we foresee in the development of health over the next 5 to 15 years and I have said to them all, "Ye that are tired of the slush and the slime of New York City, all ye that are tired of the treatment you get in London because of the colour of your skin, all ye that wish to come home to a country that is yours and give of your skills, the door is wide open." In this respect a Trinidadian, a Jamaican, all of them if they have the requisite qualifications are the same as a Barbadian. We make no distinction among our doctors and I shall make no distinction among our nurses.

Sir, they have started to trickle in. The applications are coming in. For every one that comes some will go out. That is the nature of the dynamic system. It is going up and coming down, going around and coming around. What goes around must come around.

Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty. All I want is a humanness in the delivery of our health care. I want my professionals to understand that it upsets me if a man leaves Barbados and goes to Canada on the Medical Aid Scheme and comes back and tells me that the nurses in Canada treated him too good. I wish to know that when he goes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital he has the same feeling. I want to know that if a man is old and decrepit and he is 80 years old and he goes to one of the institutions for which all of us pay, he can expect to get some love and understanding and consideration. If I do nothing else in this country, I wish to put a new... (if new is necessary) but to leave behind me a concept of nursing and health care that is humane. It has to be something to do with people. It has to be people-oriented. It has nothing to do with hierarchy. It has to do with an understanding of what health is all about. As I said, Sir, it is the total being.

Mr. Speaker, it is in that context that we are spending \$40 million at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is U.S. \$20 million, Sir, in a project - a project that was conceived by the Barbados Labour Party, a project that was started by the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: That is why if he knows that they started it, it is indecent for them to say that they want the systems increased and they want the systems upgraded. It is indecent for the Leader of the Opposition, for the Leader of the Opposition's friends, for the Leader of the Opposition's party to know that the project started with the Barbados Labour Party, and then can go out and foment strife, talking about improving the qualities of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Listen, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is pretending that he does not know what foment means. I am saying that they are fomenting strife when they try to give the impression out there that nothing is happening at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The people of Barbados will spend \$40 million that they will have to pay back for the upgrading and refurbishing of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that they started, Sir. The project started under them. So they say they started it. But we are executing it and we have changed what you were going to do, but we are not going to even take the credit for it. We wish you to tell the truth about it. We wish when you go out and tell the Press or the public about what is happening at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that you say we are spending \$40 million and the Democratic Labour Party came and found that it was necessary and so we knocked out half the plan you had and we have put in an Accident and Emergency Department. The Honourable Member sucks his teeth about an Accident and Emergency Department. But they are the ones who go out and talk about the Casualty. He sucks his teeth about the Accident and Emergency Department that we are trying to put into the 20th Century. That is the reason why we have the nurses at the Greater South East Hospital in Washington because we are producing in Barbados an exact replica of the Accident and Emergency Division in Greater South East Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker...

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You always know everything before anybody. You know everything before anybody. When Tom Adams was living why did you not tell him some of the things you know? Mr. Speaker, he knows how to do everything. He can run everything. Listen, if I were you, I would be embarrassed to be in this country.

Asides.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West were ordered by Mr. SPEAKER to be expunged from the record.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I was merely going on the previous record in the House of Assembly where Tom Adams said in this House... The Honourable Member then for St. Thomas said in this House that when he was talking about black people he was not talking about people like Henry Forde. That is in the records. It is in the record.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, he did not say so?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. Honourable Tom Adams never said that, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The present Minister of Health on Page 1164 of the Hansard debate for May 22, 1984 dealing with the debate on the National Health Service Board Act 1984 said these words:...

Mr. SPEAKER: I am allowing the Honourable Member to make his point. 3.45 p.m.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker,.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am allowing the Honourable Member to make his point.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir. The words that the present Minister used were: "You mean white people like Henry Forde?" To which Mr. Adams replied: "That is a very cogent Aside, a very cogent Aside indeed. There may well be white people like Richie Haynes, Branford Taitt and Henry Forde." That is what he said.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, we are all quoting Tom Adams this evening.

Mr. SPEAKER: I got the impression the Honourable Member was quoting from the debates of the House and I would prefer him to give me the year and the page.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I gave you all of that, Sir. I said May 22, 1984 page 1164.

Mr. SPEAKER: The point has been made.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I stand by what I said. It is in the record of Hansard, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas at the time, before this debate he has quoted, said in a debate when they were debating salaries.... Tom Adams said, "When I talk about black people I mean real black people, not people like Henry Forde." That is in the record, Sir, we have quoted it in here time and time again. But if the same Tom Adams called me a white man, Sir, you would know he could not be serious. But he was dead serious, because that was the time when a former Speaker said he would not be led by the same Honourable Member for St. Thomas. They were discussing salaries; Elliott Mottley was in here, and he cried, Sir.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I really would not want to be personal. It is untrue that I have ever cried in this House about anything which was said. That is the first point I want to make. Not only is the Honourable Member misusing, in my submission, this debate for the purpose of making racial and personal attacks on people he should try to lift the standard of the debate, not bring it down into whether a person is black and white or black or white. It is childish.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, you can't allow that to stay in the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would just like to indicate that the rules of the House tend to prohibit the personal kind of debate. I am going to ask Honourable Members to try to keep the debates at a level.... not to be (if the Honourable Member complains it to be) personal. I am asking that it be not there, but let us keep our debate above that.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I am just saying for the record, since the Honourable Member has put it in the record, that I at no time in this debate attempted to be racial. All I did was to quote a former member of this House, who is on record in the House. I did not attempt to be racial, I don't know how a House with 27 black people could be racial. I was not speaking of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I did not refer to him, what I did was to refer to what is in Hansard and I can show Your Honour, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: When I am ready, and you know it is so too; but then again you have a short memory. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has a very short memory when it comes to the late Honourable Member for St. Thomas. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central and I know what kind of memory you have in relation to the late member for St. Thomas, but we will not deal with that this evening; we are dealing with health. Let the dead bury their dead. We are dealing with health; we are not going to deal with your memory.

Mr. Speaker, I am not being racial. Who can be racial and why do we have constantly, every time the word "black" is used, to talk about, "racial"? The Honourable Member is always trying to suggest that there are two kinds of people in this country. In this House all Honourable Members are the same. What racial is he talking about? It was his political leader, the same one who told him, "who wants to resign can resign" I was here, Sir. He said he never cried in here? He should apologise, because you know better than that. Anyhow, Sir, let me move on.

I am not going to be moved by your shaking your head. When it suits those three Honourable Members, Mr. Speaker (Let me be the first to tell you) they get into any condition they wish to, any posture they wish to when they are discussing this and other Honourable Members. Don't shake your head over there; it will not move me. I am thoroughly unmoved by anything you say or do. We are discussing health. You came here to discuss health and we shall do it. We shall do it because a lot of myths are passing in this country for serious comment; a lot of lies are passing

as serious comment and we are inviting the population to examine the real situation.

Go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and see what we have done with the project. We have an auditorium; we have quarters for doctors; we have a lounge for the nurses. They are talking about improved conditions? We have four refurbished surgeries. We are going to have a neo-natal surgery and care; we are going to have a premature ICU, an ICU for pediatrics; we are going to have a surgical ICU; we are going to have in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital a system that will be second to none, and we are doing the resource training.

We have as part of that project of \$40 million the consultant who is leading the human resource development, who is a PAHO consultant, who was the Head of the University Hospital in Jamaica. He is here on a two year programme in which he is systematically training and upgrading all levels of personnel in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, because we expect that when this project has been completed the people of Barbados can expect the level of services in keeping with a developed country.

Mr. Speaker, in this country today the three leading causes of death are the same as in the United States. The infant mortality in Barbados is one of the lowest in any developing country. The chief causes of morbidity are the same as in the United States. It means, therefore, Sir, that we have reached a level in this country of services where we have to provide the same quality service that could happen in the good hospitals of the United States.

But let me tell you, Sir. Recently I was in the United States for a month and while I was there there were reports about people having to wait four days in the casualty of a hospital in the Bronx, of persons dying in the casualty without having seen a doctor after two days, of women having to give birth to their children in the casualty while waiting to see a doctor. In the meantime word has been put out that during the problems we had at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, some babies were born on the ward. Nothing extraordinary, nothing abnormal happened during that time. But we know the source of the information and we leave it there.

Mr. Speaker, the number of nurses recruited has become available to me and I feel that the record must be set right and I am going to tell you, Sir. In 1977 they recruited no nurses - zero; in 1978, one; in 1979, five; in 1980, nine; in 1981, three; in 1982, one; in 1983, nine; in 1984, eight; in 1985, 13; in 1986, nine; in 1987, six; in 1988, nine. A total of 74 nurses was recruited between 1976 and 1988, and they have the temerity to go around this country talking about a shortage of nurses, and the Leader of the Opposition had the temerity to ask the people at

Brittons Hill, if we are going to wait until somebody dies. Did he wait until somebody died, Sir? How many hundreds have died before he acted? Did the Honourable Leader of the Opposition act at all? I think, Sir, it is intellectually dishonest for anyone to give the impression across this country that we are doing something immoral, that we are failing in our duty, as if they have ever done their duty at all in relation to health. They have no record on which they can stand on this question of health. 3.55p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I would not succumb to the blandishments that are exhibited from time to time when people say you are doing a good job. I prefer, Sir, to consider what I am doing to be my duty. I consider it my duty and I have much resentment with those persons who should know better.

Mr. Speaker, if Joan Benjamin wrote a letter about me it would not affect me. Joan Benjamin will write letters because that is what brings her gratification. She is not a socialist; she has no particular interest in the things that will make Barbadians better. She has an axe to grind. That is all right with me. But if the Leader of the Opposition (who is a Barbadian, who knows and understands the sufferings that Barbadians have gone through) seeks to mislead ordinary Barbadians, young people in this country, by his mouthings, then that offends me, because what he is doing is casting aspersions on all of us - all of our generations - by the kind of ignorance which he is portraying in the community when in fact he knows better. That is the point. He knows better.

I take objection to the suggestion that the Democratic Labour Party is responsible for any shortage of nurses. I do not accept that I am responsible for any shortage of nurses. I am not, nor is the Honourable Member for St. James South. The Democratic Labour Party had no hand in the shortage of nurses. Three years now or four years from now you can lay that blame on this Government; but for now it is yours and you can keep it. I am not going to pretend, Sir, that I am holier than thou or that I am nicer than anybody else.

I was up in the United States. I went to a conference and I took a few days off. I am entitled like everybody else to have a few days off. The Nation newspaper writes an editorial and because I said I did not know what was going on down here, they accuse me of being ignorant. If they were only saying that I ought not to have said what I said, I might accept that, but they say, imagine a Minister saying he does not know. If you are in Boston on leave, a couple of days' rest, do you believe that I should telephone every day and ask the Acting Minister how things are going. Skipper, how are things going? I am not so psychologically insecure that I cannot walk from the Ministry and go somewhere. The Prime Minister is capable of telling me tomorrow, he can advise the Governor-General that he wants to try

somebody else. That is all right; so why am I to become so paranoid that when I go away from this country I am to telephone back and ask the fellows if everything is all right. And then they write suggesting that I am incompetent in the Ministry. An editorial is written by an intelligent person. When people write letters, that is one thing; when they write editorials, that is something I have to take account of. Do you know what they said in that editorial? How come they go up to New York and they can only talk in New York? Let me answer the Nation here: Because, in New York the journalist ask intelligent questions most of the time, because the journalist does his homework; because the journalist confronts you and he asks you questions, and I have answered every question that every journalist has asked me in Barbados. I am not afraid of the journalists. I can take on any journalist if they want me to. I answer what they ask me and what I don't feel like answering I tell them I can't answer or I slide.

Aside: Bring some water for him.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Tom Adams talked for four hours and you didn't give him any water. You must not have liked him. You like me, I know. The Honourable Member must like me to get water for me. If you had seen him fall down, you would not give him water.

Mr. Speaker, in this country the question of health is one that touches every single person. It is a human issue that relates to every person. When they contaminate the water in St. Thomas by going and throwing things in the gullies or if they do in St. Joseph, it comes on down to St. Michael when the water starts to flow; so everybody has an interest in this thing. It is not only the Minister who has an interest. When I appeal to people to stop throwing away garbage and Barbadians can go in the Belle and throw away the garbage willy-nilly, and persons who have commercial activities in Barbados go and systematically dump garbage illegally, those persons are traitors. They are destroying our heritage, and it is not only the Minister who has to speak about it. I will continue to speak about it, but every other citizen in Barbados has a stake in what kind of Barbados we have. Barbados is not reserved for me or the Democratic Labour Party or even the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, we all have a stake in this country. It is something blatantly stupid for us constantly to have to spend time and money telling people not to throw garbage out on the street. We build a new highway; the highway is opened; they have landscaped the two sides of the highway, and it suits some people in this country to drive along in their car and toss garbage out on the landscaped areas.

Now somebody tells me that is a protest against the Government; and somebody writes from the Barbados Labour Party that I am where I should be - I am the

Minister of Garbage; so I must be the Minister of the things they throw out on the highway.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You see, the person who wrote that is not sufficiently literate as Tom Adams was to understand what Tom Adams had said in a budget debate which was being televised and which therefore led him to be dramatic - which I recommend if you are in the Opposition. He said that when he was in London they had a man in the Labour Party Government and the Conservatives had attacked him; and they had said - when they put him to be Minister of Coal, there was no coal; when they put him to be this, there was no that; when they put him to be something else, there was no that; and therefore he Tom Adams recommended that they should put the then Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce to be Minister of Garbage and perhaps the garbage would disappear. That was intelligent comment.

Now the person who writes suffers from a certain intellectual colic; does not understand; picks up half of the words and writes them out; and now he is saying I am where I should be - Minister of Garbage. It is his garbage that I am Minister of; so if I am responsible for the Sanitation Authority, it is his garbage, his mother's garbage, his- grandmother's garbage, your garbage, my garbage that I am in charge of. So being Minister of Garbage cannot be seen in pejorative terms if you have any intelligence. How can you write and ask people to respect you if you are a young man and you talk about being Minister of Garbage with contempt? You can only be a fool, Mr. Speaker, if you do not recognise that unless you clean up the garbage you have nowhere to live.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I feel sad when I see the level to which our intellectual, our public debate has come when I, having spent so much of my time trying to learn to be like the greats, see some things that come out in the public arena. There is a difference between some of the "picong" which will go on between political parties. But I will charge the Labour Party to take their young people and nurture them and teach them not to fall into the ways which they see that some of you have fallen into, because you know better. 4.05 p.m.

The senior members of the Barbados Labour Party do not always behave the way they posture, Sir. You and I know that. But they are leading the young lambs to write foolishness and behave in a posture that has nothing to do with the aims and objectives of a country that is 22 years old and looking to become a great country even though it is small.

How long are we going to continue to let trivia and foolishness become bulwarks of this society? You are not tired? Mr. Speaker, I know you are. But is the Barbados Labour Party not tired of mediocracy, Sir? Are they not tired having foolishness manifested as greatness? Example: We have a young man who runs and wins the marathon in Barbados. You would have thought that that would make every headline, that everybody would be bursting with pride. The same evening that happened, you know what were the lead stories in the various electronic media? Anything but that.

I do not wish to criticize unnecessarily but I am saying it is that kind of puerility which is permeating the Barbados Labour Party and this concept of "infiltrate" and "overthrow" which you advocate - perhaps, in the case of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas pejoratively and in case of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition ignorantly - this concept of "infiltrate" is all right if the people you are sending to infiltrate are of the same mind, understanding and knowledge as you. But when you send children to infiltrate, what are you leaving for them to do?

I said that the sick-out is immoral. I stand by that because that is part of what I was taught. You cannot, if you are 40 years old and you have an 11 year old child at Harrison College, say that you are sick when you are not sick and then quarrel when that child says, "I do not want to go to school. I feel sick." You cannot do that.

The Bishop, the Dean and the other religious leaders in the country have an obligation to help me on this occasion to tell the population, "You can withdraw your labour." You have the authority to withdraw your labour under the Constitution. If you are working in an essential service and you feel the Essential Services legislation or the Common Law as it approaches essential services is unfair, test it.

You do not have enough jails to lock up 500 people one time. That is what Martin Luther King did but you do not go and say you are sick. And I am not going to apologise, Mr. Speaker, for saying that I consider that immoral. Crucify me if that is what you must do. I do not have any problem with that.

When you are sick... I am sick, Sir. I have sciatica, not cancer as the Labour Party people are telling my constituents that I have cancer of the gonads, that is what they are telling them... Other things, but not cancer. I have sciatica but I will not explain what that is. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. That is sick but I go to work every day that I am in this country.

