

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986-91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, November 1, 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. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A. (Econ.)
J.P. (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Hon. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.
(Minister of Health)

Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Transport, Telecommunications and Immigration and Leader of the House)

Hon. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M., (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)

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

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

Hon. M. A. KING, Q.C., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

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

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

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

Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development)

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

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

Mr. E. BOURNE Dr. E. A.

SIMMONS, M.D.

Hon. W. W. HALL, (Minister of Tourism and Sports) Mr. C. A. NEBLETT, B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

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

Mr. P. J. M. MILLER

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

Prayers were led by the Rev. Fr. Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, 25th October, 1988.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I have perused the Minutes of the meeting that took place on Tuesday, 25th October, 1988, and on page 7 I noticed that there is need for an amendment to indicate that after the Honourable Prime Minister spoke, as shown here as "Honourable L. E. Sandiford spoke", then it shows that the Honourable C. V. Walker replied. In fact, before the Minister of Education replied, the Honourable Minister of Tourism spoke. On page 7 of the Minutes, Sir, when we were debating Head 76, Ministry of Education and Culture, Part 2, immediately after the Honourable L. E. Sandiford spoke and before the Honourable C. V. Walker replied, there should be inserted there "Honourable W. W. Hall spoke."

Hon. B. M. TAITT and Air. P. J. M. MILLER entered the Chamber and took their seats.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are there any other observations or corrections?

If there are no other corrections, then that amendment as proposed by the Honourable Leader of the House will now stand.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, subject therefore to that amendment, I move that the Minutes be taken as read and approved.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I have received from the Accountant General Accounts and Statement for the month of August, 1988.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to amend the Explanatory Note to Head 13 - Prime Minister's Office, Subhead 3 - Central Emergency Relief Organisation, Object No. 25 - Plant, Equipment and Furniture.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the instant order of the day.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, at this stage, I move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

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

Order No. 1 was called.

THE ARCHIVES ACT, 1988

Order No. 1 was called - To move the second reading of a Bill to provide for the custody and preservation of public archives, public records and other documents.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, in the year 1963 it was decided to establish the post of Archivist and Assistant Archivist. In the year 1964 the Department of Archives was established. It was subsequently agreed that Archives legislation should be prepared to bring in line with conventional standards our nation of Barbados.

Now this Bill seeks to give the Minister power to establish a Committee, and the constitution of this Committee is detailed in the schedule, the establishment

and the matters to be referred to the Committee, such as the establishment of an Archives Advisory Committee. And for the purpose of this Act, it says there is established a body to be known as the Archives Advisory Committee, and the Committee shall advise the Minister on matters referred to the Committee by the Minister relating to the location, preservation and use of public archives, the custody and transfer of public records, the "conditions and restrictions on which public records available for research or any of them may be inspected and published, the inspection and the preservation of documents and manuscripts of historical or cultural or literary value in private possession, inspection by members of the public of public archives and public records, and the editing and publishing of public archives and private manuscripts. 12.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill deals with the power and duties of the Chief Archivist and it gives the power to the Chief Archivist who "shall have charge of the Archives Department and of the public archives and of the public records deposited therein or transferred thereto". And in addition to the specific functions conferred or imposed on him by the Act, he shall take "all such measures as are necessary for the conservation of public archives, public records and private manuscripts."

Two interesting sections there, Mr. Speaker, the "power to acquire by purchase, donation, bequest, contract or otherwise or take on loan any record, manuscript or document of any material which, in his opinion shall be deposited in the Archives Department for permanent preservation."

Another interesting section "To examine any record, manuscript or document containing references to or which had its origin in but lies outside Barbados, with a view to securing either by loan or by purchase, the original or any copy thereof."

Another interesting section, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the selection and transfer of public records to the Archives Department and the Chief Archivist shall have access to any place of deposit of public records and shall have the power to examine such records with a view to listing them or collecting information thereof or to taking such steps as are necessary for their transfer to the Archives Department for preservation.

Now, the Chief Archivist or any other person if dissatisfied with the decision of the responsible officer may refer the matter to the Minister, who shall then decide whether the public record referred to in the section is of a confidential or secret nature and whether it should remain closed, or whether conditions should be attached to its transfer to the Archives Department or to inspection and, if so, what the conditions should be.

We also have the procedures relating to the documents where public offices or a public office is to be closed and where the public office is due to be closed down or wound up the responsible officer of such public office "shall transmit to the Chief Archivist a complete list of all public records in that office and shall make arrangements to deposit in the Archives Department such records as the Archivist may select or require for permanent preservation in the Archives Department."

There is also the provision of the preservation and inspection of public records, and, "public records less than thirty years old shall be kept separately from the public archives in the Archives Department and public records less than thirty years old in the Archives Department shall be regarded as confidential and shall not be available to any person for research unless the material contained therein has previously been published for general information or the Minister has given permission to examine the records."

We have the area, also, Mr. Speaker, dealing with the record of commissions to be transmitted to the Chief Archivist and "it shall be the duty of the Chairman of any Commission or Committee of Inquiry to deposit all records relating to the Commission or Committee, as the case may be, at the Archives Department within three months after the rendering of the final report of that Commission or Committee."

There is a section dealing with the documents and manuscripts in private possession and "the chief executive officer of any private institution or any person in possession of any manuscript or document of historical, cultural or literary value, shall notify the Chief Archivist of the existence of the document or the manuscript and the person or the executive officer referred to in this section shall afford the Chief Archivist all the facilities to inspect the manuscript or the document."

We deal with the prohibition of export of certain documents and manuscripts. "No person shall except on the authority of a licence issued by the Minister, export, take, send or cause to be exported, taken or sent out of Barbados any record, document or manuscript or any other printed matter being of historical, cultural or literary value."

Then we have the section dealing with the destruction of public records. "No public record shall be destroyed except with the written consent of the Chief Archivist."

Then, of course, we have to have a section dealing with authentication of copies and extracts and "a copy of or an extract from any public archive, public record or any private document or manuscript deposited in the Archives Department purporting to be duly certified as true and authenticated by the Chief Archivist or any other officer authorised by him in writing for the purpose, is admissible

in evidence in any proceedings in any court in like manner and to the like extent as the original document or manuscript would have been admissible."

The Regulations are duly set out in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, but, among other things, they are set out for "regulating the selection of public records, private documents and manuscripts for permanent preservation, their transfer to and deposit in the Archives Department and the measures to be taken for their effective preservation in the Archives Department" and there are others.

The regulations made under the subsection are, of course, subject to negative resolution.

Of course, we have the area of the penalties and "any person who knowingly defaces, marks, mutilates or damages any record, manuscript or document deposited in the Archives Department, or destroys any public record otherwise than in accordance with the Act, or contravenes this Act or the regulations, is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars or imprisonment for twelve months or to both."

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks I now move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition is supporting this Bill and the Minister has clearly demonstrated that of the three "R's", he is most proficient in that of reading. He has read the clauses of the Bill almost verbatim and seriatim. We are on the second reading, Sir, and so I would have been really happy to hear the Minister talk about the policy subsuming this Bill. 12.35 p.m.

I would have wished to have heard, and indeed I speak for my colleague the Member for St. Peter, what mischief this bit of legislation was aimed to rectify.

Asides.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What is the need?

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. What is the point and purpose? Why is it necessary now? We want some background. Do not just come and read the Sections that I hear that we have all read or ought to have read. This has not informed the public's mind or my mind because I have read it already. I want to hear something more.

Laughter.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He said so?

Laughter.

Aside.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That is true. It is seventeen months as Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has not made any impact on my mind....

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS:.....in a positive way, Sir.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But I would want to hear from the Minister, for example, what is going to be the relationship between the Chief Archivist and the Committee that is set up and the operation, for example, of the Registration Department? To what extent is this Committee going to co-ordinate, or, sees itself as responsible for, the co-ordination • of the public records, especially in the Registration Department, introduction of a system of microfilming as an every day exercise and so on?

I would wish to hear from the Minister, what are his plans for the operation of the bare bones of this legislation, that is, assuming he has any. Because the Minister told us, Sir, that the Regulations are set out, his exact words, the Regulations are set out in the Bill. That is not so, Sir. The Regulations are not set out in the Bill. And to that extent he read but did not understand. Because Clause 14 gives him a discretionary power to make Regulations to provide for a variety of circumstances that is set out in (a) to (i) of Clause 14. He now has to make the Regulations - I hope he understands that that is his function - to cover these areas of general application that are set out in clause 14, Sir.

Sir, thii Opposition has always supported and encouraged the preservation of documents of historic interest and import, and in Debates in here in this Session, without referring specifically, Sir, we have called for an attempt to be made at the better organization of historic documents.

I just want to say that this need for the preservation of documents of historic importance has been there for many years and we have coped, but only coped, in the recent past with having a Chief Archivist who does an excellent job • within the scope of her limitations, I think limitations

caused primarily by a lack of finance and a lack of physical space.

But every year it is becoming important, it is becoming recognized that there is need for a repository to which researchers, and indeed the general public can go and dig up matters of particular interest which may better inform their researches and so on. And we have to modernize the facilities. We have to get in the league of microfilming and microfiche of all of our public records. I know that it has a cost implication, Sir, and it will take time to organize.

I believe that there had been microfilming equipment in the Registry for about twelve years, not used. And that was a waste of valuable public funds. I do not know if the Archives Department now has that equipment or part of it. But it would seem to me to be a clear case for the better utilization of that equipment And if this Bill with the Committee that is to advise the Minister can get some movement along that line, Sir, then of course we would be well served.

