
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, December 1, 1992.

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

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P., (*Speaker*)

His Honour T. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., LL.B., (Deputy Speaker)

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

Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Works, Communications and Transportation and Leader of the House)

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

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P., (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS, (Minister of Justice and Public Safety)

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN, B.Sc. (Econ.)

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

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

Hon. C. V. WALKER, J.P., (Minister of Education)

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. E. E. GREAVES, G.C.M., B.A., Ed.M., (Minister of Housing and Lands, Community Development and Culture)

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

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.

Miss B. A. MILLER

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR

Hon. D. W. BOWEN, (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A., LL.B.

Prayers were led by Fr. Ivan Harewood.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, 17th November, 1992.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of the proceedings of this Honourable Chamber for the meeting held on 17th November, 1992 have been circulated and I move that they be taken as read and confirmed.

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

PAPERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by the Cabinet to lay the Agreement for the establishment of an Assembly of Caribbean Community parliamentarians.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of a Resolution to note the Agreement for the establishment of an Assembly of Caribbean Community parliamentarians and to approve steps which are in progress for the establishment of the Assembly.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: There **are** some Questions to be asked, but the Honourable Member is not in his place at the moment. What I believe Honourable Members would agree to is to suspend this Item until later in the day. If there is no objection, that Item on the Order Paper will be held back until later in the day.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I **beg** to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 33, asked by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, as we are about to embark on Government Business I am going to **move** the suspension of the following Standing Orders: 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of the day's sitting.

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

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

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

ORDER NO. 1(a) – RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEAD 28 • MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the Explanatory Note to Head 28 as it now **stands** does not include the item "steam-jacketed **kettle**" and the Prison authorities want to purchase one **because** the existing one is **unserviceable**. To that end we are asking that the Explanatory Note be amended to insert, at the end of the existing note, "steam-jacketed kettle".

I should just like to indicate that it will not incur any additional expense and therefore I ask that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. H. **deB.** FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has been extremely brief in introducing this Resolution. One would have thought that he would have taken the opportunity of this debate to advert to conditions at the Prison and to have given to this Committee some idea of the number of prisoners at Glendairy and explain why there has been almost a 300-fold increase in the prison population in the last few years.

It is my understanding that it is now normal for 3 male prisoners to be occupying the same cell. That is routine. This, despite the fact that use has been made of an extra prison which was repaired, which, certainly during the time I was Attorney General, was there unused and at one stage we wondered whether we would ever have any need at all to continue to have an expansion in prison facilities.

It must be obvious to everyone that the crime in Barbados has escalated beyond compare with **all** times and that prison terms **are** now becoming the norm for a much younger population. This means, therefore, that there are fundamental reasons within this society why we have a growing prison population. I **am** going to repeat very early in my contribution under this Head the call which I issued now almost 2½, to 3 years ago to the Government to set up a **National** Task Force on crime on a non-partisan basis to seek out the causes why Barbados is becoming a non-law abiding society and why so many of our young people in particular are looking to a future of incarceration rather than to a future of work.

12.30 p.m.

It is significant that my call has gone virtually unanswered by the Government except I remember the Minister once suggesting that maybe he and I could get together on the matter. The Minister will recognise that in Jamaica, Mr. Seaga and Mr. Patterson **confronted** with similar circumstances as confront us here in Barbados were able to get together and put together very early an idea which I had hatched here in Barbados.

Now Sir, I am concerned about prison conditions and I want to make at least one suggestion which I think can relieve part of the problem up there. It no longer makes sense to send people to prison for debt. There are still people going to prison because they cannot pay their house rent or hire purchase bills. I would seriously suggest to the Government that it would have **the** support of the Opposition for a quick amendment to the legislation dealing with the Debtors' Act in order to relieve people who genuinely pay debt from having to face a prison sentence.

It is heart-rending to see young mothers and women being hauled off to jail because of their inability to

find work to be able to pay the hire purchase on their furniture or to the banks or to lending institutions. I think that is **an** archaic form of punishment and it may be better for us to use our Community Services Orders in this respect and it would at least relieve part of the prison population.

The other point I should like to make, Sir, is that I believe that when people are sent to prison they are sent to prison not to cool out. I am not one of those who believes in maltreatment and visiting other than humane treatment to people who may be incarcerated but on the other hand they have to carry out proper work. I am going to tell the Minister a few things I have been observing.