I am not suggesting that everybody has to go to work every day. If you are sick, you are sick. But for a nurse to

be sick is immoral. She should say to her union "I feel we should not go to work."

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: If the union tells her to do it, that is even worse. I hope that the union that I have a lot of respect for, when it is withdrawing its labour, would come up and say "This union is saying we are withdrawing our labour for one day, one hour or work to rule", or a number of other tactics. I hope that we will eliminate from our society the concept of sick-outs.

Mr. Speaker, when somebody "sicks-out" in New York it has no influence on somebody in San Francisco. You have to fly 5 hours from New York to San Francisco. But when somebody in Barbados does something, it has an influence on everybody; and when you start talking about sick-out, sick-out, sick-out - and now we have a whole system of sick-outs - I say that that is immoral. It is not good for the country. You cannot be 22 years old as a country and talking about sick-out. If you want to throw away the Government that is your privilege. You have time to do that. But you do not sick-out.

You wish me, because I am a politician, not have a position in this country? Mr. Speaker, I have said in this House before I was a Christian before I was a politician and long after I stop being a politician I am going to be a Christian. I have no difficulty with that and, therefore, I have to speak when these things- happen.

When I go on a political platform and I say that it is immoral, somebody then challenges me as though I am afraid I would lose my seat. The people of St. Michael West know me well and when I have stopped serving them in the way they expect, I, myself, will be the first to tell them what to do. I am not going to work on it too hard. I will see that I do what I am to do and I will go before them. They have a mercy seat for me every 5 years and I go to their judgement seat and I will discuss it with them and for the rest of Barbados I would like to think that me and my colleagues on this side can be regarded in this country as leaders with moral principles. If we cannot be so regarded, we have no right to be regarded at all, Sir.

Let them sick-out if they continue to. But if they want to sick out I reserve the right to say it is immoral and I feel so; and the Bishop should say so; and the Dean should say so; and every Clergyman in Barbados should say so; and every Reverend and every Pastor. That is what they should say.

Let them withdraw their labour and call it what it is. If they are striking, they are striking. If they are away for 4 hours the Minister of Education cannot cut off anybody's hand and make them teach. If they say they are going out

for 4 hours they have to go. If the nurses stop working for 4 hours and I would hope they would not allow anybody to die. But they are not sick and I am not going to be part of it.

Mr. Speaker, if you find that I am more animated on this matter than I usually am, it is because of a lot of little sniping remarks being made by some members, not all, Sir, of the Barbados Labour Party. They go out and suggest all manner of strange things because we take positions. We have to take those positions, Sir.

We came into this House of Assembly as leaders. Each one of us represents a constituency and they look to us to provide a certain guidance. In my constituency, and I know in yours, Sir - you cannot say it - we will provide that moral guidance, if nothing else.

We will provide some roads as well, Sir, and natural gas, jobs and other things. But we will provide moral leadership too. If we cannot do that, then the roads, the natural gas and all the other things are nothing. And I am not as concerned about the Honourable Members in here and myself as the young generation, Sir.

I am concerned about the young generation. I am talking about health. In this country today we have a danger from Aids that will affect our young people like nothing we have ever had to contend with. Not one of us will ever have to make the moral decisions that the young people will have to make and when we are reporting these matters, I beg the Press and this is one of the times when I am going to kneel and beg the Press to make sure they get it right for the children; because we are not saying that we want to stop the children from having a sexual drive. Nobody stopped me. When we were young we had sexual drive that was higher, I think, than it is now.

Some of my colleagues seem to be still young, Sir. So I would not speak with any authority on this side but I know for you and me; we had.

Quite seriously, Sir, young people in this country are faced with a moral dilemma. They have to make choices that are almost impossible. You are asking a young man between the ages of 15 and 29 to stop doing what is instinctively natural. That is what we are asking. So when we talk about Aids and young people, we are not just talking about Aids. We are seriously signalling that we have to help them and we are asking them to help save their own lives. Aids, Sir, will take a substantial part of our economic resources down the road. 4.15 p.m.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about what we are going to have to 'do for AIDS, we are not being political, Sir; we are not being the Government doing a good job. We are the country reaching out for its own future and

wondering what is going to happen. For even if they find a cure in the next five years, the pattern that has been set will have to play itself out. Already in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the cost of supplies because they are disposable has risen. And it is so throughout the world. And what we have to ask ourselves is this; What are we going to do about the children who have to go to school? Those children have to go to school. What kind of policies are we going to have with one another in relation to AIDS?

Mr. Speaker, the one thing I would like to ask before I sit down is that we consider compassion for our own people. When someone gets afflicted with the disease AIDS, that someone does not cease to be a person. And I would like to beg the people of this community, the health workers and the others to examine the situation because you do not know when the die is going to be cast in your backyard. None of us knows who will be afflicted, because, Sir, it does not walk with a sign. When you have smallpox you get some kind of signal. When you are catching a cold, you have some kind of signal. But there is no sign in the forehead of anybody who goes around saying, I have the HIV virus. So we do not know who has it and we do not know who will get it. We know who can avoid getting it. And that is what we ask people to do. And that is why we ask the media who have been very good so far in this regard to continue. This is not a one time fight, Mr. Speaker. This is something that is going to go on for the rest of our natural lives because AIDS is going to be with us. Those that have been afflicted are going to be with us for as long as we live or they live.

Mr. Speaker, in that respect, we are going to need persons, workers, helpers, and all of that is going to form part of the health system which we have to design. And so, Sir, we come to repeal this National Health Service Act. This Act which saw a division in our society between the doctors and the Government. I am pleased to say that in spite of some efforts by some other people to create a negative relationship, the relationship between the doctors and the Government is as it should be. We are under no illusions about our situation. As in any profession, there are some people who will have from time to time to be dealt with according to the regulations. There are some people in any profession who will from time to time step outside the pale. When those times come we will confront them and we will deal with them as we are required to.

But in the meantime what we have been doing is fostering a relationship of trust, a relationship which sees on the one side the protection of the total society, that is to say, the Government, and on the other side the protection of a profession, that is to say, the doctors and the nurses and the other health personnel.

I will end, Mr. Speaker, by saying this: We talk of doctors and nurses when we talk about health. But there is

another cadre of persons who are equally vital if not more vital to the health system than the doctors and the nurses; all of the ancillary workers, the ambulance drivers. A word on the ambulance drivers, Sir - the drivers and the ambulance workers and the emergency technicians. We are concentrating on trying to upgrade them. But, Mr. Speaker, all 47 of them are temporary, you know. All 47 of those people you see walking who sick-out, they are temporary. Now, Sir, I would make bold to say that they would never risk that under the Barbados Labour Party. The late Honourable Member for St. Thomas would have called them up the next morning and raised some questions, Mr. Speaker, that would have sent them flying. He would not have made any error whatsoever about his position. Ask the Honourable Member for St. Thomas! He would tell you that his predecessor in office did not make sport. But, Sir, they felt to walk. And you know what, Sir? All of them who are qualified are going to be appointed. All of them are going to be appointed. When we got the Order done in here, they were included. Bs, Ds, Qs and Rs are going to be appointed.

So I am saying now, Sir, even though they walked, I am saying from the Floor of the House that they are going to be appointed. So if they want to walk again, they can walk.

But yesterday, Sir, there was an accident on Spring Garden Highway and I saw the Defence Force Ambulance going for them. I hope it was not because they were out. I do not think so. But, Mr. Speaker, you know how bad I would feel if they were. And if I were one of them and I heard that these two people took an extra twenty minutes lying on the road because I did not go, I do not know if I could live with that, if that were my duty. But, Sir, they are going to be appointed and all of the questions are going to be solved. The Attorney-General said that the regrading exercise should take six months, the press reported it a little strange and the policemen now say, as I understand it, Sir, that according to the same press that they are upset that it is going to take six months to do regrading. Well, Sir, I am not getting into that, except to say that the Attorney-General said and all of us know that the Government has accepted regrading. It said so in writing to the people two years ago. So the question is not whether we have accepted. The question is how. And the Government is negotiating and telling the people how they are going to do it and what the Attorney-General is saying is that we hope that the exercise will be completed in six months to the satisfaction of everybody. The professionals are saying it will take a year. We are saying that we would like it done in six months. That is all he was saying.

But the regrading, Sir, is not an exercise where we say, "eeny, meeny, miny, mow!" (magical words). There were two regradings during the time of the Barbados Labour Party. The problem with them was that they were very personal in their approach. That is the problem. That is the difficulty we have now. The people in Barbados need to

know that the difficulty with regrading comes from the fact that the Barbados Labour Party did their regrading in a very highly selective manner. They chose who was who. And there were certain people who did not qualify. They were certain people who were beyond the pale. No pun intended, Sir. And those people did not qualify. So we have the dickens of a problem now with the regrading. That is the problem. But I am not going to get involved in the negotiations from the Floor of the House, Sir, except that most of the problems that affect the people come from within my Ministry.

And the Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition has the temerity to go saying that if the Ministers in the Ministries cannot handle the problem, they should step aside. Sir, can there be anything worse than that, Sir, coming from a former Attorney-General? He of all people knows that the legal system we operate under, the Cabinet system requires (in- the case of the United Kingdom) the Treasury that looks after the Civil Service and the Prime Minister in Britain to deal with matters of regrading and salaries. The Leader of the Opposition, a former Attorney-General must know that, Sir. And he knows that the Minister of Education, except to have a qualitative view about the generality of the thing or the Minister of Health, except to have a qualitative view about the generality of the thing have nothing whatsoever to do with the negotiations.

Why would he then go out giving people the impression that the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health and any other Minister who has workers in the Public Service, would be incompetent because the NUPW and the BWU and the BUT have not reached agreement? I do not understand-what drives the Leader of the Opposition to take these unreasonable positions in matters such as these. I do not understand it, Sir. Unless he is suggesting to us that we should have marched in here and legislate salaries and say, "The devil takes the hindmost!" 4.25 p.m.

The Prime Minister spoke on this and he is the Minister of Finance. He has spoken on it. He has expressed the humane view; but he does not only express it. I do not understand, Sir, because that is the position we took when we were canvassing. That is the position we campaigned upon; and that is the position we were elected on, namely, that we would allow the negotiations to take their course.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we went and told the people. You know something, Sir? If the Prime Minister and the Cabinet had decided to legislate salaries, do you know what they would say? The Leader of the Opposition would probably, (note the word "probably", Sir), be up front with those saying: "They said that they would never legislate salaries. Look at them now." You do not remember, Sir, when Jesus was being crucified there was one of his

detractors who said, "You saved others. Yourself you cannot save." That is how they would treat us. That is how they behave. If we do A, they say B. If we do B, they say A. It is Opposition politics. But we know that better than you. Precisely. YQU only had 2 years. You are not practised in Opposition politics; so you have got a long time to go, a long time before you get practice in Opposition politics. I think the country will give you a chance to learn Opposition politics before they can let you become the Government again; and we are not talking about any dead horses. We are talking about real people, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, it upsets the whole community when that kind of message goes forth from responsible people; and the Leader of the Opposition is a post in the Constitution of the country. He is no ordinary mortal. The man from St. John might be, Sir. But the Leader of the Opposition is entrenched in the Constitution as one of the principals. Therefore, people look to him and they always write and say how these 40,000 people supported them according to the polls. So if nobody else, 40,000 of them are watching him. And how he can make these irresponsible statements, ... You are not sucking your teeth right. You do not suck your teeth like that.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: If you are chupsing, you should learn how to chupse. You do not even know how to chupse. Mr. Speaker, I beg your pardon, Sir. Occasionally, you know how it is. But I do not understand; the Leader of the Opposition is not irresponsible, Sir. Some of the debates in this House we have had on human rights and Administrative Law. And we have had inputs from **the** Leader of the Opposition which will be worthy of repetition long after all of us have departed this scene. If you had seen that contribution from the Leader of the Opposition and then, Sir, you hear him say ... This is the man, Sir. This is the Honourable Member, Sir, of whom I would have said up until last week that if there is a man ...

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Well, you are bound to read me like a book. They read geniuses like that all the time. Mr. Speaker, if there was a man, Sir, of whom up until last week I would have said notwithstanding anything else, "He understands human rights, he understands national justice." I would have said that, Sir, of him. I still do not believe that the Leader of the Opposition got up on a political platform or.d said that he is going to fire somebody. I do not believe he said so. I do not believe that he... You see if you tell me that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said that, I might be inclined to believe it because the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has been known to say a few things which he does not mean. He has been known. But the Leader of the Opposition when he screws up his face, Sir,

and gets serious and raises his voice, you have to take him seriously and he says that he is going to fire...

Asides[^]

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Well, he fired us. If a politician fires another politician that is no problem. As I said in another place, Sir, he was fired when he was in the Cabinet. There was no problem. He took the firing like a man. The only thing he has not done so far is to take care of his obligation. He has a certain obligation to me, Sir, which he has not yet fulfilled and therefore he has told me fairly frequently, "Next week."

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, the obligation is to pay me what he owes me.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I know how it is, Sir, for the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, I have not spoken about the Leader of the Opposition for a long time. I used to speak about him when I was in the Opposition because I wanted him in the Opposition and I wanted to be over here and the people heard and responded accordingly. Since I have been in the Government, I have not spoken about the Leader of the Opposition. I have said of the Leader of the Opposition that he is the last person that I would offend because he is so soft. We have discussed this often, namely, that he is not able to take real lashes and we have tried, Sir, not to be, you know as offensive as we could be. But do you know what he is doing, Sir? He is like a shy dog in a gap, Sir. He runs out and barks and as soon as you run behind him now, he goes under the galvanise and inside barking. Sorry, Sir. But that is how, Sir, he behaves out there talking. He is going to fire this body. He is going to fire the next body.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure the Honourable Member recognises that I prefer my debates to maintain a certain level.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. You will notice I pulled back, Sir. I pi lied back, Sir. But Sir, the Leader of the Opposition is well respected in the society (or used to be). Because it is my understanding that a number of serious Barbados Labour Party supporters have become disillusioned with the way he has been behaving in recent times, and that is what we are talking about. You feel that I should not mention your health when we are discussing the National Health Service Bill. I do not understand, Sir. The Honourable Member himself said that he has been going to the hospital. That is what he said. Well, it was not reported. I was not at the meeting. How would I know what he said?

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I said you never passed Jemmotts Lane. Well, you do not pass Jemmotts Lane. I never saw you out there. Oh, you may go to the hospital more often than me because, you know why. You should be really going to Sir Winston Scott.

Laughs.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, it is important...

Laughs.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, if you have concluded your speech...

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It is important, Sir, that we have a little levity in these presentations. But I want to finish by referring... The Honourable Member is talking about landing gear, Sir. But he does that, often. What I want to suggest to him however, .Sir, is that we have a serious problem which cannot be solved merely by passing legislation. We have a problem of human understanding and I hope, Sir, that now that we have completed what we said about this National Health Service that we will be able to get on with the business of running the health services without these simplistic impressions which are being put forth.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the actual Bill is concerned, we are going to be making sure that where it says the Health Service Board that that is replaced by the Minister. We are making sure that the Accounting Officer now becomes the Permanent Secretary and the Drug Service Office will mean the Drug Service Office as established by the same Act in the past.

We will also ensure that all the funds that were collected under this National Health Service Board Act will be returned now to their proper place in the Treasury as we said they would. The functions of the Director will be put in such a way that they now fall fully within the Ministry and the Minister is being given the executive power which the Board would have had under the Act. 4.35 p.m. •

In essence the Bill itself is a very simple piece of legislation. But what it seeks to do is to bring down the final cap, to bring once and for all to an end this concept of a National Health Service which, like the still-born child it was, came to nothing, but which left a lingering doubt and a lingering question in the minds of those who had been committed to it, who had been promised that they would have been able to be godparents to this still-born baby. We are now, Sir, making sure that we change the entire

ambience within which it was created, and we are finally doing what we said we would do.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, and subject to any questions which Honourable Members might raise, and which I will be happy to answer in full and in their entirety, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Bill and just to make a small contribution.

Unlike the Minister and other people, I have to see this National Health Service Bill from a different perspective. I happened to have practised medicine in this country for 18 years and therefore I had to live through those days when the National Health Service was introduced, or they intended to introduce the National Health Service. I was one of the nervous doctors who met week after week, because we recognised that the health services of Barbados were very seriously threatened and we thought it was a very serious thing in this country.

I happened to look at it from a perspective where I was trained in the United States, an area where probably medicine is most developed, and therefore having come back to my own country, and seeing the health services of this country being threatened, I, like all the doctors of this country, had to join in a Trade Union in order to stave off what we saw as a serious threat to the health of this country.