In the Barbados Labour Party we have just had to rely very heavily on the facilities of the Archives Department in putting together an exhibition which is still going at the Barbados Labour Party Headquarters. And we have been able to find a number of useful documents both down at the Archives and within the security of private individuals, documents of very important historic value. For example, one of the most telling bits of correspondence that we have come across is a letter by Clement Payne himself written in his hand to Grantley Adams after Payne had left Barbados and expressing his gratitude and thanks for all that Adams had done for him. I suppose if we had not mounted this exhibition, perhaps this document may not have come to light.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Is this the mischief that the Bill is trying to correct?

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There was always an Archives Department. Before this Bill came in here, our researchers went down there, Sir, and were able to dig out the information.

But on a very serious note, Sir, for too long our researchers have been having to go abroad to find documents relating to Barbados be it in South Carolina or in London or in New York and if by this Bill - there is provision for copies of documents and purchase of documents - if by this Bill there would be a concerted effort made by the Committee and the Ministry to seek out these documents and copy them and then relocate them in

Barbados, it will be to the tremendous advantage of our scholars present and to come. I have not heard any of this from the Minister, Sir. 12.45 p.m.

I wonder why in the Schedule to the Bill it is provided that the Solicitor General or his nominee should be on the Archives Advisory Committee. Is there any particular significance in that? I do not know. The Solicitor General or his nominee is on so many other committees, I wonder if this is one that really requires his - when I say his I also mean his nominee's - presence and attendance. The Chief Archivist, yes. A member of the public with a cultural - I think this is wrongly worded - it says a member of the public with a cultural and historic interest in records. I wonder if they mean with an interest in cultural and historic records. Anyhow, this is what has come down, this is what they have. A public officer, a member of the academic community. I am not sure that academic community is defined in the Act. The width of that phrase "member of the academic community", it can include me, perhaps when I used to teach at the university. They will now say that I am a member of the professional community.

Anyhow, these are perhaps small points.

The Schedule takes the form of the usual Schedules to these types of Bill and I think the Minister has been right at this stage to impose liability to a heavy penalty for destruction or defacing of these records. I am not sure if he has in a provision for anyone who steals them. You would find people who would steal them and it should be an offence to steal or attempt to steal them, not only to mark or deface them. Clause 15 could be tightened up in that regard, Sir.

As I said, Sir, the Opposition is not against the Bill in any way. Would that we had had a more expansive presentation from the Honourable Minister, but that may be his style, Sir. We are pleased to be lending our support to this important piece of legislation in the sense that it is creating a setting for the proper organisation and storage of information. I do not have to address the House on the whole information revolution that there is in the world, the new information order. I do not have to address the House on that, because I am sure that members are familiar with that and Barbados has to get itself in line, so this takes us one more step towards the modernisation of our information data base in Barbados.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. R. P. B YER: Mr. Speaker, the subject of archives • and- information retrieval and storage and so on is a matter that I feel very strongly about. One reason why I feel this way is because I spent the early part of my professional working life being Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court,

and part of my duties at the Registry included the keeping of records and making sure that those records under my charge were always kept in a good manner. I believe to this extent the member for St. Thomas and myself see eye to eye on these matters.

The Registration Office is one of the areas in Barbados that deals with the storage of information. A lot of information is stored at the Registration Office, probably not as historical or as sensitive as that stored at the Archives, but eventually all records stored at the Registration Office will wind up in the Archives.

The Registration Office as it is now constituted really deals with the storage of information relating to births, deaths, marriages and so on. There used to be companies, but now you have an intellectual property office and that office also is responsible for the storage of records as well.

One of the things I am concerned about, Sir, is the quality of record keeping at the Registration Office. I know when I worked there for some time that the books that kept the records relating to births, deaths, marriages and so on were not always in the best condition. Because of frequent use the ends were torn and became, as we would say, dog-eared, and it made reading and recovering information from those sources very, very difficult. Sometimes if you had to do a particularly difficult search going back in time, the condition of those books and registers made the difference between a fruitful search and an unfruitful one.

I worked at the Registration Office from 1976 until 1978 and then between 1979 and 1980 when I resigned my appointment there, and I do not think that the conditions have changed in any way. Certainly a new building would help matters, but at the same time I am not so sure that we channel enough resources to the Registration Office to make sure that the records are kept in the best condition. A lot of the times because of frequent use of the books, one has got to do recopying exercises and so on, and the staff has to be paid overtime. I believe that is one of the possible problems involved in the whole exercise.

I am also concerned about the safety of documents kept at the Registration Office. Recently an attempt was made to set fire to some records there at the Registry. The matter went to the Assizes, the accused person involved was found guilty and he was put on probation. I am not commenting on the lightness or the wrongness of that approach to the sentencing there, Sir, what I am concerned about is that the same way that person got access - he was an employee there - and committed such an act, it is quite easy for something more serious to occur at the Registration Office.

The electrical wiring at that office is not of the best and it is quite possible that if we do not do anything about it

in the near future a fire of some kind could result and the information could be lost, because I do not get the impression that the vault is fireproof, I know that the vault is not fireproof, and if a fire should occur there we are going to lose all the records relating to births, deaths and marriages, a substantial amount of that relating to titles to land and so on. So that I believe that if we move in this direction the next thing we have to do is look at the element of safety in relation to the keeping of public records.

It is all right for the Act to address that question, but ultimately it is left to the individuals involved. The Registrar of the Supreme Court has got to be involved in the process. I do not see any provision made here for that kind of linkage that the member for St. Thomas spoke about, and I know that regularly when you cannot find documents at the Registration Office, you have to send to the Archives for them, so there is a lot of relationship between the Registration Office and the Archives Department, and I should like to see that at some later stage some attempt be made by way of legislation, maybe an amendment to this Act, to give statutory effect to that relationship that already exists. It is very important that that be done.

I do not know whether the Registrar will sit on this Committee that is going to be established under the Act, but I would urge the Minister to make the Registrar of the Supreme Court and also the Registrar maybe of Titles - it is going to be important - and also, the Registrar of the Intellectual Property Office part and parcel of the Committee as well. 12.55 p.m.

Speaking of the Intellectual Property Office, a lot of work that was previously handled by the Registration Department is now handled by that office. All matters dealing with patents, trademarks and companies are dealt with by that office. I am concerned as well about the quality of safety and concerned about the quality of the record keeping. There was a time when I know that bills of sale were stored on the outside of that office, stored on the steps. This was a time when it was uncertain whether the Intellectual Property Office could handle the registration of bills of sale or whether it was still a matter for the Registration Department. Nobody was certain about that when there was going to be the changeover when the Intellectual Property Office was being established, and that situation no longer exists, but at the time, because of the uncertainty and the fact that no one seemed to care about the safety- and the storage of vital documents of title, namely bills of sale, they were left in a very uncertain fashion stored at the Intellectual Property Office. That situation, as I said, no longer exists. It was remedied, but at the same time the same problems that I am speaking about in terms of safety still remain with both offices, and I would urge the Government to do something about it, to look at the safety of documents at these offices while at the same

time cement the work that is being furthered by this Act or this Bill that is now being considered.

Before I sit, Sir, I want to refer to certain sections and just in a general way section 10. I am always a bit » concerned when Government seems to be trespassing on individual rights and freedoms, property and so on, and even though I know it is important for "the country to capture on film or in some other way elements of its past history, its culture and whatever, I am still a bit worried about the burden of this section. It places responsibility on any person in possession of any manuscript or document; it says that that person shall notify the Chief Archivist of the * existence of the document or manuscript. The next subsection says he shall afford the Chief Archivist all facilities to inspect the manuscript or document. I wonder if I am in possession of that document, my own private property, why an Act of Parliament should say to me that I should make it available to the archivist.

I don't see any penalties attaching here, but if one should read the other subsections 3, 4 and 5 further, they give the archivist power to say that that person may declare any manuscript to be of historical, cultural or literary value, and it also gives the person the right to appeal against the decision of the archivist at subsection 10(5). I am a bit concerned about this section. I don't know if I am making the point very strongly, but it seems to me, even though it * seems innocent, to be an infringement of the right to own private property. It still smacks of a little infringement on the part of the Government. I don't like the mandatory element contained in the section - "shall notify". If I feel to notify or not, I may. I am a bit concerned about it and honourable Members may want to turn their attention to that aspect of the Bill to see if they agree with me or see the ^ point I am making.

Ultimately, Sir, I would hope that my pleas do not fall on deaf ears and that efforts will be made to strengthen the security at the Registration Office. I don't know how you will get that done because the office is in great need of new premises, and the Intellectual Property Office as well. I am very concerned about those, Sir. *

Also one may refer to the Chief Marshal's office. Documents are stored there as well and anybody who has gone to that office will know that the conditions there are not of the best. We recently had a fire at the Magistrate's Court where the building was burnt and we lost a lot of records there. Dominica ought to be an example to us as to what can happen when a fire takes place at the registration office. All the documents at the Dominica Registry were lost after the fire because of the very inadequate security that existed at that office. They have only been able to reconstruct some of the information by asking lawyers to send in certain information, but I would not like to see that

happen in Barbados, because I know this is a time now when many people are coming out of North America who have roots in Barbados and are coming here and doing extensive research into their roots, and I would hope that we pay particular attention to the concerns that I am raising here.

Thank you Sir.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, I think that this Bill comes at a good time. It is a very necessary document and it puts some focus on an area that is not much discussed or debated in Barbados although it is an area of fundamental importance. I think that the public might consider discussion on archives to be a very esoteric area, one that is not of national importance, but I would like to venture that in fact it is a subject of very great importance.

I would like to say that I have benefited tremendously from the very competent staff at the Archives Department. In fact I have had one complaint of that department, and it is not a complaint of the department *per se*, that it closes when I finish work and it is not open on weekends when I would like to use it, but that I understand is a difficulty that would come from matters of employment of persons to work on those hours when normally most of us would not be thinking about engaging in such activities. I think that to some extent that the archives would be used by a small group of persons. Those of us who go there do not see it as a public or a popular institution, but one that is indeed a relatively and unique institution. It has nothing to do I think with the organisation itself, but more about persons' perception about the organisation. Indeed I would say that there are some professional writers who are not even familiar with the role and functions of the archives and the facilities that are available there. That must relate to and affect the quality of production coming from anybody who seeks to write about the history or in fact about the past of Barbados.