I was **driving along** Waterford about a week ago and there were 2 officers and 12 to 15 prisoners in the back of a pick-up. I do not know how the officers in an open pick-up were going to be able to manage them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: We are on the Prison, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I know that we are on the Prison but there is an Object No. 625 for the purchase of a number of items here.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: That is what I am saying, Sir. We have to purchase proper enclosed vehicles and the Item should be amended further. I will bring it back into that, Sir.

The position is that we are going along and here were these prisoners as rain started and it seemed to me that the officers were going to be the first to take cover inside. I query very much whether adequate security arrangements are being put in place for the transport of prisoners. I have driven behind prison vehicles to see prisoners stopping and talking with people normally and sending kisses to women. Either **you** have Hotel Glendairy or you have Prison Glendairy. It cannot be both.

I would have expected to hear the Minister address this Committee on the issue of **the** use of condoms in prison. That has become a controversial matter between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice and Public **Safety**. **There** are obviously 2 different points of view and I want to know what is Government's clear policy on the use of condoms at Glendairy Prison and whether Government is in favour of homosexuality being practised in the prisons either directly or indirectly. I want to hear the Minister's clear position on this issue which raises an issue of great importance to the future of how we run Glendairy, the morality of the country in several ways.

Further, Sir, I wish the Ministry because we are going to speak many times in this committee to tell us what are the steps – without breaching any security problems – that have been put in place to deal with the results of the reports given by both the Brown Commission Report and the Smith Commission Report. Those reports made specific proposals for improving the security of Glendairy Prison. None of us can be happy at the number of **breakings** out of prison that have occurred in the last couple of years.

I am still waiting for an explanation as to how the Brazilian, Mr. Pain, could have escaped **Glendairy** and have gone to the beyond without any clear indication as to where the responsibility for his breaking out went. He left the country. Those **are** matters that **are** of concern because there is no point passing sentence on prisoners if they can easily escape outside of the place of confinement and if the manner in which they are guarded is so lackadaisical that we cannot be sure of maintaining safety in prison.

I wish the Minister at the same time to tell us whether he has had request from the Prison Association for the increase in numbers of officers, whether he considers the number of officers per head of prison population to be adequate and if it is not what steps the Government intends to take to bring it up to an accepted standard. Could the Minister address us on the question of the training that has been put in place to improve the standard of security at Glendairy Prison.

I believe that the prisoners are well fed and are very well taken care of. In fact, when I was Minister and we were in the Government there were all steps being taken to make them self-sufficient in producing poultry and eggs. I am now more concerned to see that incarceration means what it is for and that they carry out proper work when they are in prison and that therefore if you are sent up there you are not sent up merely at a leisure school and tend to forget completely that one has to impose some sort of discipline.

None of us can be happy about the breaking out of prison that have occurred. I am not even satisfied now that there are adequate provisions in place to ensure that the harassment which occurred over the last few years and months from a few in particular will not reoccur.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Member to conclude in 2 minutes.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: All right. My time is up.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I wish to support the Leader of the Opposition in his call for an update from the Minister of Justice and Public Safety on the present circumstances at Glendairy Prison. Whatever

the present circumstances at **Glendairy** Prison are, they must be related to the incidence of criminality within the Barbadian society.

There **are** 2 things which I think are important. In 1986 the present Government pledged in its Manifesto to reduce the incidence of crime in Barbados and indeed, to rid the society, and I quote, Sir, "of the scourge of drugs". The evidence since 1986 is that crime has escalated and has taken on a new form and dimension. As a result the prison population has increased commensurate to reflect what is happening in the outside society. In particular, the incidence of reported crime – I am only dealing with what is reported – in certain areas of robbery, assault with intent to rob, and street crime generally, has **gotten** out of control. I say that without reservations, Sir.
12.40 p.m.

I recently published, for the public's benefit, figures showing that robbery between the period January to September 1988, and January to September 1992, had increased by 427%. Now, that is not a statistic from which any of us can take comfort. But it also bespeaks the fact that the policies of the Government for the control of **crime** have failed. Worse of all, the idea that somehow you could control crime and prevent the prison population from reaching the level that it is at now by combining the civil forces of the Police with the military in a joint exercise, that too, on the figures, has proven to be unsuccessful because not only is there an increase in the incidence of crime generally, but the incidence of crime against visitors has also increased between January to September this year when there has been in place the joint patrol. There has still been a significant increase in the level of crime.

We have a penal system in Barbados of which the Prison is one component. For those above the age for Dodds or Summervale, prison is used not only for punishment but also as a means of incarcerating a person who is on remand. Several times in this House and once in a printed document that had wide circulation in Barbados, I have made a call for a complete re-organisation of the penal system with a view to providing a varied regime for persons who fall into crime and who ought to be dealt with in different ways.