I want to say now that the climate of the reaction of people in the country was not like it is now, because in those days Trade Unions had hanging over their heads something called the Emergency Powers Bill. I think it was a piece of legislation well known to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, why did we come to the position that we took in the Medical Association? A simple analysis... If the members of the Barbados Labour Party had done their homework, they would have understood why the doctors of this country fought tooth and nail against the introduction of a free health service. In fact, Barbados has always had a free health service.

When I came back to this country working at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, people of all walks of life, some of the richest people of this country, would come into the emergency room and would attend the medical and surgical clinics at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and they did not have to pay a cent. No money was charged. So therefore Barbados had in place already a very free National Health Service.

The Barbados Labour Party - it was a campaign pledge, we know that - brought in a team from England who told them that a free National Health Service could not

work. They brought in a team from the University of the West Indies and they told them it could not work. Then they went to the United States and they brought in a team from the Keiser Foundation, one of the richest conglomerates in the world, who knew nothing about administering a National Health Service; but these people had as one of their operations a pharmaceutical company. I am not saying that the pharmaceutical company in any way influenced their decision. But people who have never delivered a free National Health Service advised the Government of Barbados that they should go ahead with a free National Health Service.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to look at the indices of health in Barbados... And I will take a few minutes to do that now. And I am basing some of my statistics on a Report put out by IGADD, which is the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development, in Eastern Africa; and I am basing my statistics from the working documents of the Joint Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries and the European Parliament - the 1988 Report.

If we were to look at these figures, the indices of Barbados, and compare them with the rest of the world, we will see that Barbados has one of the best developed health systems in the whole world, not only in the Caribbean or in the developed countries. If, Mr. Speaker, we look at the indices of infant mortality rate... The infant mortality rate is an index that tells you when a child is born what are the chances of its living, whether it will live to reach one year old.

In Kenya 94 out of every 1 000 children die before the age of one. That means 9 out of every 100. In Uganda (these are massive countries with a lot of money) 110 children out of 1 000 die before the age of one year, or 11 out of 100. In Ethiopia 172 children die out of 1 000 before the age of one. In Barbados 11 out of 1 000, or one in 100. In Guyana 30 out of 1 000, or three out of 100. In Trinidad 20 out of 1 000 or two out of 100, and in Jamaica 18 out of 1 000 or two out of 100. In China and India 95 out of 1 000 or approximately 10 in 100. Of all of these statistics I have laid out here Barbados has the best infant mortality rate.

If we were to take another important index, that of life expectancy, you will find that in Uganda the life expectancy (which is when you are born how long you expect to live)... The life expectancy in Kenya is 54 years, in Uganda 54, in Ethiopia 44, in Barbados 72.7 years. That is the average age that a child in Barbados will expect to live. In Trinidad, it is 68.7 and in Jamaica 73.

These are important indices because these factors tell you the level of health prevailing in the country. If you have these factors, if you have a health system that can deliver this sort of health service, how can you with any common

sense or reason take up that health system, completely discard it and try to introduce a new health system? It is absolute madness, and it is this sort of thing that the medical profession was fighting against.

We know that the Barbados Labour Party has always said that the doctors in this country made too much money. That was a statement made time and time again on the floor of this House of Assembly before 1976. Therefore if you look at the indices of health you would have to come to the conclusion that the decision to introduce a new health system into Barbados had little to do with Barbados' performance in terms of the health that it was producing, because already you had a free system, you had a system in which the health indices were equal to any place in the world.

If you look at another index, that of deaths per hundred thousand, you would find that Barbados has a death rate of 129 per hundred thousand from cancer. 4.45 p.m.

The United States has a death rate of 178 per 100 000, Jamaica has a death rate of 71 and Trinidad and Tobago 60; so the indices of cancer relate in a health way to the age, how long you live, and also we know that there are certain foods which we see in developed countries which we also see in Barbados, certain pollutants that we see, so therefore Barbados comes closets of all the Caribbean countries in terms of the death rate from cancer.

If you look at hypertension you will see that Barbados has a death rate from high blood pressure of 24.9 where Jamaica has one of 27, Trinidad and Tobago has one of 39, and the United States has one of seven per hundred thousand. These are very important indices, and these are the indices that any country, any Government making a decision as to whether they should change their health system or not must bear foremost in mind. But, Mr. Speaker, that is not the worst part.

When the Barbados Labour Party was introducing the National Health Service into this country, a fundamental point was made. They said that in that system every individual would be free to choose the doctor of his own choice. Now Barbados has a population of 250 000 people. There are less than 100 private practitioners in Barbados, which meant that each doctor that was assigned on a rotation basis would have approximately 2 500 patients to take care of. But since you also notice the concept that the patient would have the right to choose his doctor, you would see very well that there are some doctors who would end up with all the patients and some doctors who would end up with almost none. But the point is that it would be impossible then for the doctors who were most popular to deliver the health services that were necessary for the

patients who opted to go to those doctors. Furthermore, under the system the contract that would be signed between the doctor and the patient was one that could not be revoked except with the written consent of both the doctor and the patient. Now those of us who practise medicine in Barbados * know that Barbados has what you call a migrant patient population. Patients go, as in all free countries, from one doctor to another. If they are not satisfied with the services of this doctor, they go and ask another opinion. And as a matter of fact, all developed countries where medicine is delivered encourage the system where patients will seek more than one advice, because you are talking about your health; and if you have a pain in your belly and you go to one doctor and the doctor thinks there is an appendix, there ' is no reason why you must accept that opinion and not seek a second opinion to make sure three or four doctors think it is an appendix before they cut you open to look at your appendix. So the concept of tying one patient to one doctor would be something that would be completely foreign to the medical concept of what the people in Barbados •** interpret their doctor should be.

Now when you had the system of having assigned patients to doctors and the patient lost confidence in the doctor or vice versa there was no recourse. And some very interesting things happened in that system in the National Health Service, because there was supposed to be some sort of tribunal made up of non-medical people, (mainly political people who were supposed to decide when doctors were involved in mal-practice or not) and the system completely shut out the Medical Association from making such decisions. And one would have to ask whether this system was really geared for the medical profession and the delivery of health services to the patients. There are a lot of areas where the doctors themselves became very concerned. *** As I say, the members of the medical fraternity, despite their political affiliations, found it absolutely necessary for the first time in the history of Barbados for the Medical Association to form a trade union, because they considered that this National Health Service and the threats that were made to the doctors of this country were very serious.

I recall that when there were some suggestions put forward by the Medical Association stating that the programme could not work, the Minister of Health made a statement that they would import doctors from overseas to run the system, as though they were talking about rearing a brand of sheep or cattle. You were not talking about the inter-personal relations, about the development of a system within a country in which most of the doctors were born and contributed most of their lives.

One of the most sinister things that happened during this time was that almost overnight, one morning, the District Medical Officers, doctors in the country who had given service to especially the poor people, those doctors

whom you could call at any time at night and who would come to visit old people, found that their contracts were completely cancelled. Their jobs were terminated and the old people who attended the clinics or, whom, if they were sick, the doctors would go and visit, found immediately that they had no doctor at their disposal. These are some of the wicked systems that were put on the people of Barbados by the Barbados Labour Party.

I cannot but include as an integral part of the health service of this country, the St. Joseph Hospital. It was very important not only to the people in the north and to Bajaris in general, but it also provided a service for some of our brothers and sisters from the Eastern Caribbean. When the Barbados Labour Party could not see eye to eye with the medical fraternity of this country, when the nurses and the staff of the St. Joseph Hospital made approaches to the then Government, the Barbados Labour Party, to help support the hospital by putting some of the non-paying patients at the St. Joseph Hospital and providing the hospital with the same fee that it would cost to take care of the patient at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, they refused. But then they came up with another proposal. They suggested that the St. George's Medical School be housed at the St. Joseph Hospital. The Medical fraternity was opposed to it on several grounds. First of all there was word, and I think there was word from good sources, that the St. George's Medical School wanted to use the training facilities in Barbados in order to upgrade their own image as an offshore medical school, because Barbados is one of the teaching centres of the University of the West Indies. So the University of the West Indies Medical School opposed the St. George Medical School conning to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when the Barbados Labour Party could not get their way in getting the St. George's Medical School into the St. Joseph Hospital, they withdrew their aid and caused the closure of the St. Joseph Hospital. We know that during this period - the Honourable Minister of Health did not want to say it - the doctors were referred to as vagabonds by the Minister of Health because there simply did what they taught was right in the interest of health in this country. There is no doubt in my mind that the Barbados Labour Party sought to force the National Health Service down the throats of the people of this country. That was a sad period in the health history of Barbados, and what we are seeing now in terms of health is a back lash of some of the misguided plans and programmes that were implemented by the Barbados Labour Party. 4.55 p.m.

I would like to see Honourable Members over there, when they speak, explain to the people in this country the good points of the National Health Service - how it would have worked to the interest of this country and if they think that this present Government in a logical way was correct in doing what we did today.

I think if they have the interest of the people of this country at heart, they would do one of two things. They will try either to explain the unexplainable, or they will sit in their seats and keep quiet.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I will not respond to the challenge of the last Honourable Member who spoke about explaining the National Health Service under the Barbados Labour Party. This is not a historical debate.

Two years ago on May 28, 1986, all of these issues were decided upon by the people of Barbados. The health service was an issue for many months before the election but I am concerned that having heard from two members on the Government side who spoke, that the Barbados Labour Party, in the 10 year period 1976 to 1986, was such a wicked Government, so destructive, so ignorant in its management of the health services of this country, that yet the last member who spoke was able to trot out a number of statistics designed to show how healthy a country Barbados is and has been, that the life expectancy is now 72 years.

Now, this wicked, vicious, ignorant set of Labour Party people left behind a system that was so terrible, according to those two Honourable Members, that towards the end of his speech the Minister of Health found himself in the position of conceding that the Drug Service and the polyclinic system, and I quote his words "have done well" - that is as I understand him...

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Am I lying now? What are you going to get up and elucidate?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member will give way.

Mr. D. A. C., SIMMONS: I have you written down.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The polyclinic system was discussed way up front. The Drug Service was discussed by itself. Do not join the two together. I said the Drug Service is doing well, not the polyclinic system. I do not wish you to say what I did not say. I said the Drug Service is doing well. I discussed the polyclinic differently. Do not put them together. I know you.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What is he saying now, Sir? That the polyclinic system is not working well? Is he going to say that for public consumption? If so, say it; because at the beginning of his speech he did not even know how

many polyclinics there were in Barbados and up to now, notwithstanding his resort to a book...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: How many there are? Eight. I know that we built eight in our time. Read the Estimates.

He found no fault with the system of polyclinics. He found no opportunity to level criticism against the system of polyclinics. He found absolute acceptability in the Drug Service. The only area of concern was the general practitioners service which we all know involved a cross-fire between human personalities - those representing the Government's negotiating team and those representing the doctor's negotiating team; and it was impossible prior to May 28, 1986, for reasons for which blame could be apportioned to both sides, to get any consensus as to how the general practitioners' service should operate and be put into effect.

As I understand it, the National Health Service Scheme as provided for under the Act of 1984 (it really had three components - the Drug Service, the polyclinic scheme and the general practitioner scheme), and having heard the Minister of Health, I am left today to draw the conclusion that he is satisfied - I am not going to say "well satisfied" - with the operation of two of the schemes that were put in place before 1986; but yet, we were such a terrible, destructive, wicked, malicious and ignorant Government.

You see, Sir, the philosophical premise upon which the National Health Service Board Scheme was launched in 1984 was the creation of a unified health social service to the entire community, removing the distinction between the health care available to those who could pay and the health care available to those who could not pay. That was what the health service was about and was designed to achieve.

One has to confess that in the methodology necessary for the implementation of that objective there were problems and difficulties, as I said, most of which related to human conflicts which prevented the smooth implementation of the whole scheme as designed.

But, I don't - anybody on that side to point to any compelling evidence to show that in the period 1976 to 1986, even when there were difficulties in implementing the totality of the scheme, that the health standards of Barbados were reduced to a level where the population was being jeopardized. I challenge any of them to show that we reduced the health standards in Barbados in the 10 year period.

I want to be fair. I admit that there were problems in the implementation of the scheme and we never got the whole thing implemented. But I am saying that at the same.

time that one recognizes those problems, the health of the population of Barbados was never put at risk.

Now, when the Health Service Board Act was introduced in 1984, the Democratic Labour Party, then in Opposition, spoke both in the House of Assembly and in the Senate. Your Honour led the debate for the Opposition and you did not find anything offensive in what was being done. Other members including the present Prime Minister also spoke.

Indeed, I would say that so enamoured of the Bill was the Opposition that everyone of you on that side then voted in favour of it and if you want chapter and verse, see 1984 Hansard, page 1157. The debate begins in the Hansard Report for May 22, 1984 and the vote at page 1201: "The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division." 5.05 p.m.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Now, Sir, we were well pleased four years ago...

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If you were in the House? You were in the House. The Honourable Minister, present Minister of Health was in the House and spoke.

When the Bill went to the Senate, July 25, 1984 in the Debate beginning at page 410 of the SENATE DEBATES, somebody called SENATOR E. E. GREAVES spoke first after a very short introduction by the Minister of Health at the time. And the SENATOR E. E. GREAVES - I believe that he is now the Minister of Trade - spoke at length. The then Leader of the Opposition in the Senate for the Democratic Labour Party found himself supporting the Bill, as an extension of Democratic Labour Party policy.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What you all are telling us today - burying - what did you say, you are driving in the last nail in the coffin today?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I do not think that the Honourable Member should be allowed to mislead the House which I am charging that he is, Sir. The extension referred to is the claim about the polyclinic. What the Honourable Member said and what we have always said is that the first polyclinic was a multi-purpose clinic at Warrens. And I do not understand why you are going to mislead.

Furthermore, Sir, while I am on my feet, the Honourable Member said that I spoke in the Debate; maybe he has a different version. Perhaps since he said that we lie

to the House, if we say things, I would like him to please indicate what page I spoke at, Sir. Help me find it, Sir. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Find it there for him. That is the same thing I read from today, when he and Tom had the argument. My friend will check the actual page where the Honourable Member was involved in the Debate, Sir. Page 1673, among other pages. But...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir,...

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The present Honourable Minister of Trade began this way, Sir:

"First I want to say that it is very clear from the amendments which Senator Trotman indicated that he will be moving today to the original Bill, that the pleas of the Opposition Democratic Labour Party have not fallen on deaf ears. Because when one examines the composition of the Board and the way it is proposed that the Board should function, it is very clear that a number of difficulties would have arisen, and these were pointed out; because there was provision for a Board which consisted largely of non-professional people having absolute control over the medical profession.

We were very concerned about this, and if the Government had not taken the advice that was given by the Democratic Labour Party the National Health Service would certainly not have gotten off the ground with the doctors who are resident in Barbados. The Prime Minister did say that it was going to get off whether the doctors here participated or not. One would still have to ask whether there was any intention to bring in doctors from overseas to assist in the National Health Service.

Health is of the utmost importance to any community. I think that Governments of Barbados have paid some particular alien ion ID this area. I see this National Health Service which is being established as a continuation of a programme of revamping, upgrading and modernizing the health services of this country, which programme was initiated by the Democratic Labour Party. Indeed, if you were to look at the whole thrust of the Democratic Labour Party, and if you were to read the Manifesto thrust of 1976, which was reiterated in 1981, you would find that our concerns were for the provision of a twenty -I our hour service with the multi-purpose service - you would notice that I am using the term "multi-purpose" - playing a

crucial role in this. It is true that you changed the name from multi-purpose clinic into polyclinic. It is just a change in name, but they are for the same purpose."

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Then later on, Sir, he said...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On page 411 ...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: At the third paragraph on the right hand side of the page:

"I think that, basically, if you look at the programme which we are now looking at, you will see that the Government is proceeding along a path which was developed by the Democratic Labour Party. There are some differences, however. Even now that we are talking about this National Health Service, the major difference is that the Democratic Labour Party would not have raped - sometimes I am accused of using violent language - the taxpayers in the way the Barbados Labour Party has raped the taxpayers, by the collection of almost three years of a Health Levy; and we have not seen any improvement in the health services of this country. As a matter of fact, it is very clear to all and sundry that rather than the health services in this count; y getting better, they are deteriorating - and they are deteriorating very quickly. 11.30a.m."

Now what the Honourable..

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Senator then was doing was trying to tag on the National Health Service as introduced through that Act of 1984 on to some Democratic Labour Party plan that existed before.

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

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am sorry to interrupt you. But, Sir, the Honourable Member himself when he was quoting from the SENATE DEBATE made reference to the 1981 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party. And it was in the 1981 Manifesto that we said, and I quoted when I spoke, that we will expose the cost of it and scrap it.