I should just like to comment just briefly outside of the scope of the Bill itself on some general matters. I believe for instance that the Archives Department should be engaged in functions that are a bit wider than they are engaged in at this present time and that the Bill seeks to engage them in. The area for instance of teaching. 1.05p.m.

Certainly, I believe, part of the uses of the archives, one of the most popular areas is in that of geneological research and while we can say that that is a function that could be carried out at the university, I think we are talking about two different exercises.

. I believe, perhaps, it is done now in an informal way, I am not sure, but one area could be that the Archives should be provided with staff to help in that kind of exercise for people who use the facilities there and I also believe that

there is a need for the students at our schools, because, again, there is a perception that the Archives should only be used by post graduate students, but, I believe, that from very early stages our students should understand the importance of primary documents.

We tend to pay too much reliance on the secondary printed word and I think those who like to be careful know the dangers that are involved in that. By the time the secondary work reaches the broad public for consumption, there are all types of omissions and interpretations and so on to cut across what occurred in that primary work and, I believe, it should be an early exercise.

In fact, I think that the CXC moved in the direction and that is the importance of CXC, our local examination system, that years before when you were dealing with Oxford and Cambridge and GCE, we were looking basically at secondary works and then writing so-called essays and so on that the CXC function has been different.

I think it has moved us looking more towards the primary documents and one remembers the work of persons like the late Dr. Eric Williams who put out that early book of documents of West Indian history which he was supposed to follow with a second book. Of course, he had a very full life and he was never able to do that but those who had the rich experience of looking at the documents, the actual printed pages from Columbus' diaries translated into English, the logs and so on, would have had a completely different impression of history than those who are only reading secondary works.

I believe that this kind of depth introduced very early not only to our school children but to, perhaps our journalists, and to others who are informed in delivering information and knowledge, this kind of exposure to original works, primary works, is vitally important and in that respect I really believe the Archives has a tremendous duty that it can perform, may be not within the particular structure that it has now but, perhaps, there may be a role for it within a different structure.

The other area I would like to look at is a private extension arm, perhaps, for the Archives. I see no reason why the Archives could not be allowed to work for private institutions. Of course, a fee would have to be paid by those institutions.

It is going to be extremely difficult to centralize all the document preparation and preservation and so on in an Archives Department. In fact, there might well be a situation where private people, like organisations or individuals, who have a collection of primary material whether it is letters written and received or old parliamentarians who have collected stores, volumes of

information over time but they might want to keep their own personal archives - I am talking now from the individual point of view or the institutional point of view - but, clearly, you do not have the expertise to organize their own archives, I think there is room there for a relationship with the Archives Department that their expertise can be called upon to come out to the private organisation for a fee. Of course, the way how that fee now is disbursed once it is collected is something else and that relates, of course, to the expertise of the persons doing the job and other matters that will be discussed but, I believe, that this particular function is a vital one.

If there is one thing we suffer from is a lack of understanding of historical material, and what it means. Now, sometimes we do not understand that when you lose that material it cannot be recovered. Once it is gone, it is gone.

If a particular company started in 1920 and it is changing its operations from down by the Harbour to go up by Seawall and it decided that everything we have here will dump, we are going to burn it, we are going to put it away, that is a serious loss to the country. Or suppose a very important person who had archives is moving from a house, a very small house, not too commodious and so on and he is moving elsewhere and he decides he is burning all his stuff, that, again, is a tremendous loss and I suspect a lot of this is happening because people do not appreciate the importance of these documents and, furthermore, because the guidance is not available and that is why I believe that, perhaps, the Archives could be given that potential, that authority, to talk with persons in institutions in order to help them to retrieve and to store, to collate that information and then to use it effectively. I think it would be very important.

This touches the point that was raised by the honourable Member for St. George South, the question about the difficulties involved where it is mandatory, according to the Act, that the Chief Executive Officer of a private institution shall notify the Chief Archivist. It poses some obligation on that Chief Executive Officer to notify.

Now, I do not share the same fear in terms of the notification except I do not read the full intention here as well as he does not coming from his legal background; but the question of notification - if you do not provide in the Act for this notification, basically, you are leaving it to the voluntary perception and understanding of a mass of people who have historical documents there or might have it, on whether they want to notify or not.

Now, here, you are coming across the conflict between, sometimes, personal motivation and the public wheel. It is important. It is important, certainly, that I have control of my documents, my information. The question

about when a document passes from being mine in the sense that I have ownership over it, to having wide impact on a country, I think that is a very important area that one has to distinguish between.

It is a matter of perception. If this person has to notify, there is nothing that will give the power to the Archives, really, if the guy only notifies nine to know that there is a tenth; so to a certain extent, there is still the selection in terms of what he identifies. The question is if the person is in possession of manuscript that is of historical, cultural or literary value. It is a matter of identification. He has to identify it first and then he notifies. What happens after that is clearly provided for. *

He may be able to make some relationship with the Archives on terms and conditions that may be agreed between himself and the Chief Archivist. I think it is very important.

I think that if we leave the notification of historical documents purely to the private individual, that our source of these documents might be poor. I believe so and I think there might be a middle way between and it might be a matter of process but I would like, as far as possible, that a central pool that is controlled by experts in the area have access to this wide number of documents. It is vitally important in moving a country forward that they know where they have come from. It is extremely important. *

Those of us who have had to do historical research to go down to the Archives and look at letters written by Governors writing at a time when they never thought that we would be looking at this material years afterwards. Some of them might feel I do not want to put this down or I don't want anybody to get hands on it later on to read what I have written. But let us remember history. History moves on. Individuals do not. You move off the scene and those who are afraid of the treatment of history or whatever it is you have to do I think, perhaps, they are not ready for maturity. You have to leave things and let the future make determinations about these things. You should never try to hide away historical documents and those who have to reproduce them and replicate them have the responsibility to be faithful. *

I remember when a portrait of Oliver Cromwell had to be done and the portrait painter came, of course, they used to do a very fancy thing so that they would end up making certain persons looking handsome even though they did not have any claims to it and Cromwell said "No. You have to paint me, warts and all, put in everything". And we have a difficulty sometimes in putting in warts because we like to romanticize things, not only in paintings and photographs but in writing. We would want to put in the things that are palatable and not the ones that are not palatable. 1.15p.m.

But I think the record must be clear, it must be collected, the good speeches and the bad speeches, the lack of judgement in a letter as well as the vast amount of erudition and ideas that will come in another letter, all of these have to be collected and collated and kept. And I believe that we need to understand that the Archives as a professional area should be given jurisdiction over these matters. I am very happy with that particular area.

Now I share the concern about the definition of the academic community that is raised here, and I hope that a very liberal interpretation would be given to it. Academic community could be limited to mean university teachers and lecturers and so on. But I do not think that was the intention. I believe that the wide area of the academic community will be included.

But when we come to another area, the area of penalties, I have a problem here which again, my legal friends might be able to advise me on. The penalty looks fairly heavy, "a fine of five thousand dollars or imprisonment for twelve months or both."

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Up to. Up to.

Aside.

"summary conviction to a

Mr. R. L. MORRIS:
fine of ____ This is up to?

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Liable. Okay. But I am not dealing only with the heaviness of the fine because I believe that is a deterrent. That is to keep people from doing these things. But I am concerned that you can deface, mark, mutilate but there is nothing to say you carried it away.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: I understand that that would be larceny. But my only concern was whether the Laws, whether the penalty provided under larceny would come to the same level as this. It might not. Then a fellow might decide it is better to carry away if he is that type of a crook, than to deface.

Laughter.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: But I believe that certainly the penalty must be put at a level to deter any one of these forms. I think that is very, very important. I think people do not understand the lure of knowledge. There are some people who love knowledge and who love to keep it. That is

why you have national archives, so that people are not confused that the repository of knowledge within an individual, a person, that that is anything that is good. If you have it, you have to get it out. We have to leave it. We have seen too many knowledgeable persons, highly trained persons pass on to the Great Beyond and they have left precious little, that is on their volition they have left, nor have they organized that kind of information to pass on to others.

We have been hearing from some of them that they are going to be producing books when they go. The books are not there. Because again, it is so difficult to balance an active life with a life of reflection and writing. We promise ourselves this and then you get caught up in the maelstrom of day to day activities and you never get around to writing much of what you want to write.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Bill is a very useful one and it sets a framework, a broad framework in which the Archives Department can operate. And I believe we are fortunate to have very competent staff at the department at this time, and this gives them a framework within which they can operate. But as I said I would still like to think that there are certain other areas that the department could move into, one is the teaching area, the second I think the area of consultancy to private organizations, and a third area which I did not spend too much time on and that is the area of publications. I would really like to see a facility in the Archives that you can sometimes put together documentation on areas and make it generally available to the Barbadian public. But I am very satisfied that the department is in good hands.

I thank you very much.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I believe that in the long sweep of history, few nations can be identified as having been great nations. Those nations took an especial interest in their past and sought to draw sustenance and strength from that past.

Any nation which seeks to provide a high quality of life for its citizens must therefore seek to ensure that its past is available for examination and that strength and sustenance may therefore be drawn from that past in order to assist the present trends and future directions.

It is therefore very significant that today, this Parliament should be considering legislation relating to the establishment of a legislative framework for the custody and preservation of public archives, public records and other documents.

I think it is very important that in this country we should have a clear knowledge of our past and we should

not be afraid of staring that past in the face in order better to understand where we are today and where we may be going in the future. For that to happen, the preservation of records and archival material represents an important aspect of that examination or the possibilities for that examination".