So do not try to say now ihat the Member in the Senate was trying to tag on when the Member of the Senate

himself referred to the Manifestoes of 1976 and 1981, and in 1981 we said we would scrap it. We have to keep him in line, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The speech of the Honourable Senator runs... I was at page 411 then; it runs to page 414.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no, no; the Senate began at page 410, and the Member's speech ran to page 414 followed by Senator Wickham and then he picked up again at page 415, Sir. 5.15p.m.

It would be tedious for me to read the whole of the speech of the Honourable Senator of 1984. But suffice it to say that what he did was to deal with virtually every aspect of the National Health Service in those pages and in that speech. But I read the philosophical part of the speech where he was trying to establish the linkage between the concept of the National Health Service being implemented by the Barbados Labour Party and the concept of health care offered by the Democratic Labour Party then as recently as 1981 in their Manifesto. He went further to suggest that the Opposition had made certain proposals to Government for the amendment of the legislation to make it work more smoothly and Government had indeed listened to the Opposition and had done the amendments; and having done the amendments he was well pleased to support it. That is there. All that is there.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Embarrassed? Embarrassed? You must tell the truth, the whole truth.

Now Sir, both the Honourable Minister of Health and the Member for St. Michael South East bandied around statistics in here today and they used them like a dog would use a lamp post for support rather than for illumination. It is he who introduced the dog metaphor, the Honourable Minister of Health. It is he who introduced the dog metaphor earlier this afternoon. So I feel myself well within the province of propriety to make a similar reference to the canine world, Sir.

We are told from the statistics handed to the Minister of Health that the Barbados Labour Party refused to train any nurses in the 10 year period 1976 to 1986 as a matter of policy and that the present dearth of nursing personnel in Barbados is entirely due to a misconceived policy which denied training without taking into account the long term interest of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the nursing services. That in a nutshell is what I understand of the argument which the Minister spent hours explaining.

Now Sir, there are a number of documents put out by the Chief Medical Officer and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital itself.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, 1984, 1985. We will deal with that and so on. But I think first of all, Sir, before we come to explaining what these reports provide, there are some facts that have to be brought to the attention of the House. In 1986 when a group of persons from the United States came to Barbados to recruit nurses for work overseas the then Minister of Health, the now Minister of Labour, said and it was reported, that there was no problem in their being recruited for work overseas.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, there still is no problem. So what are you complaining about then? We had enough nurses in Barbados adequately to man the health services of Barbados. The Democratic Labour Party in late 1986 sanctioned recruitment of nurses for export - and that was implicit in what the then Minister of Health said - on the ground that there was no shortage in Barbados. Senior nurses then and now have been taking off - I am talking about nurses who are in line for a position as a Sister - and are leaving this country and going to the United States. In 1986, 74 nurses took the present Minister of Labour at his word and left Barbados and went abroad.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: When Barbados Labour Party formed the Government - I have not heard the Minister of Health advert to this and, if I am wrong, I would like to be corrected - a CARICOM decision was taken in Jamaica either in 1980 or 1981, at a meeting of Ministers of Health and nurses, that training of nurses was an aspect of education and should take place, as far as Barbados is concerned, at an educational institution. That is to say the Community College rather than at the training institution.

The then Matron of the hospital, Miss Walters, agreed. Her agreement was made at a meeting of the Caribbean Nurses Association and it meant that there had to be a change in the content of the curriculum for the future training of nurses. Now I say that that was a CARICOM decision.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: How can you talk to these dummies? I said it was a meeting of Ministers and nurses looking at, as a matter of policy, how you would have to change the system and how it would impact on the nurses. So the nurses and the Ministers, as the policy formulators,

went. The decision was taken there. All I said was that subsequent to that at a meeting of nurses, now exclusively for nurses, - the Caribbean Nurses Association, Miss Walters went and agreed with what the Ministers and nurses had decided a year or two before. All right. I had made the point, Sir, that in order to implement the decisions there had to be a change in the content of the curriculum; and no decision was taken to stop any training of nurses; and if there was, I want the Minister to point to it, to give me the date, time, and place. No decision was taken to stop the training of nurses.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. In 1979 the Minister of Health, Miss Billie Miller, made a decision, wrote it on the file saying that we have enough nurses in Barbados and training would stop, not 1984 but 1979. In 1984 the Minister of Health, Senator Trotman, confirmed that decision. I pointed out that none was taken in 1979. They stopped training mental health nurses at the hospital and none has been trained since 1979, not 1984. 5.25p.m.

In 1983, 79; in 1980, 1981, 1982 none graduated; in 1983 none; and that is the problem. You started in 1979, not 1984. In 1984 you continued the policy.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is very odd that that decision was alleged to have been taken in 1979. ..

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: How do you mean it is true? He said a decision was taken to stop training in 1979 and yet in 1980 - I am using his figures - 31 were trained.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He did not say anything about graduated; he said nurses for training; and we had it headed up and listed here. In 1981, 21; in 1982, 11. It came down then; he had 16, 30 and 22.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member will give way, he was Minister for a period and he reversed the policy and O'Brien Trotman went and changed it. What I said, Sir, on a point of elucidation, was that the decision was to stop intake; if you take in this year you will see the fruit of that intake three to four years later.

The second thing is that there used to be double intake. What I said - and the record is there, Sir, you can get it - I said there was no intake so the figures we called were those who graduated. There were years when you had no intake at all and there were years when you had half the intake; that is when you had the 11 and five and the six. I am sure you understand.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What the Minister has said is that pursuant to the decisions at the CARICOM meeting of the nurses and so...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let me tell you how I am interpreting it. The problem with establishing the curriculum... you were phasing out one system.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But that happened!

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, but are you saying what I said?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right, let me withdraw that, Sir. I should not attribute it to the Minister. The conclusion I draw from what he said does not bear my interpretation. I admit that, Sir. What I ought to have said is that what he has not explained, (and he must admit this) is that there was this period of hiatus when a new system was to come into place and there was the problem of establishing the new curriculum, and that when one system was being phased out, another one had to be phased in; but that there was a gap between the operation of the two systems.

Now, Sir, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital itself in 1984 published their report for the calendar year 1984 and at page 8, Item 5 is headed Training and In-Service Education. Now remember, we took a decision to stop training. It has now been varied to say that one Minister stopped it and another Minister re-introduced it. So it was stopped for a period between when Billie Miller was Minister and when the present Minister of Transport assumed responsibility. That is what you are saying.

Paragraph 5.1. "Overseas training of staff continued to be limited because of scarce funds. Training courses offered by the Tercentenary School of Nursing were also limited because of the protracted arrangements regarding the transfer of the School from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education. This is having an adverse effect on the availability of trained nurses and nursing assistants. There is need for an urgent solution to this problem. Both the medical and nursing staff continued to be exposed to an intensive series of local in-service courses, seminars and workshops. A 48-hour in-service course for orderlies.... "

What this report of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital itself adverts to and confesses is that there was this shift, this interlude. You are moving from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education and providing for it.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Okay, we admit that there was a problem; but it is not correct to suggest that there was a total stoppage of training.

The following year now, 1985, the Chief Medical Officer in his annual report at page 11, paragraph 2.1 headed Nursing stated: "Staff education programmes continued in all areas in order to upgrade the clinical skills of nursing *per se*. Nurses attended courses both locally and overseas, including those conducted through the University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Education (UWIDITE) programme in disaster preparedness, reproductive health and nutrition. There was also a significant occurrence in nursing education when arrangements were finalised for the transfer of responsibility and for the Tencentenary School of Nursing from the QEH to the Barbados Community College."

What the two reports, when read together, are saying is that they had a problem with the harmonisation of training courses for nurses, and in 1984 there was that problem which was identified. In the period 1984 to 1985 while you are phasing out one, moving from Health to Education, there was a problem. But by 1985, according to the Chief Medical Officer's report, that problem had been solved, because he said the arrangements were finalised.

I just find that it would be a little odd that you spend money to put these programmes into place and want the House to believe that you stopped training. It is not true, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying, as I understand him, that a Minister came to this House and gave information that, so far as it is humanly possible, he has been given by his officials; and he is saying that it is not true. If he is saying that, he is saying that I lied to the House. I am sure he does not mean to say that. I am saying that they did not take in anybody for training in 1985. I said that.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Okay, if he is saying in 1985, having regard to the two reports and the explanation of the problem in the two reports, I am not going to challenge that in 1985 they may not have taken in anybody. What I challenge is the emotive statement and the blanket statement made earlier today that the Labour Party stopped training and would not train any nurses. It is not true. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East revived the training programme, so let us be fair.

It is not that for ten years no nurses were trained; and that has got to be the fact and the record. I will stand on that.

Now, Sir, in 1983 - 1984, after the agreement in principle for the new training scheme, the British

Government itself accepted the qualification of the Community College course as being the equivalent of the SRN. 5.35 p.m.

There is no doubt about that. In 1983-84 there was a surplus of nurses in Barbados according to my information. There were many who had returned from overseas and who could not find jobs in Barbados. I do not want to call any names, but I know of at least six people myself. I do not see health in terms of Dews and Bees. I think that health is a national matter and we must take partisan politics out of it as far as I am concerned. There was a number of nurses searching for jobs and could not get them. I am going to show him how that situation was resolved. The Minister knows that a number of those persons took jobs as drug reps. One of them, I do not think he would mind if I say it, was the wife of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. A number of them went into industrial nursing. And do not let us forget that when the polyclinics came on stream and the service was fully opened, the Government did not have to advertise for one nurse to work in the polyclinic system.

Now if there had been a shortage of nurses at the time when the polyclinic system came on stream, I would have expected that it would have been difficult for the Government to get the scheme implemented.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You are so accustomed to talking foolishness that you would say that. It is absolute rubbish to say that we were using maids as nurses. That is nonsense. Why didn't you prosecute some of them? It is against the law for that to have happened and he knows that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not going to encourage interruptions from Honourable Members.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, those were the problems that one can identify up to 1985 in relation to whether we had enough nurses or not in Barbados and the problems relating to training.

I wish to turn now, Sir, to the present problems in health, because the Minister of Health spoke for three hours and 40 minutes today and I have not heard him deal with the current problems of health other than the problem of litter and illegal dumping - environmental health. The Minister has to deal with the situation in Barbados today where nurses trained at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will not remain - have no intention of remaining. I will tell you, Sir, that the Government must examine the reasons for the present dissatisfaction among the nursing population in Barbados - and the Minister agrees with that. And if he

agrees with it, let us now identify some of the problems, the ones that he was careful to eschew discussion on today.

The first and prime problem is right there, Sir - the Minister himself. The nurses of Barbados (I say it without any fear of contradiction) have lost all confidence in the present Minister of Health whom they see and regard as a sweet talker, prone to verbosity, effusing wind. They could not say it about the previous Minister. They saw you as a glorified social worker from New York. He knows that at the last meeting he had with the nurses, they sat and listened to him and refused to ask him any questions at the end.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am coming to the NUPW. Can I instruct Harper? Am I a Dem? That is the first problem. The nurses have lost confidence in the Minister and do you know why they may well be justified? He was making a lot of sport about his four weeks holiday. The Minister went away for five weeks, three of which were on PAHO business, and two of which he was entitled to as a human being as a well deserved rest and a break. When he came back to Barbados he was told of the anxiety of the nurses in relation to the problems which they were experiencing particularly in relation to regrading and salaries. I saw him with these four on television saying "I was not here, I really do not know anything about it. If they are complaining about regradings and salaries, that is not a matter for my Ministry, but perhaps another Ministry." He was off loading on the Minister of the Civil Service, and the nurses felt he was joking because in this country there is collective responsibility, but he was palming it off on someone called the octopus.

Now they were concerned that having got wind of the fact that they had planned a sick out, the Minister took off and went to Geneva two or three weeks ago. He ran from the problem having skirted the problem the first time; and on the second occasion he deliberately ran from it and could not face it.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I went to Geneva, Sir, because Barbados was chosen as one of two countries to represent the region on Pan American Health Organisation, as a member of the Management Committee on the global problem of AIDS. That meeting had been fixed almost a year before, so the Honourable Member is deliberately misleading the House; because to say that I ran from anything is to cast aspersions on me in the performance of my official functions. Far from running, it was an honour for Barbados. Barbados and Chile were the two countries and I went to represent not only Barbados but the entire region, the whole Pan American region. So I

was not running, and I was coming back. I live here, I intend to stay here and I will die here.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am glad. I do not believe the Minister of Health has a green card like one other person on the front bench of his party; but I would say that it was strangely coincidental that at the time when the nurses were sicking out the Minister found himself, as he says, of necessity born of arrangements a year before, out of Barbados in 1988. The nurses are dissatisfied, Sir, that...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think it is fair to the Honourable Member for Honourable Members to interrupt him.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is all right, Sir. I did a little heckling in the three and a half hours and I have to expect some. That is the nature of adversary politics and debate. I don't mind it, Sir. 5.45p.m.

I am glad for it, Sir, because it keeps me there and it gives me another point to deal with all the time.

What I want to say is this, that why the nurses are distressed is that they find the break in continuity of the substantive Minister a factor operating to their disadvantage. They meet with the substantive Minister; then he goes away for five weeks and an itinerant kind of temporary pensioner is placed to act as Minister.

Hon. B. FvF, TAITT: Sir, on a point...

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He is temporary Minister and he is a pensioner. I do not want to call him a geriatric. He is my friend.

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

would not wish to be a friend like that.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What did you say about him today? You said some terrible things about him today.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: But they are true.

Sir, I do not think that the Honourable Member intends to refer to a Minister of the Crown. He was appointed a Minister. I do not think you want to refer to him as an itinerant.

Mr. D. A. G. SIMMONS: Sir, what would you say of a person who acts as Minister of Transport when the substantive Minister of Transport finds himself abroad in

August? What would you say of the same person who acts for the Minister of International Transport when he was abroad with us in Australia? What would you say about that same person who then acts again for the Minister of Health? What are you going to say, that he acts so much that he belongs to Hollywood? I prefer to say he was itinerant, moving from Ministry to Ministry.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Not pejorative, Sir, an accurate description.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. When the Prime Minister announced ...

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Minister was appointed and doing what he was appointed to do. The Prime Minister announced to the nation that he was appointing a person to be Minister who would relieve a number of Ministers. It is pejorative for the Honourable Member to be talking about "itinerant". You have itinerants when you talk about tribes who move from site to site with Georgie bundles. The Minister has no Georgie bundle.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, that was the first problem with the nurses dissatisfaction, the problem with the Minister. They find that the Minister is too plastic and coming through with some insincerity.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They say that they are fed up with his verbose confusions. I have said that already.

Secondly, Sir, the nurses are distressed about the conditions under which they work. I am not dealing with regradings now. I am dealing with other things.

At night - this is not something new - you have two nurses per ward.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am told I am being lucky.

In Ward B3 you could find 36 mothers and 36 babies at the same time with two nurses.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. You came in on a promise of deliverance, you know. You were going to do so wonderfully well.

Things are so bad, Sir, that some days some nurses do not even have a lunch break and you are asking 108 nurses

to man 600 beds in overcrowded wards. They are dissatisfied. You know why they are dissatisfied, Sir? Because they have no proper linen and equipment in the hospital. I am going to deal with whether it just started or not. ^

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They have no proper equipment and linen in the hospital. The Minister is aware that the situation with gloves - and gloves now in today's world form a necessary part of the nurses equipment - the -+* situation is critical. They should have two pairs. Very often they have one pair and the other one is full of holes.

The Minister is sufficiently aware, Sir, to recall that it was Senator Eastmond in the Senate, earlier this year who complained of the appalling conditions at the QEH in the Senate Debates the day she spoke about "female women" - that same day and, Sir, allied to the problems of equipment and lack of supplies, you have the burning issue of raise of pay and regradings.

Now, it ought to be clear to members of the Government by now; and the Minister was rather careful today when he was talking about the immorality of a sick-out. It is not the nurses who came to that decision. That * decision was foisted upon the nurses by their union. 5.55p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They were told what to do!

Aside. ""

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You must deal with the leadership.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You deal with it! Check it out and see. Tell me if I am wrong. Check out if at the meeting the nurses were not told what to do. „

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, they are a law unto themselves. I do not know about them yet. I will find out ** for you one of these days.

Sir, the nurses are concerned also that there is a Mental Health Training Course going on at the Psychiatric Hospital. Write it down.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Correct. I do not tell lies in here man. I cuff you hard and hit hard. Sorry, Sir. I will speak positively, Sir.

Aside.

Laughter.

Mi. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But always from a substratum of fact. There is this training course going on at the Psychiatric Hospital and the Nursing Assistants - I did not say the nurses - at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are angry because they cannot themselves get on the course because it is a ministerial decision or edict that they are not to be allowed to join that course. It is a matter that is causing concern among the nurses and I ask the Minister to look at it.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, all of us I believe on both sides of the House must have sympathy with the nurses. Those of us who do not have. . . My mother was a nurse, and the Honourable Minister's wife is or was one.

But now that the situation has, I do not want to say, erupted. Now that...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Right. Come to a boil, and that the problem has been highlighted, the Government cannot go on much longer blaming everything on the Barbados Labour Party. We have been gone 2¹/₂ years. They are looking to you all to provide the solutions.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Right.

Aside.

Mi. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Produce the solutions and do not let the health services deteriorate any further.

You have a situation where it is being alleged that the Hospital is going to be sued for a man who fell out of a bed because it did not have a cot side. And the matron said that there were 98 who fell out of beds in the last year. But that is not because people just lose their equilibrium or suffer from vertigo. That is because this Government which has been collecting the people's Health Levy and increasing it has failed to provide the necessary equipment in the Hospital, even simple things like the sides. You pull up the sides to prevent you from falling off. They have got the people's money and we warned that there would have been

a deterioration in the health services and now we are seeing them. That is but one example, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But one.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not talking about the CATSCAN. What are you humbugging me about the CATSCAN for, Sir? The CATSCAN...

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Was bought for \$1 million.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well \$1.5 million, out of the levy money.

Aside.

Mi. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And do you know what happened after the Democratic Labour Party took over the administration of this country? They allowed rats to eat it up.

Laughter.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They allowed rats. ..

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We had to draw it out of the Minister of Health and he had to confess...

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That it did happen, Sir. But that is not all. We recall the day, Sir, when the surgery could not operate because of its infestation with lice and vermin and nimbles and all kinds of unwanted creatures.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That happened under this Government.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If you did not hatch them,, they found your presence very commodious.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All of that is happening in the health services in Barbados, Sir. I am not making fun. I am talking serious things and all are true as the Minister well knows.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I had forgotten one point. I want to return to the question of training, "because in his speech the Minister was able to talk of those nurses who are being trained (several of them) at Greater South Eastern Hospital in Washington. What he will not tell the House is all the facts. They are being trained as a direct result of the negotiation of the \$40 million with the IADB for the extension of the wing at the QEH, Sir. Do you know why? It was a term of that loan that there would be overseas training and they are the beneficiaries now.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. On a point of order, Sir. I am only correcting him; because what he is saying is true about all the other training, except that one. You chose the wrong example. »

The training at Greater South Eastern Hospital in Washington is a direct result of negotiations between us and the Greater South Eastern Hospital. It has nothing to do with the IADB loan. The other training is part of the IADB project.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right, Sir. I accept the correction as to detail. I do not accept any correction as to ' principle. Because the principle I was establishing and the larger principle which the Minister concedes is that there is currently going on a training programme overseas for nurses from Barbados, and there has been for some time.

But the responsibility for arranging those training courses rested with the Barbados Labour Party when it was in power, when it did not believe in training but when it was able to get the Inter-American Development Bank not only to lend \$40 million to extend the QEH but to tie in a term providing for...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Normal. When I expose you now, it is normal. So that Barbadian nurses could be trained overseas. Now that helps to knock the whole argument about the Barbados Labour Party's philosophy in relation to training on its head.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I dealt with that already.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I want now to leave the QEH specifically and the problems of nursing and move into other areas of health, Sir.

The Government... Now I am going to be very serious about what I have to say now, Sir. I want no mistake about • this. The Democratic Labour Party has today brought a Bill to abolish the National Health Service Board. Kill it! Stone cold dead!

I call upon the Democratic Labour Party... If you are killing the National Health Service Board, then abolish the National Health Levy also. There is no moral justification for the continued imposition of the Health Levy on the people of Barbados. I am serious about that.

How is it that you who were philosophically opposed to Health Levies, Transport Levies, Training Levies and all kinds of levies introduced by the Barbados Labour Party can find it in your breast now to continue the collection of a Health Levy after you have abolished the very basis upon which that Health Levy was collected? That is, it had to be collected for payment into the National Health Service Board for specific use in areas related to health development, polyclinics, health service. There can be no justification for the continued collection of a Health Levy, once the National Health Service is being killed by an Act repealing it. It is a serious point of moral conflict for the Government of Barbados in 1988. You go and explain to the people how you are going to take money out of their pockets every week for a Health Levy and you have no Health Service.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You do not want any Health Service, man! You are killing it! You say the National Health Service Board is dead and you are not running it any more.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And the critical part of the service for which the Levy was being raised will go out of existence after this Bill is assented to.

A sides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You seem to forget that some of the money collected in the Health Levy was to be for payment of the general practitioners also.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I havt not dealt with any politics at all. I have been sticking to health. I did not

get into any politics at all. I was sticking to the problems in health.

But I really must remind the Honourable Minister of Health that it is amazing when he and his Party were in Opposition, it is they who criticized the use and importation of generic drugs. And now, what do you have?

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: For them, it is the best thing. You are using it and you are finding total satisfaction with it.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No. You are using generic drugs too.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Right. Yes. Correct. So there is nothing wrong in what I said. What I have said is that when you were over here, it was wrong, particularly the Member for St. Michael South Central.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, he did!

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right, Sir. I make my point, Sir. They criticized them and now they have no criticism to make of the same generic drugs now that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is almost out of politics. I do not know where he is.

6.05 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: When last did they talk? You see politically it is that kind of behaviour that evokes a response from the population on Tuesday before Independence for only 350 souls to volunteer and go out there in the square. That sounds like a calypso - to go out there in the square, Sir. Do not fool yourself. Last Tuesday night at 7.45 p.m. it was reported in the control room at the police station that you had 38 at 7.45 p.m. and at 10 o'clock when you were kicking there were 350.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Having a wake? 'You are confused, Sir. You see, Sir, this Government is confused at so many things. The fact is that a lot of youngsters including members of my family were able to report to me the next day. They had gone to the Warehouse and were doing bad in the Warehouse and getting down and some had gone to the Fisherman's Wharf and the Waterfront Cafe. The cars they saw along there were for that, not attending their meeting. So it is when people see you saying that you are philosophically opposed to levies and then sitting down and voting for increases, when they see you killing the National Health Service and yet saying that the polyclinics function well and the Drug Service is beautiful, that they say it does not lie in your mouth to speak with two tongues. They cannot believe you. They cannot trust you.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: So Government has to do something about its image and its credibility. I am not telling them how to do it - too far gone. When you can only get 53 people at the dance at 12 o'clock. Ask Don B. Sorry, Sir, I should not call his name in here. All right, I will tell you outside. Fifty-three at 12 o'clock and when he turns up what does he find, Sir? Coloured cursing another person, Sir, by the bar and criticising. You cannot organise nothing. That person has not come in here today but he often sits out there. Anyhow Sir, they have their act to deal with.

I want to turn now to the Sanitation Authority. One of the most ama/iag statement.; was broadcast and published in this country four weeks ago by, I think he must be, the Deputy Manager of the Authority. He has a voice. This is as far as I will g.) to identify hinx a strong voice, and this is what he said, S r That the Sanitation Service Authority is going to reo:r;rril!.,- the /..ating for the Authority's collection of garbage to accord with the local Government routes of the 1950's, Now can you imagine anything more preposterous? And I v/ill never call anybody fundamentally ignorant in here. But I will not do it, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope you are not. He is an officer of Government.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right, Sir. I will not do it. They can do it. Better yet if they do it to one another; but I won't do it. But I want a word to describe the emptiness in the statement. Yes, to accord with the local Government routes. Now this is a man whose experience was indeed rooted in the local Government days going back to the fifties, well familiar with that. But it shows the level of intelligence and vision that he has not understood that the society of Barbados has changed geographically and demographically, in every respect.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you are critical of his conduct as a public officer.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am critical but not of his conduct. I am critical of his statement, Sir. All right, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You said the Deputy...

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes Sir, I did identify him. If you find it offensive, Sir, you can strike it. But I think it is an embarrassing situation because you have all these middle-class areas that have developed all over Barbados with the heights, parks, and the terraces and so on; and he wants to go back to the routes in the fifties. You cannot have it. And he explained it in detail. So it is not a slip of the tongue.

So I would ask the Minister to have an appropriate word at the right place. But when you have that kind of thinking and articulation, you are going to blame people for dumping. But anyhow, Sir, I want to say this. I am not going to condone or sanction indiscriminate dumping and litter - no, no, no. But we have to ensure that the service is so well organised that we do not encourage indiscriminate dumping even on the Tom Adams Highway.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Where is it? Also known as Airport to West Coast Road. You see, Sir, if the Minister really fails to provide an adequate and satisfactory service then the general public will resort to self help which can include and does include indiscriminate dumping.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Now I told you if you have a policy of collecting along a particular route and the executive authority is now going to come and say we are not doing that, and we are going back to the routes that we used to use in the fifties, old mas has set in. The member of the public will feel well they have not passed here for the last 4 days, goes with his black bag and dumps it at the nearest point where he thinks nobody is seeing him doing it.

All of us recognise, Sir, that the question of illegal dumping is a serious problem which has dire consequences for Barbados if not controlled because of infiltration in the water system and the general pollution of the atmosphere and malodorous effluvia and so on, and the attraction of rats it will multiply. The consequences can multiply. I really agree with the Minister that we should all, if he has not said it, join together and impress upon our people the need to establish standards of cleanliness and proper management of waste and litter.

I am not going to press the Minister today since I have a substantive question down about the dump at Mangrove Pond, Sir. I just will let him know that I passed there on Saturday deliberately and it is in a state and the road

leading to it is in a worse state. I do not know what we are going to do. I saw a truck on its way up the hill to discharge its waste and the waste was blowing back down the hill. We are going to have to do something about that. We used to complain about the vehicles which carry goods and the * goods were not properly strapped and secured, and they used to fall off. I do not think so much of that is happening because after pounding we got it in the psyche of the transportation workers that they must tie goods and secure them on the platforms of trucks. 6.15 p.m.

We have to get it also in the psyche of those people who transport garbage and waste that they must secure it so that it does not fall out and then constitute a nuisance to those around the area where it falls out. I saw that on Saturday and it distressed me.

Sir, a few weeks ago I mentioned in here that the Government had agreed to use the Crown Agents to act on " its behalf in relation to the purchase of equipment overseas, including hospital beds. The Government then pretended not to know. They said they did not know about it, Sir. It was sought to blame the Central Purchasing Department and to suggest that it was done by a group of functionaries without Government approval.

I have information that in fact it was a Cabinet *» decision and I am still waiting to hear, because I was promised that Government would look into it and explain the situation. I raise it because I saw two letters in the Press within the last week, some concerned citizen and somebody else writing about the Crown Agents and asking who they are and a set of questions and so on. It is obviously a matter that is out in the public domain and I would like to hear from the Government if it is a fact that the Crown Agents are being used now to cut out local agents from earning a dollar in the importation of these things. If so, why?

The Minister of Health in his presentation studiously avoided any prognosis about the St. Joseph Hospital.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The National Health Service, he says, has nothing to do with St. Joseph Hospital. Well, I want to know how the fact that the Leader of the Opposition was black, or how the columnist and the journalist he was attacking today had anything to do with the National Health Service. At least the St. Joseph Hospital is a hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is one too. **

Sir, it was to have been opened when? December, 1986? Blame us for it too. Blame the Labour Party again. It was to be opened last year, March 1987, then it was to be opened in June 1987. Promises, promises, promises. That is why the people are fed up. They see this now as a kind of medical gantry crane. It cost \$6 million; the crane cost \$6 *

million; and this Government cannot get anything that cost \$6 million to work. You see, Sir, it was distressing but not surprising when I could see in the newspaper vine and grass and bush growing through, not around, a hospital, the St. Joseph Hospital.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am talking about four, five weeks ago, Sir, since I have come back from Australia. After October I saw that in the newspaper a photograph; and last year December when this Minister came in here for a supplementary he told us that the people had got the cheque, that it had been settled. Have your forgotten?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member must not mislead the House. I never said that the people had got the cheque, I said that we had approved the money and the Minister of Housing had indicated that instructions had been given for the cheque to be paid. That is what he said.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: So that last year, December, the Government had the \$6 million and all they needed was to get the Central Bank's permission to send it out of the island to the Sorrowful Sisters.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS; I am not getting into the lawyers' business, I do not know anything about it; it is not my brief. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition will declare an interest and explain the situation, I hope. He must do that.

In 1984 in this same debate in the Senate that I alluded to earlier, the then Senator Greaves spoke about the DLP's conception for the integration of the St. Joseph Hospital in the health service plans for Barbados. One would have thought that after four years and after all of the palaver, that the Democratic Labour Party would have had a policy ripe for implementation after completion of the purchase. They had three years of gestation period and yet after being in Government two and a half years the hospital is in a state of dilapidation and getting worse.

Now, Sir, it betrays the management of that hospital - I mean the management of the purchase of that hospital... The management of that particular enterprise betrays a general weakness in the Government because only last week or week before (I could not believe it) here were some houses in Fairfield that were built over a year ago, somewhere in Grazettes. I passed and saw them one Sunday night after a Branch meeting last year, and they are there shut up, with grass reaching almost to the roof. That photograph appeared in the Advocate, and that is how the Minister of Housing has allowed the public's money to be

run down, to remain there for a year closed up. Poor people in this country want houses to rent or to buy; we all agree there is a shortage of housing, and for a year, through (I cannot say incompetence... Sir, you will make me withdraw that? Try it, Sir?)...

Mr. SPEAKER: What I would like you to try is recognising that we are going into housing rather than the hospital and I do not know how it relates to the Bill at the present moment.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I was very careful to link it, Sir. I was very careful to point out that the way they have managed the St. Joseph Hospital, they in a similar way have, managed these eight or ten houses in Grazettes; and I say that it portrays a level of malaise, incompetence and so on in the Government. 6.25 p.m.

We are confident that when the expansion at the QEH is finished, that will take at least a year to be opened.

Finally, Sir, I want to deal with the problem of narcotic drugs. We have spoken so much so often about narcotic drugs that I am not going to repeat any observations that have been made from time to time by the Opposition, save and except to say that the grand plans enunciated by the Government in its manifesto in 1986 for reducing the incidence of narcotic drugs in Barbados, cleaning up the Island, freeing up those whose hands were tied and all of that - all of these promises have now come to nought. The facts are that there is a serious problem with narcotic drugs among that age group 17 to 25 in this country, and the drugs are destructive of the mental health of many of our young people; and apart from platitudinous comments from time to time, I am searching to come across some clear articulation of Government policy by members of the Government.

I will say that I think the Prime Minister as represented in the press over the weekend came fairly close to articulating a policy, as I saw reported in Miami. But we have got to do a lot more. It cannot be comforting for us as Barbadians - I am not being partisan - to be told that a popular station in New York, WLIB, broadcast two months ago that Barbados has a drug riddled administration and called the name of a high official in this country.

Now we have to take the problem seriously. Now, Sir, it is popular to accuse politicians of involvement in drugs. I see that some MP (from England I think he was, I read it in the Press) went to the CPA conference in Bermuda and complained that Caribbean countries were not doing enough and that they did not speak about involvement of politicians with drugs. You were there and the Honourable Member for St. John, and I hope that somebody from Barbados had the opportunity to let him know that so far as

"we are all aware - I think I speak for both sides - nobody can with any justification at all accuse anyone involved in politics in Barbados of being involved in drugs. And it behoves us to ensure that the good name of politicians in Barbados remains. I was not there, but I take offence at any Englishman going to Bermuda and labelling Caribbean people without proof, because it was on the wired service and other people in other parts of the world will pick up these sorts of things and feel that they have the right to speak glibly about us.

Mr. Speaker, some of those who were careless with their mouths about this drug business are no longer with us. The late Prime Minister Barrow went to Vancouver (and I have the publication in the Vancouver Sun) and accused the late Prime Minister Tom Adams and senior Police Officers in the Royal Barbados Police Force of involvement in drugs.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You asked if he was wrong. All right. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is asking if he was wrong. When he said in 1986 that unemployment was 40 per cent, was that true or not? When he said that we had the most corrupt electoral system in the world, second only to the Philippines, was that true or not? Sycophantic behaviour on the part of some people will cloud their better judgment and allow them to say ill-considered nonsense at times. I was never a sycophant for anybody. If Adams was wrong, I told him so.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am so pleased, and as you say in England "chuffed" about the relationship between the Leader of the Opposition and myself that I was able today while the Honourable Minister was speaking to say to the Leader of the Opposition, "Look, I am so glad that we took that decision to hold the public meeting on the Sunday night before the Dems held theirs; it has got them in a terrible slate." I was telling the Leader today how pleased I was about the decision we took and that it had rattled the Members of the Government. Little did I know that within seconds the Honourable Minister would have said, "Last week the Leader of the Opposition..." It was bothering them. I also spoke. I am like the Honourable Prime Minister. CBC announced the meeting last Friday night or Saturday night in this way: "The Democratic Labour Party will be holding a meeting in Independence Square on Tuesday, 29th. Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. So-and-So, will speak about so and so. Somebody else will be speaking about so and so. Prime Minister Sandiford will be among the speakers." I get the impression that he would be sitting on the platform among the others speaking and he would be silent because he had no topic. That is what CBC did.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It was a great place when I was there. Why did I leave? We cannot go into that now. Wait until the Estimates and ask me the question again. and I would deal with it then.