I am not sure why the Member for St. Thomas began his speech by seeking to be critical.

Aside.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: He sought to be critical of what the Minister of Education and Culture was saying. He wanted to know what mischief the Bill was seeking to correct, what was the policy behind it and other general criticisms which were not really founded.

Aside.

Laughter.

Asides.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: He sought to make those kinds of criticisms.

Laughter.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Let us understand it. The attempt to set up an archival administration in this country goes back to the 1960s, and efforts have been made since then up to the present time in order both to maintain that kind of administration, as well as to improve upon it. 1.25 p.m.

It must be clear to the member for St. Thomas that this piece of legislation is being introduced in order to improve the regime for the management of the various types of archival material that may be available. I think all of this is well known to the Opposition. Let me hear the question again. What kind of mischief is the Bill seeking to correct? The member for St. Thomas was the Attorney General in Iliis country when his leader was on the back benches and he certified this piece of legislation.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I thought I had certified something like this. It has now taken this Government 29 months to bring something that I certified?

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I may have certified it. I thought I had seen it before, Sir.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: There is no party divide on this, it is you who started out to make a party divide about

the archival material and started to attack the Attorney General without any basis and the Minister of Education and Culture. That is why he spoke like that. It is the member for St. Thomas "I hereby certify that the Archives Bill, 1986 is in order for introduction into Parliament,"-and it is the A.G. April 1986. I believe you were the Attorney General at that time, but it was introduced into the House of Assembly and the dissolution of Parliament caused the death of the piece of legislation.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we will tend to fall into these traps when we are looking for issues on which to divide the country, and they are pseudo issues. All the talk about what the academic community is and so on,, a bit wide, but you did say that was a minor point. Basically the legislation is the legislation that was there in 1986. There have been some minor modifications, I believe, and the Minister of Education and Culture has played a very important role in resurrecting the legislation which in its intent no one can quarrel with, and therefore I think instead of getting up and trying to prove that the Minister of Education and Culture is incompetent, because that is basically what you are trying to do, and whenever you try to make those attempts certainly I, as well as the rest of us on this side, will seek to counteract those criticisms.

Mr. Speaker, we have different kinds of records in this country. You have the records which are the records of the Government, which represent the Government or public archives; you have the records of certain institutions in the country, you have the records of business places, you have the legal records and the documents to which the Member for St. Thomas and the Member for St. George South referred, and then you have those personal and family documents which can be very important not only at the personal level but perhaps for the kinds of insights which they may place on an interpretation of an event or of a certain historical trend.

It is important that a nation should have these records available both for an illumination of the past as well as for the kinds of enlightenment that they may give on the part that persons played in the evolution of a particular country and institution or any aspect of the social life of the country. Against that kind of background there can be no one who would be against or should be against putting this within a certain legislative framework.

We are talking about records here, but of course records carry a very wide definition in this context. It does not only refer to paper or manuscript, it will include reproductions, it will include photographic materials and it will include other kinds of records as well, so it is a very wide array of material that we are talking about in this particular instance.

I am coming back to the member for St. Thomas. He knows very well he should not tangle with me. You want to

..know about the Development Plan. I will tell you when your Development Plans were introduced and laid in the House in due course.

This particular piece of legislation gives the Chief Archivist the authority in law to manage, to advise and to superintend the adequate care of the archives or archival material of the various types which I have identified, and I think that it is important that this should be so. We are not saying that this is necessarily a perfect piece of legislation, but successive Ministers of Information and Culture have searched widely to get the models on which legislation appropriate for this country might be based. 1.35p.m.

I believe that what we have here is the kind of beginning on which we can build for the future development of this most important work. Now it is clear that we cannot get a proper administration in archives unless sums of money are expended. There is still a lot of work to be done. The simple housing of materials in the kind of environment that would preserve and conserve the materials is a very important aspect of it.

In the various Government departments there is still a lot of material around which should be in better conditions and under the control of the archivist, but there is a physical accommodation problem, and this is one of the areas that will have to be paid attention in due course as resources become available. We will also have, for the proper implementation of this piece of legislation, not only to bring down the regulations - I think that was a very cheap point to say that the regulations are not included in the Bill.....

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, the Minister when he introduced the Bill said the regulations are set out in the Bill, and they are not. The framework within which the regulations are to be promulgated are set out in the Bill. It is not a cheap point; it is a point of fundamental ignorance on the part of the Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure you cannot refer to an honourable Member in that respect.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That he did not know, Sir? I am sorry if that is what is your concern.

(Aside: He read it badly.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure the honourable Member made a statement.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It was not intended to be a cheap point. I withdraw it.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I thought it was an ungracious point to make.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Have you been gracious to me at any time?

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes. In Hong Kong.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are discussing a Bill on the archives.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is fully seized of the fact that there is authority in here for him to make regulations for the filling out of those areas within the main piece of legislation that is before us and which are not treated in detail. That is very obvious, but that is, I think, only one aspect of the implementation of this Bill that we will have to turn attention to in the coming years, because we will have to look at the question of training as well as to ensure that if we give these kinds of powers in the legislation that there will be the human resources available to implement fully what is in the Bill and what may be in the Regulations.

I think, Sir, that as far as the Archives Advisory Committee is concerned, what the Schedule does is to seek to ensure that there is some public association with the administration of this Act and the Bill makes provision for five persons to constitute that particular Committee. The Attorney General will obviously turn his attention to these matters and he will best say why the Solicitor General or his nominee should be in. I take it that it is because of the legal implications of this piece of legislation. There are rights and there are obligations which have to be taken into account, and I believe however conservative the legal profession to which the honourable Member and the Leader of the Opposition, belong, may be, that the legal aspect of matters must be taken into account. So I believe that that may be the reason why the thing is in there.

A member of the academic community. In similar legislation in other jurisdictions, reference was made to the University community because the researchers who are generally found or found at the height of their powers and in terms of their advance in the academic community are generally found in the universities, and I believe that the term "academic community" is used here in order to give a broader choice, not restricting it to the "Hill", but perhaps permitting an opportunity for others who may come within the term "academic community" an opportunity to serve. Of course it is not defined in the definition clause, and so I take it that it will carry its ordinary meaning.

Asides.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: You can appoint him at Roebuck Street. He says he wants help up there. We are talking about archives. He said he had to appeal to the archivist for assistance. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think we have had a phoney

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: He has not continued his sentence. Perhaps he is aware of it.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am fully aware. I have been in here too long, much longer than any of the honourable Members over there to be caught in any trap like that or indeed to show any disrespect to the Chair and certainly not to you, Sir, who presides over this Chamber with such dignity and such impartiality. 1.45p.m.

But let us not forget, before I close, Sir, that Parliament itself has an interest in this particular piece of legislation because the records of Parliament themselves constitute an important part of the public archives or the Government archives of this country.

Those of us who have researched these matters and I do not know that the Honourable Member for Christ Christ East Central has difficulties with the opening hours of the Archives; I have that difficulty myself because many a time I would wish to go and pursue some antiquarian interest or • to follow some historical vignette but at those particular ' times the Archives are closed.

I used to be able to visit and get very good assistance from a very helpful staff down there when I was researching the Debates of this Honourable Chamber or looking for other kinds of material and I have, therefore, some knowledge of the Archives Department from the point of view as a user as well as from the point of view of someone who had the responsibility at one time for the particular department.

So we have an interest in here as parliamentarians in this to ensure that we have a proper framework for the management of the records that have been produced by parliamentarians down through the years or as a result of the work of parliamentarians. Indeed, Sir, our own records, part of them are housed down there and for research we need to go to the Archives Department in order to pursue those particular interests.

I think this will provide the kind of framework in which our researchers will be able to use the records in a way, hopefully, that will benefit the advancement of knowledge in this country. I can join with the honourable Member for St. Thomas in hoping that we will be able to build up the records which have been important in the evolution in this country and which may be housed in public or private collections outside of Barbados and if we cannot retrieve the actual originals that through a process of reproduction we might be able to build up records in this country so that we may have nearby a more complete list of

documents for analysis, for perusal and for any comment and interpretation.

I am happy, Mr. Speaker, to make this contribution on this Act which I, of course, fully support.

Thank you.

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

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

COMMITTEE Mr.

CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 1 stand part.

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the Honourable Prime Minister for reminding me that the origin of this Bill is of many years past and that, indeed, I did have to certify because in 1985 this Bill would have been, if it was ever brought to Parliament, or 1986, the Archives Act of 1986.

When one certifies a Bill, Sir, you are certifying that it is constitutional. Anything that is within the general law is constitutional, nothing more, and I am grateful that we had the setting for this Bill given to the House by the Honourable Prime Minister in his speech because what we were looking for was that kind of speech from the Minister.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am still waiting on the honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Laughter.

Asides.

The question that Clause 1 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clauses 2 to 5 were called and passed.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, first of all let me second the motion made by the Minister in relation to Clause 6 standing part but if I may just make one explanation in relation to a point which, I believe, had been raised by the honourable Member for St. George South during the debate.

There was a plea, if I understand it, for co-operation, or collaboration, or even further, perhaps, that the Registrar should be part of the committee, I believe. I do not know if he went that far or if it was part of the consultation process in relation to archival material but Clause 6 does seem, Mr. Chairman, to provide exactly that in that the "Chief Archivist shall have access to any place of deposit of public records and shall have the power to examine such records with a view to listing them or collecting information thereof or to taking such step as are necessary for their transfer to the Archives Department and it shall be the duty of the responsible officer of any public office," and that would include the Registrar, "or any other person for the time being having custody of any public records" to do the « things listed in (a) - (e). So that Clause 6 does then make provision for the Chief Archivist, certainly, to be in contact with the heads of public offices where material of cultural, historical or other interest appropriate to archives are available and for the relationship to exist in relation to dealing with any public records held by those departments. 1.55p.m.