I want to deal with the position with regard to temporary appointees. Among the several statements the Minister made today was that it was heartless and inhuman for persons to be employed in Government or on Statutory Boards in temporary positions for ten, twelve and fifteen years without appointment. As a general principle I agree with that. I have always argued, and argued in here, that if 'you can keep a person employed for ten years and pay him steadily for ten years, you could just as well employ the person permanently. And at the personal level when I was Chairman of the Housing Authority, I took certain decisions that within a year ensured that people who had been there for ten or twelve years before and not appointed were in fact appointed. 6.35p.m.

But the impression that the Minister sought to give today was that the Barbados Labour Party did nothing about rendering permanent those several employees throughout the Civil Service who had been temporary.

Now, Sir, he forgets. It is the only thing he can talk of because he has announced to the nurses as a sop that some permanent appointments were coming. Hold strain. Some of you are going to get fixed up. But he has forgotten December 17, 1985. I quote from the House of Assembly Debates...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You want some of the previous ones then?

On December 17, 1985, on page 3113 of the debate for that day: "CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) (No. 3) ORDER 1985." I cite the speech of the then Prime Minister, Hon. H. B. St. John:-

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, an undertaking was given by me earlier this year that review of the temporary jobs in the Public Service and in the Teaching Service would be continued and that by the end of the year between 800 and 900 jobs would be established. This Order and the Order that forms the next item on the Order Paper are the legal instruments to implement this undertaking. Four hundred posts in the various Ministries and departments would be made permanent by this Order.

The principal area is the Ministry of Health. There are 81 posts of Public Health Inspector (Trainee) in the public health system...."

And he deals with the Public Health and the Aedes Egypti people and Honourable Members who were here at the time would recall the comment of the then Leader of the Opposition about the Aedes Egypti workers.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What he said? He said, "Establish the posts, pay them and then loose them." That is what Prime Minister Barrow said - the then Leader of the Opposition. It is here.

Now, Sir, having dealt with the Aedes Egypti officers he then turned to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital:

"In respect of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 150 posts of Staff Nurse are being made permanent. It has been the practice over the years to supplement the number of staff nurses by the employment of temporary ward nurses at the same salary of the staff nurses. It is understood that successive Ministers of Establishment have grappled with this problem. This has been the source of great contention between the union and the Government. We decided that the Government will create 150 of these posts and that we will allow the reduction, from 5 to 4 nights per week that the nurses may work, to take place." •

Now, Sir, that was in respect of the nurses. On April 22, 1986 another 115...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But we said we were intending to do 800 or 900 in a year.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, No. These are others but these included the doctors. Provision was made for them, not in terms of making them permanent (because they were in a different category) but in terms of the regrading for the doctors; this was done on April 22, 1986.

The substance of my argument, Sir, is that it is not true and, indeed, it is grossly unfair for the Ministry of Health to give the impression that the Barbados Labour Party did nothing about making permanent those several temporary officers within the Civil Service. It is untrue to suggest that we did nothing about regradings.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There is no inference that flows. The conclusion that was drawn by the Minister was

drawn from a premise that was empty of fact. It was not true.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, again the Honourable Member is misleading the House by suggesting that I lied. I am stating categorically as I did then that there are persons in the polyclinics who have been in the Ministry of Health in a temporary post for 10 years or more. That was the gravamen of my submission. If, therefore, they made permanent appointments in 1985, how come we still have nurses in the polyclinics who have been there for 10 years? That was the point I was making, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I am sure the Minister will agree that the policy then prior to 1976 and now has been that all of the temporary people existing at a particular date are not necessarily made permanent. You do it in batches over a period of time and, in 1976...That is why I alluded to what I found at the Housing Corporation.

There was that problem when I took over in 1976 and I give honourable Members the assurance that if they want, I will bring the facts to the House next time because I am sure I gave them in a debate in here, where there were people at the Housing Authority in 1976 who had been there for 7, 8, 10 years before and not appointed; and it is a problem that all the Governments have had to deal with.

The time will come when I think we have to establish as a policy (and I have said it in here already and I mean it) that after 5 or 6 years (whatever period you want to set - that is a policy decision - but after a reasonable period of time, during which you can assess the capability of the person and the suitability for the job) it should be axiomatic, automatic that that person be appointed.

I know Honourable Members on the other side share the view. As I said, we will argue as to whether it should be 5 years, 2 years, or what. But the Personnel Department of Government and the Establishments Division should be so structured that automatically after a period of time these names would come up and will be brought to the House on the appropriate Civil Establishment Order, and it be done without any rancour. But we have known members...Now I do not see any; probably the Deputy Prime Minister would know. We have known people in the Registry who were there for 8 years when we took up Government in 1976 and who were not appointed and I would like to say this: I do not believe that it is deliberate victimisation by any Government; and this is where I take issue with the Minister of Health. 6.45 p.m.

He was prepared to impute motives of victimization to the Barbados Labour Party. I am not going to say that the cases we found in 1976...

Hon. B. M. TAUT: Sir, what I alluded to is what I saw on the file, Sir. I said categorically that I have seen evidence of vitimization on the files. That is what I said. That is what I stand by. I have seen evidence of vitimization on the files. Now I am sure that he does not wish' to press "me any further. I am leaving it there, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not calling any names in here. I am not going to press the Minister to give civil servants' names in here. I am not doing that. What I am saying is that I do not believe...He says he has seen it. I said I did not believe it. Okay. But I am not going to impute to the Democratic Labour Party in 1976 (because I do not have any evidence) that they were victimizing all those people who were still without appointments when we took over in September, 1976. I am not going to go that far. But I am going to say, Sir, that since there seems to be a bi-partisan approach on both sides to this, that Government should look at how we can take the heat and the worry, the discomfort, the lack of the sense of security and so on out of this system, and modernize a system under which these people can be better and more speedily appointed, Sir.

So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the first spokesman for the Opposition on this side, I wish it to be clearly understood, Sir, that as a Party, the Barbados Labour Party is thoroughly proud of its record in Health and the delivery of health care to the people of Barbados in the ten year period 1976 to 1986. We entirely reject that the cause of any shortage of nurses in Barbados today is due to any shortsightedness or misguidance of policy on the part of the Barbados Labour Party.

We admit that in the middle of the term (or I had better say, around 1983) there was a CARICOM decision to change the character of training for nurses who would be needed for work in the health services in the Caribbean. And as it affected Barbados, it meant a change of system from training under the Ministry of Health through the Tercentenary School to training at the Community College under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. And that change itself required change in the content of the curriculum. And in the period 1984 to 1985 when the two systems were being phased out and phased in, there was a hiatus in which there was little training offered in that year. And that is evidenced in these reports which I dealt with earlier, Sir.

But having said that, and having read what the Chief Medical Officer and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital itself had published, our commitment to training cannot be denied. It is clear. And so, it was only a red herring which must really stop now, after today, to allege and blame the Barbados Labour Party for a lack of opportunity for nurses to be trained, Sir.

In regard to the National Health Service Board itself and the fruits of that Board, we wish to say that as a facet of the National Health Scheme, the broad scheme, Sir,...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The scheme which worked. How do you get the polyclinics?

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: How do you get the polyclinics and the Drug Service?

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Minister would have a chance to reply. All of these were aspects of the broad policy aimed at giving an enhanced health service to the people of Barbados in an egalitarian way, so that those who could pay would not be at a greater disadvantage than those whose poverty prevented their ability to get proper health care, Sir. And we are pleased that the Minister of Health could say towards the end of his speech, Sir, that the services in the Drug Service and the polyclinics are second to none.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: - You said this. No? I wrote it down. He said save and except the British Health Service. I found that very strange. He began his speech by attacking and criticizing the British Health Service which he said was our model, and quoted from The Spectator.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Sir, the Honourable Member continues, I now am beginning to believe deliberately, to misunderstand what I said.

On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member... I was discussing it in the context of cost. I was saying free service, and I said except for the British. It was only in relation to the freeness. Please, I criticized the British Health Service and went on to discuss it at the beginning. And the Honourable Member knows I cannot be so bereft of ability..We were discussing the freeness. Do not confuse it now.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: David, man, you know better than that.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I do not know better than that. You see, we were here marking him very

carefully, Sir. I found it incongruous that he could begin his speech by citation from *The Spectator* and his own comments about the inequities in the British system and all of the problems. He described it as awful. And three hours and forty minutes later...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: he had forgotten what he said before. So he ended up by praising it...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And saying that the Barbados system was second to none, save and except...and I wrote down every word. He may have intended...

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You did, though.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right. He said, "Second to none." He said, "Save and except the British Health Service."

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right, Sir. That is not his phrase. When you read the Debate, you would be surprised at what you said today and the number of contradictions in what you had to say.

Sir, you allowed him some latitude.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We are going to dinner now? All right. You allowed him some latitude, Sir. And if it is that the stinging bees are stinging him so terribly, Sir, that today he lost his balance, his cool, his sense of logic, his poise, even his; apxnb...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Then we are sorry that we have caused him this kind of mental anguish that would act out itself in the manner of his conduct today, Sir.

However, he must understand, that it has only just started and it has just started in pursuance of our rights as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, by whatever means. 6.55p.m.

One of our functions is to get that Government back, Sir, legitimately.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no, no. Legitimately; but we will do it with the necessary amount of pressure and honest comments.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Honest pressure. The Members on the other side have to be aware, Sir, that it is not only Opposition. When they talked and when they said on the political platform on the 29th of November that we are subversive (and you know what you do with people who are subversive and dangerous) when all of those threats are being levelled, you must remember within your own 24 you have people who are out there destabilising you so much so that the general public, far from calling us the 3 blind mice anymore, are talking about 4 and 20 mocking birds.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I think on that note, Sir, I am obliged to you.

Applause.

Laughter.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move that this Sitting be, -xspended unlit 7.45 p.m. this evening, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: 1 beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 7.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

ON RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to detain Honourable Members longer than is necessary. But I believe as a former Minister of Health I would just like to make 1 or 2 comments. The first is that when I took up office on June 2, 1986 the morale of the medical profession was very low and I believe that the Minister of Health has explained certain reasons for that. We held a series of meetings to see if we could try to resolve some of the problems. I believe that by and large those problems were resolved and at the present time the relationship between the Government and the health providers is a healthy one.

It is unfortunate that for example the polyclinic system was set up in a manner in which it was. I do not think that there was any planning attached to it. It is well known that the Minister of the day, two days before the polyclinics were to be officially opened, called various doctors on the phone and asked them if they would join the service. There was no contract. As a matter of fact some were even told that they could continue in their private practice although they would be in the service. This created severe problems for the clients or those persons who attended the polyclinics because there was a degree of uncertainty as to what was happening in the polyclinics. Indeed, the support staff - the nurses and other staff in the polyclinics themselves - were uncertain and again in order to try to rectify this situation we held meetings with everybody. I believe the Minister said that there is in place the appointment system. This came about because the health workers - the nurses and doctors - formed the committee, and they made recommendations for the implementation of this.

As far as the nurses are concerned, I think that (not I think) our nurses are among some of the most hard working people in Barbados of necessity. It is true there is a shortage and, therefore, for example,... I believe the Member for St. Thomas spoke of nurses on the ward working with 34 people alone. If they are working at night, they do not have what we consider a lunch hour or break because they cannot. He mentioned some of the problems which at this present time he says confront them. But I believe one of the major problems facing our nurses will be with them forever more. The fact of the matter is that we have one hospital. We have some very bright, qualified, ambitious young ladies in the hospital. The chances of promotion for a lot of them is nil. If you happen to come in at the wrong time, you will know that it will take you 20 years before you move from a staff nurse to a Sister. Some of them are trying to go the other route by going to the university and doing degrees in Public Administration. But this will not help because, if the vacancies are not there, they will never move forward. So there will always be a great degree of frustration about the nurses at the hospital because of the situation.

In England,... We know that our young ladies leave here and probably in 5 years time they can be Assistant Sisters depending on where they are. So that when the nurses here know that, and they are 20 years down the road and still wearing their green belts, well what happens? Total frustration. These are some of the problems. Even if there is regrading and there is an increase of posts at a certain level, there will still be a bottleneck somewhere down the road. I believe that one way out for them, quite frankly, is to relocate. My own sister did it. Many nurses do it. I think my friend from St. Peter has "family" who has done it and it will happen all the time. It is a serious problem and I think that those of us who understand the nursing profession will have to be in sympathy with the nurses, and that is the most

we can do at this present moment - except possibly for the regrading. It is unfortunate that when there was the regrading for the teachers, apparently they were not taken into consideration. But that is not our problem. Nurses have always left Barbados. In the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, and in the 1980's. I believe over the last 10 years or 15 years... Probably in 1983, about 25 left - the most up to that time. And they will continue to leave; because if they see opportunities in other lands they will go there; and there is nothing we can do about it. 7.50p.m.

I do not see, except for the regrading, how we can have a solution for frustration; because there are no more hospitals in this country.

I think I had better respond to a comment made by the member for St. Thomas. It is true that when I saw the situation at the Geriatric Hospital, not only did tears come to my eyes but I told the Ministry of Finance that if my sister were working there I would have to ask her to leave, because the conditions were so bad. It is true that urine was seeping through the top floor hitting nurses in their heads; and that is why we have started to rebuild the Geriatric Hospital. I believe we have spent about \$2 million now; and we will rebuild it systematically, because the conditions are so poor.

I would like to say as well that when we had meetings with the Matrons of those hospitals, they were the people who decided which hospital we had to work on first. The district hospitals are in a very bad state and it was pointless at that time spending fifty or sixty thousand dollars on each of them; because you were achieving nothing, and they decided at that time, in 1986, to let us spend all the money on one, suffer at some until we get to those. And the decision was made, on their recommendation, that we would start with the Geriatric Hospital first.

I just thought I would clear up one or two of those points. I do not think I need to detain you any more on that, but I wanted to make that contribution.

Thank you.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very grateful to Honourable Members who have spoken. There were some questions raised by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas which I think warrant responses to the extent *, that my colleague, the former Minister of Health, the Honourable Member for St. James and now the Minister of Employment, etc., did not respond.

I think I need to give the House some information, first of all, on the statistics for resignations from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, so that we can put this in perspective:

because the indication was from the Honourable Member when he spoke that he knew of 74 nurses who had left Barbados in 1986.

The statistics for resignations from 1961 to 1988, Mr. Speaker, in consecutive years will be as follows (and I am going to give them because I wish them to be embedded in the record of the House): In 1961 three Ward Sisters, 32 Staff Nurses, 14 Student Nurses and 10 Nursing Assistants resigned.

	Ward Sisters	Staff Nurses	Student Nurses	Nursing Assis- tants
1962	128	32	5	
1963	119	26	2	
1964	120	31	1	
1965		34	19	7
1966		30	22	2

Now, Sir, that is the year we became independent. And you can see, if you look at the staff nurses numbers, that persons were leaving and going away, resigning, between 1961 and 1966, or getting married, or doing whatever they had to do.

In 1967 to 1975 these are the numbers of staff nurses who resigned:

1967	29
1968	40
1969	69
1970	35
1971	42
1972	24
1973	34
1974	48
1975	44

Those are the staff nurses, Sir, and that indicates that Barbados was always producing what may be termed a surplus. I am saying this because when I made the point about the cause of the shortage, that point was rebutted by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. But you can see up to 1976 large numbers of staff nurses resigned from the system and that did not affect the availability of nursing services in Barbados, because we always had in essence a surplus.

In 1976 5 Ward Sisters, 25 Staff Nurses, no Student Nurses and 4 Nursing Assistants resigned.

Ward Sisters	Staff Nurses	Student Nurses	Nursing Assis- tants
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1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
(so far)	-				

I do not know where these 74 nurses that left Barbados came from. The other services are intact. But I am not going to dispute the Honourable Member's figures, because he would know where they come from; but I would charge him that he must be very wary of any information which he received from former General Secretaries of the Barbados Registered Nurses Association, not because there is anyone from that Association who would deliberately mislead, but because the information can sometimes be convoluted - the actual information, not the person bringing the information.