I believe the Honourable Member for St. George South did also make the point that the present state of the Registry was such that the safe custody of documents whether of legal, cultural, historical or other value was not properly ensured. And the Prime Minister did make the point that all of this has to be looked at in the context of providing adequate space and facilities for the many institutions which make up Government.

I believe Honourable Members must be aware that active consideration is presently being given to the provision of adequate facilities for the Supreme Court, the Registry, for the Marshal's Department and for all the departments, including the Corporate Affairs Department in which adequate provision would be made in the buildings to be provided for adequate and safe storage of material.

Thank you, Sir.

The question that Clause 6 stand part was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clauses 7 to 9 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 10 was called.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 10 stand part.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, in seconding Clause 10, I should like to respond to a concern which has been uttered by the Honourable Member for St. George South in relation to the documents and manuscripts in private possession. I believe the honourable Member did express some concern that the privacy of documents might

be not as secure as one would wish. And the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central did make the point that in relation to documents of cultural, historical and of literary value that perhaps the concerns for the preservation of such material might be of some very important consideration when considering the two competing claims to privacy and to preservation of material of historical, cultural or literary value.

Your Honour will note that the Section is not worded as prohibitively and as strongly as it could have been. It says that:

"The chief executive officer of any private institution or any person in possession of any manuscript or document of historical, cultural value, shall notify the Chief Archivist of the existence of the document or manuscript."

I think what the Act essentially does is to depend largely on the co-operation of public persons because strictly speaking, it is not going to be that easy to insist on that notification by a private person. And I think Your Honour will easily understand that it is to some extent a matter of judgement whether a private person feels that a document or a manuscript is of historical, cultural or literary value.

Now what happens, you may ask, if in the perception of the Archivist a document is of cultural, historical or literary value, but in the perception of the private person, it may not have been so and as a result, the private person did not notify the Archivist.

I think some latitude has to be allowed in all of this and what the following subsections provide is that the Archivist shall have power to inspect those documents. And at sub-clause (3):

"The person or the executive officer referred to in subsection (1) may, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed between himself and the Chief Archivist

- (a) deposit the manuscript or documents mentioned in that subsection with the Archives Department;
 - (b) make the manuscript or document available for inspection by the public;
 - (c) permit the chief Archivist to make photocopies of the manuscript
- and:
- (d) make the manuscript or document or extracts of copies thereof available for publication

It seems to me that this Clause does not interfere with the right of ownership. But what it says is that the Archivist and the owner may make arrangements for having the documents photocopied and for extracts thereof to be made available for publication.

And in sub-clause (4) the Archivist: "shall enter the particulars of the " document in a register to be kept for that purpose.

It is important to achieve public co-operation between the Archivist and members of the public in relation to documents which after all are of interest to the community . because of the historic, literary or cultural value.

One thing I may note, Mr. Chairman, that having seen legislation in some other areas, is the attempt to desex drafting. The Bill refers to himself which may include females. So that in some countries, the tendency now is, what they call it, to desexualize drafting.

Aside.

Hon. M. A. KING: I know. But it is so in other countries as well. But the tendency still is now to remove any connotation which would mean that the masculine includes the feminine.

I second the motion that Clause 10 stand part *The question that Clause 10 stand part was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division.*

Clauses 11 to 17 inclusive were called and passed. The Schedule was called.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Schedule be the Schedule to the Bill. Hon. M. A. KING: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, it may be that two years and a half ago I did certify this Bill with the Advisory Committee as now brought before us with the Solicitor-General. But it is two and a half years ago. I do not think that the fact that I certified it then or the Government then may have had a view that the Solicitor-General should be on the Committee derogates from our looking at it again. 2.05 p.m.

We do say "or his nominee" but having regard to what the honourable Member for St. George South said in his speech, picking up the link that I mentioned in my

contribution on the Second Reading, the link between the Registration Department and the Archives, I really sincerely am counselling Government to make some provision for somebody from the Registration Department to be on this Committee *ex officio* in the same way as the Chief Archivist is on the Committee *ex officio*.

For all the years - I do not know if that file will show, it, but other files will show it - there has been a lot of co-operation between the Registry and the Archives Department. There has also been a lot of divergence of view - I am not going to put it any higher than that - and opinion as to how, for example, the microfilming and the microfiche facilities in the Registry should be operated and who was to operate them. At one time we had to get a man from the hospital who was familiar with this kind of work, who worked with the hospital, to come down and assist in the Registry in teaching and training people in the Registry because Archives were saying they could not do it and there was a lot of confusion.

Here we are dealing with the two Departments of Government which are the repositories for the vast bulk of public documents. The two Departments should be represented on the Committee so that at all times the one would be aware of what the other was doing and there could be a linkage and some harmony, and indeed guidance, given to the other members of the Committee who may not be familiar with the mechanics of the operations at the Registry and at the Archives Department.

I would really like to move an amendment or ask the Government to consider having the Registrar or nominee on *ex officio*. Please, it is not a private, special pleading, I really genuinely think that there should be harmony at that level between the Chief Archivist and the Registry. I do not go as far as the honourable Member for St. George South and say that necessarily the Corporate Affairs Registrar or the Land Titles Registrar. Perhaps the Land Titles Registrar, since he is coming on now, since we are having registration of land now, consideration should be given to that, and perhaps if the Government's schedule of business could accommodate an amendment, I would certainly urge perhaps that we defer further consideration until next week, or whenever we come back, to just get the composition of this Archives Advisory Committee, if Government is persuaded by what my colleague from St. George South and myself have urged, to just redo paragraph 1 of the Schedule to reflect the Registrar or nominee *ex officio*, or indeed, as I say, since we are introducing a new system of land registration in Barbados, it is going to be absolutely critical how he stores his material. Rather than leave it to the Solicitor General or his nominee - I do not know if he can nominate the Registrar of Titles - I am not sure of the lines of authority as between them - but perhaps if we could redo this to accommodate these other persons, or to just say "and such other persons as the Minister shall appoint".

Even though I am making the plea, and I make the plea quite unselfishly and with deep humility, I really think we could look at the composition again after two years have passed and we are seeing things happening now. As I say, the land titles thing is on stream virtually ready to go and it may be worthwhile for Government to look at it again.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, whilst I understand the point which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is making, I did in the course of my comment on paragraph 6 of the Bill make the point that there was provision for the Chief Archivist to collaborate and discuss these issues with the Public Officers in any Department where public records are kept. If you follow the argument of the honourable member for St. Thomas to its logical conclusion, the question is, where do you draw the line? There is the Registrar of the Supreme Court who has responsibility for the care and custody of certain documents, which the Bill recognises, there is the Registrar of Titles who has the responsibility for a large amount of substantial documents, there is the Registrar of Corporate Affairs as well who has responsibility for any number of documents, in relation to Parliament there is the Clerk of Parliament presumably who has responsibility for the custody of so many important documents relating to Parliament. Where do you draw the line?

I am saying that the way in which section 6 is done it makes provision for the Chief Archivist, after all, who is the person who by law is given the responsibility for the care and preservation of records, because the ultimate responsibility rests with the Chief Archivist, and the Chief Archivist will obviously in the course of such functions have close contact and consultation and co-operation with all the public offices in relation to which material is required to be maintained.

After all, the Committee is only an advisory committee and I believe that the process of consultation with the various Heads of Departments who have archival material is going to be much, much deeper than the functions of any advisory committee.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas asked why the Solicitor General. It says "the Solicitor General or nominee" and I think he will concede that it is useful that some legal knowledge on committees of this kind and on any committee is useful. I am not saying it is necessary, but legal knowledge is always necessary and to provide for the Solicitor General or his nominee I think is a useful arrangement.

"A member of the academic community, a public officer other than the Solicitor General." That would provide for the accommodation of the Registrar, if so necessary, of the Supreme Court or Title or Corporate Affairs. You see, from time to time the advisory work of one of the Registrars may predominate more in relation to

the others. In relation to one set of circumstances you might find that the advisory work required of the Registrar of the Supreme Court might be of the greatest possible assistance to the Committee. At another point in time the advisory work of the Registrar of Titles might be more important, and so forth, or the Clerk of Parliament or any of the holders of public office. If you leave it open you allow much greater latitude than if you restrict yourself to legislating for one particular Registrar. So I urge the Honourable House that the legislation could probably go through as it is. If in the working of the legislation it is found to be necessary that there be a change, I am sure we will have no difficulty whatsoever in bringing it back again. 2.15p.m.

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

On motion of Hon. C. V. WALKER seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 3.20 p.m. today.

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

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

ON RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

RESOLUTION TO COMPULSORILY ACQUIRE LAND AT RIVER ROAD

Order No. 2 was called - to move the passing of a Resolution to approve the acquisition of land at River Road, St. Michael, for the purpose of expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks the authority of Parliament to purchase two lots of land at River Road for the expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. One section of land is 5591/2 square metres and belongs to a Mrs. Griffith, and the other one is 6261/2 square metres and is the property of Mr. Inniss.

It should be said that these parcels of land are the residue from the acquisitions that were made when we were acquiring land at the Culloden Road, Collymore Rock and Pine Road junctions. The land in the beginning would at the outset be used for car park facilities because at the hospital now there are about 1 500 persons, two-thirds of whom already own vehicles, and the parking facilities at the hospital can only accommodate 512 cars. The land that we are acquiring will accommodate about 60 or 80 more cars, which would go a long way in helping to relieve the parking congestion at the hospital at the moment.

Ultimately the land is expected to be used for the construction of residential quarters for the doctors at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who are at the moment renting accommodation. There is very little land available for any future expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mr. Speaker, and the Government will have to consider as far as possible acquiring any suitable lands adjoining that area especially if the people are not willing to allow the Government to acquire the land.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, if I followed the Minister about the future use of the land, as I understand it, these 1 200 or 1 300 square metres of land will be used for car park facilities in the first instance because there is a need outside of the hospital for car parking facilities. But it will ultimately be used for residences for doctors. What will happen when you build these doctors' residences in relation to the need for car parking facilities, because it seems to me that you will be building on land which to me could accommodate 80 cars, and in a few years there will perhaps be an increase in the cars and you will need even more land around there; so it did not seem to me to be a logical use of the land, especially having regard to the fact that the Minister said that there was little scope for further expansion around the hospital unless you acquired the land. You may yef have to acquire some land.

Sir, the Minister of Health has been away on a well deserved rest, four weeks of it, attending important conferences overseas, and in his absence this same Queen Elizabeth Hospital that we are dealing with has been the subject of some industrial problems, and I was a little surprised that the Minister himself appeared to be unaware of the extent of the grievances of the nurses who work at , the same Queen Elizabeth Hospital and who would be using no doubt these 555i/2 square metres and the 626i/2 square

metres from time to time for their own parking and that of visitors to the Hospital. 3.25 p.m.

(Aside)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We are concerned in the Opposition at the difficulties which seem to be besetting the nurses of Barbados and particularly those at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I hope that there can be a speedy resolution of the problems and now that the Minister is back that he himself will take an interest and be brought up-to-date on what is going on at the QEH because they are a * vital service to Barbados as we all appreciate and it is not in anybody's interest for the current dispute to be prolonged or for more drastic action to be taken by the nurses.

At the same time, Sir, we are also concerned in the Opposition as to Government's pace in relation to the St. Joseph Hospital. It is not enough and it is not true to keep ^ blaming the opening of that hospital to be integrated in the hospital services and to work as an adjunct with the QEH to blame the problems on any legal bureaucracy or hold-up. It just is not true because lawyers do not have anything to do with the acquisition of the hospital compulsorily by Government and the fact that vines and all kinds of weeds are growing through the buildings.....

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No. The one that you want to have is the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This is part of the expansion that we are talking about at River Road.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, but not part of the acquisition. The acquisition deals primarily to approve land at River * Road.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will come back to River Road, Sir, and the acquisition for these additional facilities because a very serious thing is happening in the health service sector. Indeed it is not limited to the health service sector.

Some time in the last week or last month the Government has agreed with the Crown Agents in England for the Crown Agents to supply equipment for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Psychiatric Hospital and, I believe, the Geriatric Hospital to an amount of \$500 000. It has not only been in the Press that this agreement has been reached. It is a fact. <*

The only fear that the Opposition has is that apart from any colonial aspect of it - you all used to talk about repatriating the Constitution - I am not talking about that.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Crown Agents have become the agents of Government. They have 100 beds. Government wants 100 beds for the hospital and through all the years, local importers, commission agents and people in Barbados acting as agents on behalf of suppliers overseas have been the ones who have been placing the orders, getting the contract - you are laughing? - making a commission and a percentage on the transaction and, at the same time, maintaining levels of profit and employment.

Now, I can tell you, Sir, that the Opposition had representations from six of these people, I will not call the names in here. I will tell the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health privately later on.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The honourable Minister of Trade has a chance to speak in this debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was just going to say you need not worry. I will get things back on even keel once you keep within the framework of the Resolution.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am dealing with acquisition of land in relation to the expansion of the hospital and I am drawing to the Government's attention something that is seen as a problem by persons who have been in the habit of importing and in league with - I do not use that word pejoratively - the Chief Supply Officer, he is called, Central Purchasing Department.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no. I said that I was not using it in a pejorative sense so do not misunderstand me.

The Central Purchasing Department and the local agents of the foreign suppliers/manufacturers have been able to negotiate contracts abroad for the supply of hospital equipment. There are other things which Government from time to time needs.

We know that there are a number of small business people who have been involved in this commission agency business for many years. Some have even outgrown being small business people and they see the latest decision by Government to let the Crown Agents negotiate, direct and cut them out as a threat to the economic survival of the particular business. It is as simple as that.

I was mentioning the firm in relation to the 100 beds. The Crown Agents having got the order for 100 beds from the Government of Barbados then contacted the suppliers in England. The suppliers in England had been in the habit of doing business with a Barbadian commission agent. They

contacted the commission agent in Barbados and said "how come you have not placed this order?" He said "No. We could not place it. The Government has cut us out and the Crown Agents are doing it."

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I do not like to interrupt the honourable Member in his speech but I think that to the extent that he would mislead the House through no fault of his own I think I should inform them.

First of all, there is nobody in Barbados who could order 100 beds for anything to do with the Hospital. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has not ordered any 100 beds from anywhere and the Crown Agents are not supplying the Queen Elizabeth Hospital with any 100 beds.

I think that the people who may have been informing the honourable Member have got mixed up with another aspect of an agency that falls within the ambit of the Crown Agents. It has nothing to do with the supply of beds or anything. The beds are not imported in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as far as I know, through the Crown Agents. 3.35p.m.

But I do not wish to interrupt the speech. I am just helping the honourable Member not to allow bogus information make him go down the wrong road in this acquisition, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would also like to remind the honourable Member, we are not debating the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We are dealing with an acquisition of land for the expansion of the Hospital, and I will wish that the honourable Member, even though I would give some room, that the debate does not find itself into another debate which is far removed to some extent from the acquisition for the particular purpose.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the burden of the Minister's point of order was that the beds are not for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but are for the Psychiatric and Geriatric Hospital and that the supplies are worth \$500 000

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no. No, no. I am not saying that the beds are worth \$500 000. I said supplies. Total supplies. Government is doing all of its health purchasing - I am accusing the Government of that, Sir - of doing the health purchasing for the hospital now through the Crown Agents in England.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And leaving out the local people who have been doing it for years. And that this new decision is a threat to the economic viability' of the businesses

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: and the continued employment of people working in these businesses, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The only thing the Minister of Labour can say all the time is "foolishness".

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And I am submitting, Sir

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Minister of Health does not know about it. He was not in Barbados. I am not accusing the Minister of Health. I exempt him from that, Sir. I am saying it was a decision elsewhere in the Government. And I am saying that Government has to watch the implications in these kinds of decisions. If decisions are taken consciously by the Government, I say it has consequences that may be adverse to the local commission agents, Sir. If the decisions are not being taken by the Government in the sense of Cabinet but by an agency of Government

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: then if the Government does not agree with the decision, then Government must get on top of that department and let that department know what is the policy.

Now you would remember, Sir, that in relation to the deutschmarks with the Crown Agents that earlier -1 cannot say too much more about it, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition at that time warned about this same thing in regard to Government's relations with the Crown Agents. And just as we were about to be pooh-poohed today, he was pooh-poohed then. But the facts are as I have given this House, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to trespass on your generosity in letting us deal with this matter. So I am not going to pursue it any further. I think that everybody now understands the point I was making, Sir, that if Government itself was not aware that an agency of Government is doing that behind Government's back, then Government must deal with that agency. But since it is a department of

Government, the Cabinet will have to take responsibility. And the Members understand that. The Members on the other side understand that.

But in my submission, Sir, it is a backward step: We are gradually moving back into an era of economic colonialism relying on the Crown Agents to do these things for us. When we are trying to encourage an entrepreneurial class in Barbados, go put and do some of these things and everybody make a little dollar, and we are using these people from England to do it, Sir.

I do not think it is fair and I just warn Government, Sir, that they must have a look at the concerns I have raised.

I am very grateful to you, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all let me deal with the question of the acquisition of the land.

The two parcels of land, as has been outlined by my colleague the Honourable Minister of Lands is a decision virtually to take the two small parcels of land that are "curtiling" the hospital to use for further expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Until such time as the hospital is being expanded these two bits of land which are relatively small will be used for car park purposes. ^

The question as to when the hospital will expand into providing doctors' quarters in that vicinity is not one on which there needs to be any particular discussion because these residences which we are discussing fall within the ambit of the normal provision of hospitals of the size which the Queen Elizabeth is and will be to provide the medical personnel, usually the doctors who are functioning on a * continuous basis within the hospital, with residences in the environs of the hospital so that they can be available for emergencies and to deal with the population.

As you know, Sir, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is a teaching institution and as a result the interns and residents and clinical students and all of these people are on an on/off ' ^ basis where they are on for x number of hours and off for a shorter period and on again. As a matter of fact, the \$14 million expansion which is going on at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has built into it, as part of the project, the provision of residences within the additions, Sir, that are going on. There are not residences so much as they are places where the doctors can sleep and rest. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is familiar * with this, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is not in his place, but they are familiar with this, that in the reputable hospitals in the important countries of the world, they provide a place for the on call doctors to rest and recuperate as they prepare to return to the fray of providing health care.

Now the decision to acquire these two pieces of property falls within the ambit of making provision for the future. The questions raised by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas are fundamental questions if in fact they are correct as he outlined his position. The first issue as I understand it has to do with whether the Central Purchasing Department of the Government is functioning in the way it is supposed to function and as it was set up to function, and if in fact it is doing something that is contrary to the spirit in which it was set up over the years, this Government will investigate that and deal with it accordingly. We are not in possession of any facts which accord with the facts which he outlined today. And therefore we cannot speak with authority and say that it is not so or that it is so.

What he has said to me is alien to what I understand to be happening. I am not the first Minister nor will I be the last Minister who may not be apprised of what is happening exactly at a particular time. I think however that we should recognize that the Crown Agents today are not the Crown Agents of the colonial era. Under the aegis of Mrs. Thatcher, the Crown Agents have become an aggressive public sector/ private sector operation in which the Crown Agents are actually competing with the private sector in a whole conglomeration of activities, unlike any activities that the Crown Agents carried on in the past. So that in more recent times an agency which falls within the description "Crown Agents" did in fact make an offer to the Government of Barbados to provide a credit facility in the supply of certain equipment and by so doing save the Government by its competitive nature certain costs. That is to say, it made credit available. 3.45 p.m.