For what it is worth, however, our records suggest that whereas in the days when nurses were going to England and going to the United States (and I made the point, I think the Honourable Member for St. Thomas raised this question)... I want to reiterate that I have no difficulty with persons leaving the Service and going to see how the grass is on the other side.

Many of us have had the opportunity to go away and we have always come back in better shape than when we left. I also believe that when people so-called emigrate and go away, and they find a place in the new community, they never forget their roots, and all of us know that. For example, at a certain point in the sixties tourism in Barbados was saved by the return of those Barbadians who had gone.

We all know that remittances have made a significant contribution to the economic development of Barbados, and it would be wrong for us to try to put a hold on people who attempt to go overseas. What I would say to those people who go overseas is that they should always try to ensure that they are not taken advantage of. And I resent any woman from Florida or anywhere coming into Barbados to recruit nurses and speaking in the kind of contemptuous language which appeared in the Barbados Advocate

suggesting that she was happy and the people were happy. And it was the same kind of attitude which we have seen over the years which all of us had condemned because those persons who come into our country and regard our people in that kind of sneering way are always people whom I do not accept as interested in the welfare of Barbadians. And so all I would say to Barbadian nurses or other professionals who are seeking to leave these shores to go to work in other parts of the world is that they should seek to have someone of their own ilk who can advise them as to what constitutes a good deal. 8.00 p.m.

The point I made earlier, Mr. Speaker, is that \$US21 000 to \$US25 000 in New York city is less than what is paid to the workers in 'the lower levels of the society.

The problem of shortages of nurses afflicts every society. It afflicts workers all over the world. Anyone who watches CNN will see that the shortage of nurses is affecting every society; so we in Barbados are no exception.

Now to turn more specifically to some of the questions raised by Honourable Members. On the question of WLIB making statements about there being a drug-riddled administration in Barbados, not having heard the broadcast, one is not in a position to speak about it. But I would say this: so far as having facilities for drug rehabilitation, the superintendent of the Psychiatric Hospital is at the moment preparing a report for the Minister of Health in which she will make recommendations about the establishment, or rather the expansion, of the drug rehabilitation centre for Barbados. We have a definitive policy for drug rehabilitation which I promise this House that I will bring to the House when it has been finalised.

We have had a programme going on within the Psychiatric Hospital for some time now; and there are some 30 to 35 persons who have been finding relief and comfort and solace in the drug rehabilitation programme that is being run. One of the reasons why we do not publicise this aspect of our programme is because we believe that drug rehabilitation requires confidentiality and anonymity if it is going to work. I would say that we are including an element of drug rehabilitation in all of our health facilities. And we are seeking to have a psychiatric ward at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital shortly. We have mandated both the Hospital Director and the Superintendent of Mental Health at the Psychiatric Hospital together to produce a report which will determine their advice on the best place to locate a drug rehabilitation centre.

I wish to assure this Honourable House that this is a matter which is receiving very serious attention and has been receiving serious attention. I do not think that it is a matter that should be sensationalised and therefore we have

not been speaking about it publicly. But I think in light of the comments by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that I should draw to the attention of the House that we are proceeding in this direction quite seriously and quite assiduously; and as soon as the Superintendent and the Hospital Director submit their report to me, I am going to (based on their advice) indicate what kind of facility we are going to have to expand the present thirty to thirty five person arrangement which we have in the Psychiatric Hospital. It is my feeling that drug rehabilitation should be extricated from the Psychiatric Hospital. We should move it away and we should provide facilities both in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in the Psychiatric Hospital and elsewhere. I think that you can therefore deduce that among the considerations which we are giving to the proper use of the total property at St. Joseph Hospital is the feasibility of establishing a drug rehabilitation centre there.

The Villa Maria property is being actively examined, if I may turn to the St. Joseph Hospital. I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that contrary to the view which may have addressed itself to him as a result of the newspaper story, we have been doing some very serious examinations. Tomorrow morning... If I say tomorrow morning the Press will be down there with photographs. So you will let me just say that sometime in the next couple of weeks I will be going, as part of an on-going continuous examination, to make certain final decisions before going to Cabinet. But here is what we have done: Since we got the keys for the property from the Ministry of Housing which Ministry had finally completed the purchase with the owners ... And the Honourable Member made his point and I accepted it in the political context in which he wrote it. But as a leading Queen's Counsel and former Attorney General, I know that he knows that these matters sometimes take a longer period of time to conclude than one may have anticipated. But the question of completion of the sale occurred in 1988. So no matter what noises laymen may have made in 1985, 1986 and 1987, the fact is that completion of the sale occurred in August - September, 1988.

The Honourable Member is saying (and I will not even repeat it)... But I am only saying that even though I may have teased him and may have said from time to time in certain quarters that the Honourable Member was holding it up, he will not find anywhere that I have made any public statement which allowed...

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: But the point is that we got completion of the sale in 1988 and the Ministry of Housing and Lands handed us the keys in September; and from September until now we have had two major appraisals of the property, one done by a team of three experts that came

in under the aegis of PAHO. These experts were three top people who came in and examined the property in the context of the report that had been done by the Advisory Committee established by the Government soon after we took responsibility for St. Joseph. That expert Committee has subsequently reported to me and that report is now a subject of examination within the Ministry. What they did for us, Mr. Speaker, was to examine the Advisory Committee's report and to give us an objective appraisal as perceived by persons not involved in Barbados. And one of the things that I can tell you they have said is that the purchase of the property was a magnificent decision. They have said that we have got value for money. I think the Leader of the Opposition will agree to that since he knows that it was a fair transaction all around. And the experts in Barbados are now working on the physical aspects of the building.

Sir, the first thing that we will have to do will be to have the sewerage system functional again. It was seized up and within the next few days we will have a clear indication of what is to be done; and I shall be going to the Cabinet within the next two weeks or so to get the first decision by the Cabinet which is related to commissioning the St. Joseph Hospital, or by whatever name it will be called. 8.10p.m.

While I cannot tell you what name it will be, what I can say to the House is that we are unlikely to continue calling it the St. Joseph Hospital. But since the Leader of the Opposition reads the file, no doubt, he will be able to tell us where we are and how it is going to be named.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: If you wish me to send the files to you it will be a waste of time because if you are reading them without my sending them to you it would only be double trouble. You wish me to name it after Sybil Leacock? If the Honourable Member for St. Peter is suggesting that, as a gesture, we should name it after Sybil Leacock, he can make that recommendation in writing so that I would know that he is serious.

The point is that what I wish the Honourable House to be aware of is that the St. Joseph Hospital is not a matter that is languishing. It is having active consideration. The security forces have already been down there and done their surveys. They are in the process of making recommendations for the security of the perimeters of the property.

In the meantime we have the temporary people working in St. Joseph securing the property and it is only a matter of time before we come to this Honourable House and outline the methodology which we are going to be using in the St. Joseph Hospital.

It is going to supplement the health services in Barbados. They have no need to worry and we will try, when we come in with a policy, to avoid making it any additional or substantial drain on the finances of the country except for the first few years which naturally happens when there is any investment. We will be seeking to see how we can dovetail it into the total service of the country.

What, I think we should be applauded on is that contrary to what the Barbados Labour Party thought would happen, it did not cost us \$5 million or anywhere near that amount. It costs us \$6 million and, of course, we are going to have to put equipment in it.

I am always amazed, Mr. Speaker, when people discuss the St. Joseph Hospital and our having to put facilities in it, as though they are discussing some esoteric, far off activity that has nothing to do with the people. The St. Joseph Hospital is an acute care hospital for the residents of the north and other areas of Barbados and, therefore, it is to be considered like any other health care system.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: We will get them. The Lord will provide. Do not worry about that yet. In the same way that we have been able to find resources to do all the other things we have to do... When the time comes for St. Joseph... They are a lot of the drug reps that you discussed earlier who could not find work under the Barbado.; Labour Party and went into being drug reps. They now rightly can say, when you open the St. Joseph Hospital, we are interested in working. So these are matters which we would not spend time worrying about at this stage.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of this Caribbean Community decision, I think that there are Honourable Members on the other side who may have forgotten what the Caribbean Community is and what force decisions of the Caribbean Community have. Only the decisions which are made at the level of Heads of Government have the force to drive a country to do X or Y. And the attempt which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas made to extricate the Barbados Labour Party from the clear responsibility for the chaotic state of health, so far as the nurses are concerned, was a brilliant attempt by a desperate representative. But at the end of the day all of us recognize that he was only doing his duty.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: A brilliant attempt by a desperate representative? He should not say that, Sir. He knows that what I said was absolutely correct. He knows that. I am not going back over what I said. You are talking about desperate people.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I will withdraw "desperate", Sir. It was neither brilliant nor desperate.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: When he talks about desperation, Sir, he must talk about November 29 when they had a meeting in the City and would not even let the representative for the City chair the meeting or take any part in it. That is desperation.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He spoke?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I really think he should withdraw that. But the representative of the City is in his place and, therefore, does not need any champion.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You are trying to recruit him? It will not work.

Mr. Speaker, let me press on. Desperation manifests itself in many ways. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas announcing his love for the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. I heard him with my own ears say how much he loves the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and how they get along together. I have heard these things in the course of my political life, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I would not go so far as to say "love", Sir. But even so, I would not have said, as the Honourable Member said of the late Mr. Barrow; it is not that he does not love Mr. Barrow, he does not love the things Mr. Barrow did to him. He said that.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Now, you are being misled by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. First he tells you something, then he says that they took it out of Hansard and left you hanging. If I were you I would not listen to the Honourable Member for St. Peter anymore. He would mislead you.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Do not mind what you hear. The last man who heard something and Hansard did not repeat it costs him \$20 000. Just remember that what the reporter wrote from this place in the "Advocate" he had heard. But when the Hansard appeared and he did not see it, it costs \$20 000 which at that time was a landmark in the award of libel. So try and avoid being misled by these people who think they hear things.

Mr. Barrow did one or two things to me which I did not like. So I could possibly have said that. But he did a lot

of things to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition which he did not like either.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You were "family"? You are claiming now to be "family"? Mr. Speaker, I am finished with that. I am not getting into any family business.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: When you were going to throw acid on him he was not "family".

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, that is family matters so I do not get in that. As they say, Sir, I do not get into the white people business.

To continue to respond to the more legitimate queries. On this question of CARICOM there are two things. First of all, there was a project that was funded by CIDA in which the Canadians attempted to assist the Caribbean states in a project that would have seen a single examination in the Caribbean that would have allowed for reciprocity of nursing credentials within the Caribbean Community.

The project went on for some substantial time. And it is unfortunate that the Honourable Members would have raised that as an issue because it was Senator O'Brien Trotman who, on receipt of the report, killed it dead in its tracks, as it would have affected the Caribbean and wrote in a manner (which I do not now choose to put in the record unless someone insists that I do) that I have found unfortunate. 8.20p.m.

He wrote in a manner that I have found unfortunate. You see what the project attempted to do was to have a single examination that would be available for every Caribbean country which would have meant that we could exchange nurses within the region. We would have had a single exam. When the Caribbean Community came to discuss this project, they then suddenly found, after they had consulted the Caribbean Examinations Council, that the cost of implementing the project was going to be too high for the respective Governments, and Barbados took the lead in saying that they do not wish to be associated with it.

It is a matter which on becoming Minister of Health, I have sought to revive; and at the last Meeting of the „,

Caribbean Ministers of Health in Trinidad, we, Barbados, raised the issue again and we have had it put back on the Agenda for Caribbean nursing. It is a very important issue, because, Sir, here is what happens. A nurse from St. Lucia who works for say fifteen years in her Operating Theatre as a Registered Nurse can come to Barbados and find that the Nursing Council here will adjudge her to have inferior qualifications and will demand that she has to take examinations and various other things and she is only allowed to work as a Nursing Assistant. I have spoken on this before, Sir, because I feel very strongly about it. But the Nursing Council in Barbados is the competent body to determine qualifications and we have been working in a manner to try to have these questions resolved once and for all. But the cost of the project was rejected by Barbados and a number of other CARICOM territories and as a result what the Honourable Members believe to be the case, so far as that is concerned is not the case.

On the question of movement of nursing training out of the Ministry of Health into the Ministry of Education, that decision was agreed upon on the basis of an initiative taken even before the Barbados Labour Party became the Government. It is an initiative, believe it or not, that was in train when the Democratic Labour Party was in office. So that the decision, (a decision which I might as well tell you I do not necessarily agree with, but it is part of a debate that has been going across the world)... And you will find equally eminent people divided on both sides; they are on both sides of the great divide, as to whether health training, nursing training should be within Ministries of Health or Ministries of Education.

My own version of it, Sir, is that for countries like the United States, and the United Kingdom, large countries that have many schools of nursing and a multiplicity of jurisdictions, it may in fact be desirable to have nursing in the educational, in the academic area of training. In that way, you can guarantee a certain degree of commonality, a certain commonality of standards. Although it is my judgment that if they all have to take a common board exam then-the commonality would reflect itself in the results of the exam.

But be that as it may, there was a movement to professionalize nursing and that especially in the United States. The argument was that nurses should have degrees and be treated in the same way as other professionals because those other professionals had started looking down their noses at nurses who, by virtue of having only an RN (Registered Nurse) which was the equivalent of an Associate Degree, were being perceived as less than those other professions that had a degree and a graduate degree. And so the decision to go into the educational field was one that was made on principle. Once done does not look back.

However, my own view is that in developing countries like Barbados, small countries like we have in the Caribbean, if you put the nursing into the academic or educational field you create certain problems which will not be of easy solution precisely because of certain deficiencies of development which we suffer as developing countries. But the issue is not sufficient to warrant a divide between Ministries of Health and Ministries of Education. And therefore, once a decision is made to put them in the Ministry of Education, one accepts the decision and moves on.

So one is not criticizing the Barbados Labour Party for putting nursing education into the Community College. I would say in passing and this is not really a carping criticism; it is a sincere criticism in which perhaps more dialogue, more discussion could have occurred between the various professionals to ensure that some of the bitterness which subsequently developed might not have been the case.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying he had a big file, and I accept that. I am still saying, for example, that whereas when nursing was in the Tercenary there were 15 Tutors, when nursing went to the Community College, there were only 10 Tudors. When we have had discussions... We are having ongoing discussions now in the Ministry of Health; we are having ongoing discussions with the Community College because what we are saying to them is this: You have to take more people. You have to do double intakes. When nursing was in the Tercenary School, there used to be double intakes. When it went to the Community College, for good and sufficient reason there have only been single intakes. When you look at the number of males for example who have offered themselves as candidates for nursing training, you will find that the group that will graduate in 1989 has among them one man.

Now when, you come to look at training as it will reflect on the Psychiatric Hospital, for example, there is a strong body of opinion that feels that you need to have male attendants, male nurses, male persons functioning in the male areas of the Psychiatric Hospital. Now the philosophy in the academic training system is that once you become a Registered Nurse, you would have had sufficient psychiatric training and all other aspects of the training that you would qualify to be a Psychiatric Nurse or a general nurse. It is the feeling of another body of opinion, especially those steeped in psychiatric training, that if you do that, you are going to deprive the psychiatric nurse, especially the male, of a specialist training in Psychiatric

Nursing. I am not competent to determine which of the two is the correct one. But I will say that my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James South, as Minister, accepted the argument, the very forceful argument that was put by those from the Psychiatric Hospital who were facing the real dilemma of having untrained persons administering medicine in that hospital. And we agreed that we would start the Registered Mental Nurses Training Programme and we have intensified it this year. The Cabinet has agreed.

All of this, Mr. Speaker, is by way of explaining that some of these issues are genuine issues which need to be discussed; they need to be worked out; and finally the solution should be one that is acceptable to the total community. In the meantime, we take a position and we have moved ahead. And that is all the point I was making when I said that we have an additional 40 persons who were taken in this year. One of the things we have done, however, is recognizing that in other institutions we have psycho geriatrics in those institutions, we have allowed one person from Her Majesty's Prison for example, persons from the Geriatric Hospital, persons from the District Hospitals generally to enter the course, which brings me to, the point made that the Minister had obviated the need for enrolled Nursing Assistants from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to participate in the course.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very simple matter. We have decided that we first must train those persons who work in psychiatry, those persons in the Mental Hospital, or Psychiatric Hospital as it is called, who have been Nursing Assistants and who are either Nursing Assistants or untrained Attendants. We have agreed that those are the persons who should be given the first opportunity to get the training in the Registered Mental Nurses Programme. It is as simple as that. As a matter of fact, we sent to every institution including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and asked them to make recommendations for persons to go on the training programme. 8.30p.m.