As we know, Sir, there are a number of houses. Anyone who is in the business of trading will be aware of a number of houses in the metropolitan and other countries where they provide 30, 60, 90, and 120 day credit to those persons who are purchasing, and they provide that credit where they pay the people in the respective currencies and they earn some kind of profit from providing these credit facilities. They are in fact providing, in the loosest use of the word, banking facilities.

There are many people who become confused about credit. They feel that credit is some esoteric thing, but the truth is credit is, as the honourable Member for St. Peter will be glad to advise his colleagues on that side, the buying and selling of money and getting the best price, and those who are familiar with this know that when you get into certain numbers sometimes one-eighth of one percent can be the decisive factor in whether you go with A or whether you go with B.

But, Sir, the Crown Agents therefore, in the context of privatising - and I am very disappointed sometimes that many people who use words do not follow through and find

out what is happening - but in the context of privatising the British Government has been particularly aggressive in going into the market-place and competing with the private sector as statutory agencies, and so the Crown Agents have become involved in competitive bidding for certain aspects of trade. This is a decisive policy by the British Government in the last quarter of the 20th century to earn revenue from the activities of certain governmental agencies.

Now having said all of that, Sir, I know that the "Crown Agents" which must be distinguished from the Crown Agents of old, which were the colonial importers and they were really not as passive as they may have seemed, the British Government always understood the nature of trade in a way that most other entities did not understand, and the Crown Agents that used to supply us with stamps, with implements and with everything else always made a profit. But the present Crown Agents have moved into the more esoteric areas, and I suspect that they have made a credit facility available to the Government of Barbados which the Government of Barbados would have accepted because it saves precious foreign exchange, and the honourable Member for St. Peter would be the first to applaud any decision by this Government in its understanding of the international system to save foreign exchange by going from one agency to the other.

The mere pejorative use of the phrase "Crown Agents" must not be sufficient to drive knee-jerk reactionaries into thinking that we have been regressing. The Crown Agents of which the honourable Member speaks are the Crown Agents of yore. The Crown Agents of which I speak are the aggressive Crown Agents of the British Government which is competing in the world of trade, and which I would recommend to the importing agencies, which the Barbados Labour Party supports from time to time, that they come into the 21st century.

There are some people in Barbados who believe that business is still to be done and will continue to be done in the old time way where all you have to do is write another letter saying send me some more of the same. The fact is that it is competition and sometimes you have to offer one quarter of one percent better than your competition in order to get the goods.

That notwithstanding, Sir, I promise the honourable Member that I am going to make available in this House at some time a debate of the health delivery systems and health care systems in this country, because I wish to submit that this Resolution is not the vehicle by which we should engage in the debate which they, obviously, and we, wish to engage in, because I believe that the people of this country have a right to know how the monies which they spend in the delivery of health care are being spent, and I

give the House the assurance that I will give another accounting of those monies and how they are being spent. So that any statement by the nurses or the Union or by anybody else with regard to conditions of work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be dealt with in due course and on the terms that would make them proper for discussion. I do not intend to just pass by on the other side merely because we are having this discussion.

Mr. Speaker, so far as 100 beds being imported, I have to say that I do not now know of any such thing.

So far as how the Central Purchasing Department has operated, let me be the first to say that I am not myself satisfied with the way that Department has worked and the Government has been examining that Department with a view to making sure that it serves the purposes for which it was created, and to the extent that it stands in the way of the efficient use of the resources of the Ministry of Health, I shall be the first to join in the fight to have the system changed.

So far as Barbadians who are importers into this country are concerned, to the extent that using them is going to redound to the credit of the community, I will be up front assisting. On the contrary, where by using them it is going to be a deficient use of our resources, then obviously I will have to agree with those experts and officials in the various Ministries who make recommendations.

Now, Sir, I don't know if I have left out anything, but the honourable Member spoke with a certainty about these hundred beds, and I would really like to become aware of them, for \$500 000. We are going to find out from the appropriate Department about this, but I would say this. Mr. Speaker, given the number of beds which have been brought into Barbados over the last year, only this morning I was completing a negotiation that I started when I was out during the last four weeks in which the Government of Barbados is going to be a beneficiary of a number of supplies without cost coming from agencies outside of Barbados. I would be surprised if in fact we have ordered as many as a hundred beds from anywhere for \$500 000. These are very expensive beds.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Minister is still a little bit confused. What I tried to explain was that the hundred beds are but one component in a total package of health supplies amounting to \$500 000.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: All right. Now that that is clear to both the honourable Member and myself, and to Your Honour, Sir, that we are talking about \$500 000 in supplies for the health sector in which there is a component of beds

- that is my understanding now - then the question is if this \$500 000 is being spent with the Crown Agents. Again I would say that \$500 000 would constitute foreign exchange. If we are importing \$500 000 in foreign exchange, it may very well be that the \$500 000 falls within the ambit of the facility which the Crown Agents are providing to the Government under the terms of a contract arrangement that was signed - I think the Instruments may have come to this House, but certainly they were in the newspaper - where the Government is saving foreign exchange by going into this agreement to be financed by the Crown Agents.

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The Crown Agents of which we speak are the equivalent of OPIC and other agencies in the United States where the Governments who are making funds available or terms of credit available then seek to get the supplies, and it is not unusual for the Crown Agents of today, when they are seeking to get such supplies, to go to the self same suppliers in their own countries who have agents in Barbados. So it may very well be that what the honourable Member said is true, but the fact that it is true does not mean that it is wrong. It would simply mean that the Crown Agents are able to get a better price or are able to offer a price without some of the padding which some of the supplies which come into the agencies suggest. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are many instances and the honourable Member for St. Peter, the honourable Member for St. James South, the honourable Member for St. Michael East, the honourable Member for St. Michael South East, all those persons who have either been Minister of Health or associated with the Hospital can tell you that there are many supplies which come into Barbados which are extremely expensive as compared to if these supplies had been ordered directly. 3.55p.m.

Now, Sir, a long time ago when I was Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce, nearly 20 years ago, I used to take a position. Now, Sir, I have kept very quiet on that position because all kinds of people suggested that that position was rooted in all kinds of ideological considerations. The fact is though, Sir, that there are new and different ways for doing things and there is no reason why Barbados must continue to have onerous impositions of additional costs put on because that is the way we did business in 1956.

A Government that is spending the kinds of money that we spend has a duty to find the most expeditious and efficient ways of doing that business. If you are spending money, the money does not come from any vault under the roof or in the floor of the House of Assembly; it comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers and it is the duty of all of us in this front row and all the other honourable Members to see that that money is spent properly, and to the extent, let me be the first to say to the Central Purchasing Department,

to the people in Bridgetown, to everybody everywhere, I have no hidden agenda, but to the extent that \$127 million in the Ministry of Health is being directed by this honourable Member, we are going to see that every taxpayer receives value for the money he or she is expending on health care.

The health care facilities in this country are good, but they can be better and if we can use the money more effectively, we intend to; so if there is anybody in the town who is going to set up a little business to make a little something on the side on the basis of imports, tell that person that unless there is going to be an efficient use of the taxpayers' money, we cannot do business with that person. And to the extent that the Central Purchasing Department will not fall into that mould, we will have to pass them by on the other side, Mr. Speaker, also.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I have been

Mr. SPEAKER: Did you say Mr. Speaker also?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I would pass everybody else on the other side, but you know you and I, Sir, are next to each other, we belong with one another, we will never pass each other on the other side. But very seriously, I appreciate the point which the honourable Member is making. I suspect that what he was attempting to do is to send us a signal that we need to examine, and we are going to examine, and I give him the assurance and I give the House the assurance that when we have examined what he had to say, if the truth of what he said has an impact on the methods we are using, then we will be the first to come back to this House and tell the honourable Member and the honourable Members of this House that what he said required us to make the following changes; but as of now we have no reason to believe that there has been anything amiss in the way we are conducting the business.

The fact that I have been away does not mean that I am ignorant. The fact that I am ignorant does not mean I have been away. The fact of ignorance does not reside in any one head, and therefore it is very possible that something has happened of which I am not aware, but I wish him to be aware, Sir, that the honourable gentleman who was acting Minister of Health has a perspicacity that is beyond ordinary understanding. That gentleman who acted as Minister of Health can be trusted to do almost anything because his heart and his commitment to doing the right thing is second to none, and therefore I am satisfied that during the time that I was away the honourable gentleman, a former Member of this Honourable House, would have discharged his responsibilities in a manner to which we all have become accustomed. I had full confidence as did the Prime Minister and his colleagues in the Cabinet that he would have carried out his duties, and as a matter of fact, in the short time that I have had the opportunity to examine

what has happened while I was away, I can only say that he has performed in an exemplary manner, and I am very grateful to him for maintaining the high standards in the Ministry of Health while I was gone. Thank you.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I must with respect say that Government seems to be intimidated by the prospects of entering a serious debate on a series of matters of grave importance to this country- Since this Session has opened, the free flow of debate to which we have become accustomed has, in my judgment, I am not reflecting derogatorily, to some extent been curtailed by the limitation that if we are speaking about land acquisition pertaining to housing, we must speak only in relation to Rices and that Parliament is not the place to talk about policy, and I think the House has become the poorer....

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe the honourable Member needs to read the Rules a little bit more. Resolutions and Bills are controlled by the Rules of this House, and because I might give that extra room to develop a point, it does not mean that I encourage one to flout the Rules. So I do not think it would be fair to make that comment because you would be reflecting on the Chair's ruling as well if you think that I am in a position to intimidate one from speaking primarily because I ask him to stick within the rules governing the debate on a Bill or Resolution. I am satisfied that the Minister has just given an assurance that he will afford this House an opportunity for Members to discuss freely the health situation in Barbados, and I would wish then that the honourable Member would not go outside the ambit of the Resolution before us.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member for St. Lucy has an opportunity to speak and perhaps he does not want us to speak about matters pertaining to the expansion of the health facilities of this country. Perhaps the honourable Member for St. Lucy does not want us to speak in relation to this matter on the Resolution before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot take that because the honourable Member for St. Lucy is not the one who regulates the business in the House. I am the one who determines who should speak, and therefore the honourable Member should not make that statement.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: But the honourable Member is behaving as though that is true.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will ask the honourable Member to speak within the framework of the Resolution.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, a particular difficulty has arisen where I am concerned, if I may put it that way. I see this particular Resolution not only as having

to do with the fact of land acquisition, but the acquisition of land for the purpose of the expansion of the medical facilities of this country, and it seems to me, Sir, that to that extent one would be within the limits and relevance of the Resolution if one were to discuss the matter broadly from the point of view of the expansion of the health facilities of this country, and therefore, Sir, what I have to say.....

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: On a point of order, am I to understand that the honourable Member for St. Peter is challenging the ruling of Your Honour?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure he dares not. Let the honourable Member continue his speech, but as I said, within the Rules of the House and within the limits of the Resolution itself.

4.05 p.m.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, we are this evening discussing plans that would facilitate the expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but the Opposition feels it has a responsibility to say that even when we proceed with plans to expand that there are contemporary problems that have to be addressed and to be resolved.

Now, I sympathize, Mr. Speaker, with the present Minister of Health because I sense that he is trying to grope with some very serious problems that he inherited from his immediate predecessor who seemed to have had as his principal advisor the honourable Member for St. Michael South East. I sympathize with him but in the process of our making provision for the expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mr. Speaker...

(Aside)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I will want to know, Mr. Speaker, while we discuss plans for the expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital what precisely is the position in relation to the use of the facilities which have just recently been created at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

It is our understanding that the Government, through the use of a loan, I think, from the Inter-American Development Bank, has recently expanded facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but there seems to be a great difficulty, Sir, in bringing those facilities into use for the benefit of the people of this country who will be called upon to repay the loan.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Speaker, you will recall that on a previous occasion I informed this House about the IADB Loan and the project and that I said to this House that as soon as the project was completed that I would report to this House. The project is not yet completed and, therefore, it is premature to be discussing any difficulties in bringing it on stream.

The project is still going on. The building is still being constructed. The refurbishing is still being done and, therefore, Sir, it would be premature for the honourable Member to discuss difficulties bringing it on stream. There are no difficulties. The system is working and we are doing '«. the project and since I have already brought this information to the Honourable House the honourable Member might have forgotten. I draw it to Your Honour's attention for what it is worth.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I would like also, Mr. Speaker to enquire of somebody in the Government, and not necessarily the Honourable Minister of Health who has *** already spoken because there is a collective responsibility in Government, whether the expansion of the hospital has created an unplanned dilemma for Government and that dilemma being a difficulty in providing supplies to maintain at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital a level of service to which this country has been accustomed and to which the people are entitled.

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This Opposition is in possession of information which is saying that there is a deterioration in the provision of services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because there is a general problem in relation to supplies and I am asking the Government if its plans for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are so being crafted that adequate provision is being made to meet the recurrent expenses that flow from a capital * programme some time in the past and to that extent, Sir, I see that kind of issue as being relevant within the context of a Resolution which allows us to discuss the expansion of health facilities in this country.

Is the Government making sufficient recurrent expenditure available to meet what the normal increase in demand for supplies that attends a capital expansion?

I want also to know if the provisions as established in the Inter-American Development Bank agreement with Government governing the expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital pertaining to the training of nurses have been put into effect and if it has not been put into effect, Sir, when will it be put into effect. ***

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The answer to his question is "Yes". The only problem we have with training is that when the honourable Member's Government was in power they stopped training of any kind and as a result we are reaping the whirlwind. We do not have the nurses that should have been turned out in 1982, 1983, *» 1984, 1985 and it is only in 1986 when the Democratic Labour Party became the Government that the training was resumed and the honourable Member is in a position to know that his Ministers and his Prime Minister and he, as an adjunct to the Prime Minister, stopped the training and that is why we do not have nurses.

They are not like shop assistants. You cannot go out and pick up one. It takes three years to train one and we have only been in Government two years so technically we are incapable of having produced a nurse yet.

The Barbados Labour Party must take full responsibility for all the shortages of nurses there are in Barbados today and there is no way that they can resign from that.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member says that I am responsible for making sure that nurses have not been trained in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am going to rule that nurses form no part of this Resolution. I am going to rule that.

(Certain remarks made by Mr. O. S. ARTHUR were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER).

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I also want to enquire what is Government's general policy in relation to the acquisition of land and facilities for the expansion of the medical facilities of this country. I want within the context of that general question to ask the Government where does the St. Joseph Hospital sit within the context of Government's general policy for the acquisition of land and facilities to expand the medical facilities of this country?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I give the honourable Member the assurance that I will come to the House of Assembly for a sum of money to implement the magnificent programme for the St. Joseph Hospital, that when we come for the money we are going to give them a full statement on the plans for the St. Joseph Hospital; but we assumed that this acquisition for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had nothing whatsoever to do with St. Joseph, but I give the Honourable Member and this House the assurance that the St. Joseph Hospital will be aired, that we will come for the money for recurrent expenditure and that we have had advice from experts that the \$6 million that we have spent on St. Joseph so far is the best money the Government has spent this century.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I can only warn the Honourable Minister of Health that he must really treat the expert advice that he gets from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East as the advice tendered in the spirit in which it is offered.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. So that he will not allow any of the miscreants who function as spokesmen for the Labour Party in the newspapers on Sundays to say the wrong thing, the advice came from experts from the highest calibre, from outside of Barbados along with the information which had been submitted from those in Barbados.

The experts I speak of who said it was excellent value for money come from universities like Harvard, Sir, among others.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the broad general statement of the Minister in this matter is no different from the broad general statements that have been made by the Democratic Labour Party since November.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not entertaining any general statements about anything. I would like Honourable Members to take note of what is before the House and I do not rule harshly against the member but I think that given enough room to make your speech, you ought to appreciate the fact that I have allowed the rules to be bent a little while in order for you to make a statement but I think that you should appreciate the fact that we are dealing with a Resolution calling for land acquisition and expansion for the Hospital.

When we get to St. Joseph, I do not know how River Road acquisition can get into St. Peter, but I give you a little room to make a point but I do not think you should expand on it.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am really sad that you are seeing this thing purely in geographical and 'special terms. One is speaking to the question of general policy and, surely, Mr. Speaker, the expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital must fit within a general policy and if the Government is not in a position to discuss its general policy because a Minister might have happened to be away and the others who constitute the Government are incompetent to discuss what Government policy is, Sir.....
4.15p.m.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I submit that the honourable Member is now misleading the House and I submit he is doing so deliberately, Sir, because he has been in the House, I spoke on the St. Joseph.....

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I spoke on the St. Joseph Hospital during the Estimates. I spoke on the St. Joseph Hospital during the

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the Minister need to reply any more. St. Joseph's Hospital does not apply in my view to the Resolution. And I need to remind the Member to get a little closer to the Resolution. St. Joseph's Hospital does not form part of the Resolution before the House.

Aside.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is obviously an air of bedlam as exemplified in the confusion surrounding the purposes to which this land would be put in

Government's planning for the health services of this country, Sir.

There are many unsettling issues.....

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I submit that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. There is no bedlam whatsoever in the simple acquisition of 1 250 square metres of land a piece of the curtilage of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. And I think the Honourable Member is not only Clearly, Sir, any bedlam which ^exists is in the honourable Member's head.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member, Sir, can abuse me as is the normal practice of the Democratic Labour Party. I do not mind.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will ask the Honourable Member to withdraw that remark.

Laughter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have never allowed any Member to abuse another Honourable Member. It is contrary to the Rules of this House. So you have to withdraw it.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I will withdraw the remark, Sir. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is complete confusion existing in the medical services of this country, Sir. There is a lack, Mr. Speaker, of proper planning

Aside.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR:..... as the Honourable Minister, Sir, knows.

And for the Minister to be saying this evening that he has just returned and therefore he is not in a position, Sir, to give an account to the House

Laughter.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I never said any such thing. The Honourable Member is really in a sad state.

I believe that this Debate should have come before lunch because the Honourable Member is usually much more lucid before lunch than he is after lunch.

I withdraw that, Sir, because I am told that the Honourable Member has not been himself, that he has not been well. So I am going to withdraw that, Sir. I understand now that he is not feeling well and that he is not necessarily responsible for all that he says. I will withdraw that, Sir.

Laughter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think Honourable Members have lost the real purpose of this Debate and I will now rule very closely to the Rules of this House. If any other Member believes that they will get that kind of latitude, I will not give them.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have taken note of the initial statement of the Minister of Housing and Lands. There obviously is a lack of clarity surrounding the manner in which these lands will be used in future, Sir.

The Minister said they might be used for housing accommodation for doctors, and it is possible, Sir, that they might not be used for housing accommodation for doctors.

It is the Opposition's position, Sir, that this ambivalence, this sense of confusion is symptomatic not only of Government's position only in relation to the purchase of this piece of land, but it extends, Mr. Speaker, generally speaking, to all of Government's actions in the field of health, including the St. Joseph's Hospital..

And I am obliged to you.

Laughter.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, that clears the Order Paper for today. And I now move, Sir, that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, the 15th day of November, 1988 at 12.00 o'clock noon.

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

The question that this sitting do now stand adjourned until Tuesday, the 15th of November, 1988 at 12.00 o'clock noon was put and was resolved in the affirmative without 'division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly at 4.21 p.m.

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