We had recommendations for over 60 people and we had to do a ratio with the largest percentage going to the Psychiatric Hospital. And since the geriatric hospitals which have the largest proportion of the psycho-geriatrics as part of their census we decided therefore that the training should go to them before it would go to nursing assistants for an acute hospital, where the nursing assistant's role has nothing to do with mental health.

It had nothing, Mr. Speaker, to do with any personal choice by the Minister. In fact, the Minister's role in this was one that the Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition, said that he read the files on and saw the Minister saying something in this regard. And if he read the files, I fear that he might not have read the same file that I wrote on. But for what it is worth, all we were saying was

that we are going to give the preference of training to those persons first in the Psychiatric Hospital, secondly in the District Hospital - that is to say St. Lucy, Gordon Cummins, Oistins, St. Michael District Hospital, and St. Philip District Hospital - then we would have others from the various institutions including Her Majesty's Prison, and then the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

But Mr. Speaker, I want to go on and make this point. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been the prima donna of health care training and health care activity in Barbados from time immemorial. We are not going to be any better off if we continue to pour all of our resources into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at the expense (both from a psychological and economic point of view) of the other hospitals. We need to bring all of them within the total ambit of health care. Therefore, what we have been trying to do is to let the other district hospitals and related institutions come to understand that they too are a part of the total health care system. So that if the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which has more than 60% of the total health care budget in Barbados would come to feel at anytime that they were being discriminated against in favour of any other health care institution in Barbados, it may indeed be a fact, because we would be trying, if you will pardon the expression Sir, to correct past imbalances.

We feel that it is a legitimate activity to correct past imbalances if those imbalances are leading us down a path of destruction. Mr. Speaker, I hope Sir that by responding to the obvious point made gives you a further insight into how we are perceiving the health services. And now quickly to deal with the specifics.

To say that there is no linen and no gloves in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would merely be to make a mockery of the reality. If there is a shortage of linen, and if there is a shortage of gloves, first the supply of gloves has to do with the ability to get the supplies, because with the movement of AIDS and other similar related diseases it has literally been difficult to get supplies of gloves of a certain quality. There are a number of second rate suppliers who have come into the market-place and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is making it a point to ensure that when it gets gloves it gets the right kind of gloves. Therefore, we depend on the Pan American Health Organisation to select certain of these health requirements for us. If there is a shortage of gloves (which has not been reported to the Ministry) then that is not due to any inefficiency. It is due to the simple shortage of gloves across the board.

We have insisted that every health worker in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and certain other persons, identified by the Chief Medical Officer, will have access to all of the protection that is necessary including a decision to give to all health workers in Barbados at risk free immunisation against hepatitis and ARC related diseases,

etcetera. So that we are now giving free hepatitis vaccine against hepatitis to all of the health workers, especially those in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

So far as the union telling people to go on sick-out, that is not a matter that I am competent to respond to because I do not know. Unlike the Labour Party I have no access. I have no infiltrators in the National Union of Public Workers. So I really do not know what happens in their meetings. The Barbados Labour Party has infiltrators. If they say that the Union directed the nurses to go on sick-out, then I say the Labour Party knows what they are talking about. But I will say this. Just to be consistent I said that if the nurses sick-out it would be immoral. I want to say if the NUPW or the BWU or the BUT or the BLP advise anybody to sick-out, they are and would be equally immoral. I have no question in my mind about that. So if you or anybody else tell somebody to sick-out as opposed to withdrawing their labour under the Constitution, I say that that is immoral.

The Psychiatric I have dealt with, and the IADB Loan I want to touch on that. The IADB said to the Barbados Government in 1985: "After examining Barbados, after examining the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, we will not lend you the money unless you put a training element in it." It is not that you went and asked for training. The people who discuss these loans - if you get a loan for a little computer from CIDA, if you get any kind of international agency helping you, they build their training element into the project. So don't let us get any divide on the issue of training.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I have accused you of not taking certain positions on training. So far as the IADB is concerned, they have to put in a little element for somebody to get a little ... you understand. Do not let us have a divide over that. The Honourable Member of St. Peter has been dealing with projects long enough to know that training of the human resources and the lifting of the hospital levels were part of the project. On that I am not going to go any further.

On the Civil Establishments Order, I have had a little difficulty with the logic of the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition induced his Honourable Member for St. Thomas to make certain statements about (and they produced a document and they called out the Civil Establishments Order)... Nothing is wrong with that. My question is a very simple one, Mr. Speaker. If you in 1985 (and you quoted the Honourable Member for the then Christ Church East Central, the Honourable Prime Minister as he then was, and he came in and he was an honourable man and he said that he was going to create a number of posts he was going to establish)... My question is a very

simple one. If you established these posts in 1985, how come you missed out all of these people in- the polyclinics and other places who had been there now 10 years? It means that if you go 1988, 1987, 1986, 1985 that is ... 4 from 10 is j6; they would have been there for at least 6 years. How did those people manage to get left out in 1985? Because if you did this in 1985 and you did another one in 1986 and when I have come to be Minister and my colleague came to be Minister we still find them there in temporary posts, it means that you passed them by. .

Now Sir, in logic-Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I do not understand what he is saying. I just want to make myself clear. I read where the then Prime Minister said the then Government intended to make permanent 800 Or 900 throughout the service. Of those he then brought 150 nurses. Subsequently another set came up including the fire officers and prison wardens and so on. What seems to have happened is that the 800 or 900 were not completed by the time we went out of office. So that is why you may have had a backlog. 8.40 p.m.

I can add them up now (I have the things here) and tell you how many were done. But it looks like about 550 out of the 900.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am going to leave that alone, Sir. I will merely say let us agree that in the future in Barbados we are not going to subject our citizens (they are our citizens) to this difficulty of having to come and knock on anybody's door.

I worked in the United Nations, Sir, and they had a very simple, straightforward policy. For the first two years you were on probation; at the end of that two years if you were satisfactory you were automatically appointed. It seems to me that two to three years is the maximum anybody should need to find out if they want to hire anybody, if they want to have a relationship. Some people get married in four years; some get married in four days; and that is a relationship for life.

I feel that in Barbados, especially where the Government is the employer, we should not have this situation where people are wondering if they are worthwhile. And it seems to me that we should have a clear position and so far as this Government is concerned, and so far as the Ministry of Health is concerned, that is going to be the position.

When you get some people at levels these people are being appointed, what difference does it make what is their politics? There was a time when the Prime Minister of

Barbados used to embarrass people in public meetings by discussing their politics and their mothers' politics and that sort of thing. That is part of the destruction of our society.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You want me to mention the Prime Minister? I mean Tom Adams.

Sir, all I am saying is that we have to reach the point as a mature society where we can stop treating people as though they are appendages. We do not have any appendices; all of us may have different stages of the same development and therefore we must regard one another humanely and with a certain amount of love.

Mr. Speaker, so far as the Crown Agents are concerned, I have checked and I have discovered that in fact the Crown Agents opened a line of credit and that the Economic Affairs Division has established a relationship with the Crown Agents at the level of financing; so that in terms of a line of credit, the new Crown Agents under the Thatcher Government are active and aggressive capitalists. I understand that there is a line of credit that has been established which allows us to save scarce foreign exchange and at the same time to get a special line of credit.

My understanding is that all the things which are purchased on this line of credit will be purchased through the local agents in Barbados. That is my understanding of it.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Members have better information than that, at another time we can discuss it. But that is the information available to me and therefore I am not able to give any more information. But I did give the Honourable Member an assurance that I would check to see whether it was in fact so. I now say that I have discovered that it was so, that the Cabinet has made a decision based on the recommendation, because of the savings in foreign exchange, to accept the line of credit offered by the Crown Agents.

These Crown Agents are not to be equated with the Crown Agent¹ - that used to direct the affairs of Barbados when we were a colony.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker... -

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I gave the Honourable Member an assurance on that day. He raised the question again and I am responding as it is my duty as a Cabinet Minister. But I want to remind him that the way he raised it on that particular day was unusual. So that if Honourable Members on this side were not quite *au fait*, you brought it "out of

left field" *apropos* of nothing; and Honourable Members do not go around remembering Crown Agents. You were a Minister and you know that they have a number of things to do; they do not go around remembering Crown Agents; and the way you asked the question I myself was flabbergasted. What I have found out to be the fact is no big thing.

The question you asked was whether the agents in Barbados were being excluded; and the impression you gave was that the Crown Agents were going to be coming in at the exclusion of the agents. What the Cabinet agreed to was not that, and therefore the consternation would have been genuine. If there is more to this I cannot give you now because I do not know any more.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have answered all the queries that have been raised. I believe I have been expansive in my explanations of the matters relating to the Ministry and therefore, Sir, I am now going to ask that this matter be concluded by putting the matter to the vote. I thank you for your indulgence.

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

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, 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. 8.50p.m.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a third time.

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

The question that the Bill be read a third time was put and resolved in the affirmative. /

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill do now pass.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:

Ayes: Hon. P. M. GREAVES; Hon. B. M. TAITT; Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN; Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN; Hon. N. K. SIMMONS; Hon. W. W. HALL; Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN; Hon. C. V. WALKER; Mr. C. A. NEBLETT; Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON; Mr. E. BOURNE; Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE; Mr. P. J. M. MILLER and Mr. R. P. BYER - 14.

Noes: Hon. H. deB. FORDE and Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS - 2.

COMPULSORY ACQUISITIONS OF LAND AT LODGE HILL AND CAVE HILL

Order No. 2 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Lodge Hill and Cave Hill, St. Michael, for the construction of the Airport to West Coast Highway.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, this is non-controversial really. In 1985 the House of Assembly approved the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of about 70 parcels of land for the construction of the Airport to West Coast Road, and of the two parcels of land in this Resolution, one belonged to Delcina Forde of University Drive, Cave Hill. The original acquisition was for only just a little part of her land - 255 square metres I think - but the road caused a lot of damage to the lady's house and she had to be moved. She is now accommodated at some other place in a house belonging to the Ministry of Housing.

This Resolution is seeking to acquire the remaining parcel of land and in fact her house has to be demolished because it is no good because of what took place with the road, the shaking and so on.

The other part of the acquisition is for land belonging to Keith Thornton at Lodge Hill in St. Michael. The past administration had acquired part of this gentleman's land, but having acquired that, the other portion of land that remained became uneconomical to the owner, and therefore the Government has decided that it should also acquire that land from Mr. Thornton, which is 2.564 square metres.

This Resolution seeks Parliamentary approval to acquire these two portions of land including Delcina Forde's house which is to be demolished.

With those few remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that, and in so doing I just want to comment on the acquisition of land from Delcina Forde. This is a very old

lady who lived on University Drive, and I would ask that people be more sensitive of the concerns of people. For some unknown reason they acquired the property to the east of her and to the west of her. I made a number of representations on her behalf and nobody did anything. They shifted the road and then she was about ten feet below the road. Dust upon dust went on her house and eventually... I am not saying that this caused it, but the old lady had a stroke; and it was only after she had a stroke and was very critical that they decided to purchase the house.

I hope that something like this will never happen again to people. I think we have to be much more sensitive. I am happy that the Government is purchasing the property. But quite frankly this could have been avoided; and even if she would have had a stroke, I think her days on this land would have been much more pleasant than they are at this present time. I am just asking that when we are trying to improve our own lot, that we consider the individual person at times.

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

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I beg to move that Question Time be now taken.

QUESTION TIME Mr.

SPEAKER: It is now Question Time.

Parliamentary Question No. 84 stands in the name of the Honourable Member for St. George South.

QUESTION RE ST. LUKE'S - BRIGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr. R. P. BYER: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of Education and Culture: (i) Is the Minister aware that the roof of the St. Luke's - Brighton Primary School needs replacing and that the school is in a general state of disrepair and in urgent need of repair and renewal? (ii) If the Minister is so aware, will he give this Honourable House the assurance that he will move swiftly to ensure the early rehabilitation of the said school?

Notice of this Question was given on 5th July, 1988.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 84 asked by the Honourable Member for St. George South is as follows:

- (i) "Yes, I was aware of the conditions at the St. Luke's - Brighton Primary School;

- (ii) Repairs and refurbishing of the school have been effected."

Mr. R. P. BYER: By way of a supplementary, Sir, when were the repairs done?

Hon. C. V. WALKER: The repairs were completed on 10th October, 1988.

Mr. R. P. BYER: Could the Honourable Minister tell me the cost and extent of repairs?

Hon. C. V. WALKER: The cost of the repairs was some \$24 298.

Mr. SPEAKER: Parliamentary Question No. 91 stands in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

QUESTION RE WHITE FLY DISEASE IN BARBADOS

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries: 1. Will the Minister please state whether his Ministry has conducted research aimed at explaining the presence of "White Fly" disease in Barbados? 2. If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister please state the results of the research?

Notice of this Question was given on 25th October 1988.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 91 is as follows:

"White-fly is not a disease but belongs to an order of insects called Hemiptera or plant bugs.

These insects live on the underside of the leaves of host plants; both adults and nymphs suck plant sap from the the underside of leaves. In large numbers, they can cause economic damage to crops.

Two species of white-fly have been found to be prevalent namely *Bemisia sp* and *Trialeurodes sp*.

During the early months of 1987, white-flies seriously infested cotton at Foursquare and surrounding areas of St. Philip, Lowthers and a few other plantations in Christ Church. There was a simultaneous upsurge of white-fly in Black Rock, St. Michael, Christ Church and St. George, particularly on vegetables like cabbages, cucurbits, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers and thyme. White-fly was found to have also infested several wild host plants and weeds.

Infestations have continued sporadically on vegetables, and insects may be found in every parish though not at pest levels."

9.00 p.m.

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"The increasing incidence of white-flies and other plant suckers like aphids, scale insects and mites in Barbados coincides with the increased use of, and over-dependence on, a group of insecticides known as synthetic pyrethroids. This relatively new group of contact insecticides is very effective against a range of chewing pests found on agricultural crops. The active ingredient of . *• most pyrethroids break down in 3 to 4 days; they are low in mammalian toxicity. It is these characteristics which make them the first choice of farmers.

Pyrethroids have not been as effective against sucking insects and consequently there have been upsurges of the category of insects since 1981.

The biology and behaviour of these pests on a range of susceptible hosts crops are being studied. It should be noted that a generation is completed in four weeks from egg to adult with the egg stage lasting six to seven days.

Behavioural experiments have been conducted in the laboratory and greenhouse at Graeme Hall which show that both species are attracted to shades of yellow. Yellow * sticky traps were therefore used successfully to reduce adult population on cabbages in the greenhouse. This technique is being tested in the field. Investigations into biological control have so far shown two promising species of parasites and several useful predators of the pest. These are being reared for mass release. Chemical control experiments are also being conducted to determine the most suitable chemicals and application techniques to be used against white-flies.

Farmers have been advised that early detection of the pest is necessary for effective control and they have been given a list of chemicals and advised of the application techniques for their use which take account of the biology and behaviour of the pest.

The suggestion that the new upsurge of white-flies is the result of infested cabbages imported into Barbados is totally false because -

- (i) these species have been known to exist in Barbados for many years although not at pest levels;
- (ii) in recent times other plant suckers including two different species of white-flies achieved pest status on several crops;
- (iii) mature cabbage heads are not suitable hosts for any stage of white-flies; and

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- (iv) there are documented case histories of white-fly upsurge where pyrethroids have been used."

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Supplementary. Will the Minister please explain what is a pyrethroid?

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Pyrethroid, Mr. Speaker, is a substance originally extracted from the pyrethrum flower that kills insects, but within more recent times there have been chemical ways of developing pyrethroids. It is a contact insecticide which means it is not effective against sucking insects since the white-fly lies mostly on the underleaf of the vegetable.

Unless the pyrethroid comes into direct contact it does not affect the insect; so as a result we have to use some systemic insecticides which means that when the insects suck the sap which is already poisoned they will be killed.

Thank you.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He mentioned useful species of parasites. What are the two useful species of parasites referred to?

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, we have discovered parasites. They are mostly of the wasp type. One is prichogramma and the other is braconid and they are both wasps.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He mentioned a list of chemicals given to farmers. I would like to ask the Minister to tell us what chemicals are included in the list given to farmers.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, farmers are advised that they can use orthane, metasystox, rogor 40 or diazadine.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Will the Minister state what has been the economic loss to crops as a result of the presence of white-flies in dollar terms?

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to answer that. I will just say that at the moment the white-fly is not at the pest level and we have not been able to quantify the economic loss.

Mr. SPEAKER: End of Replies to Questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I assume, Sir, that Question Time has ended so I have not risen to ask any supplementaries. I have risen, Sir, to move the adjournment of this House.

I now move that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, December 13, 1988 at 12 o'clock noon.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, December 13, 1988 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 9.10p.m.

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