Earlier this year the Opposition indicated on the floor of this House that it was willing to join **forcés** with the Government, and in particular the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, in recommending personnel to sit on a task force, or whatever group or body the Ministry had in mind to set up, to discuss the problems of crime and penal reforms. We have not yet got an indication but I hope in the new year if the Minister can get the project off the ground that we will be invited to sit and lend assistance to the Government in a national effort to provide strategies and programmes to reduce the level of criminality.

One of the reasons why the Prison population is overcrowded and you will need all these different things they have in this Sub-programme 01: Object 625, is clearly that people who are sentenced by the courts find themselves in prison to serve a term of imprisonment, to a very insignificant degree now, but it still happens, people who owe debts and cannot pay are picked up by the marshals **executing** warrants and are imprisoned. Now, it is **true**, Sir, that when I was Attorney-General, we built a separate unit **for** civil debt prisoners to ensure they did not mix with the people who were sentenced for criminal offences but in the one compound you have them and you have the people who get terms of imprisonment from the courts. You have persons who are on remand who do not get bail or who are awaiting the process of the court at some stage prior to conviction. You also have in the prison population the 4th category that includes prisoners of all types. The man who is a persistent small offender, he is sent up. That group who commits offences and is aged between 17 to 25 where the bulk of criminality now seems to reside, they are sent up. The "**drugees**", they are sent to prison.

Surely what we need to be doing is looking at a different **regime** where some of these persons can be housed in a different type of institution whose aims and objectives are not necessarily the protection of society but who might need a real course of discipline and training particularly among the younger type of offender, **the** adolescent types and reserve prison for the recidivist types and those who commit the offences that are most heinous and outrageous to society.

What I am calling for is another type of institution which caters to a different type of criminal from the hardened criminal and the recidivist **type** and those who do rape, manslaughter and murder. I had an idea at one time that Government could have acquired the Cable and Wireless building at **Carrington's** in St. Philip – I think it may be on a file in the Ministry – with a substantial amount of land around that complex. **That** was the place that could have served – I do not want to be quoted as saying "a borstal" – I want to be quoted as saying "a kind of borstal institution, open **prison**", whatever you like, where persons who need discipline and training and who perhaps, in the case of the drug offenders, need a situation other than prison where they can be given individual therapy or group therapy, could be housed with a very stiff regime, that that kind of institution may have gone somewhere towards the solution of the overcrowding at the prison and the creation of a different type of institution aimed at different penal objectives.

12.50 p.m.

I should like to hear from the Minister in his **reply** whether Government has any such plans to develop an

intermediary institution between **Dodds** and the prison for a different type of offence. It was in my Report on **Dodds** in 1980 which is in the Ministry of Education. That is one of the things that my Committee had recommended.

Sir, the situation with crime in Barbados is depressing on all scores. On the one hand we are trying to develop and promote a tourism **industry** inviting people to come to **Barbados** and, at the same time, we are offering them a society that is unsafe. I know that it is not an easy solution. I have every sympathy with the Minister. But I do not believe that the **Government** has approached the matter in the correct way. I believe that what perhaps we need, and we have needed for a long time, is first a commitment by the Government to do what is necessary to reduce the incidence of crime. **You** cannot eradicate crime. Do not let us fool ourselves. But we need to be in a position to reduce it to reasonably tolerable levels. I would have thought that Government would have appointed already a person sufficiently well qualified and experienced in the area of correctional training and rehabilitative services to have undertaken a study to let us determine how we are going to approach the question of penal reform and get ahead with providing the type of institution to give us a more varied regime than we presently have.

There are Barbadians in England and the United States who **are** qualified and who are willing and desirous of contributing in this area – I think that Government should seek them out – who are willing to look at our system, look at our laws relating to young people, the Juvenile Offenders Act, whatever, right through the Reform School Act and so on recommending the **modernization** of that legislation and helping in the creation of a new system.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Time.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I wish to say, Sir,... Time, Sir? All right. I will come back to that.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I should just like to respond, at this point in time, to some of the issues raised by the last two honourable gentlemen who spoke.

It is **true** that I came here with the idea of just changing an explanatory note but since they have raised these points I think it would be good for me to say one or two things. On the question of the number of persons in prison and the percentage of increase between **1986** and **1992**, I should just like to indicate that this increase has not just come about. In 1974 when I used to work in prison there were **210** people. By **1984**...

Aside.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: – I am still there – ...there were **420**. Now there are 530 or thereabouts. There has

been a steady increase over the years. There has been a problem over the years. The prison itself was built, I think, for 289 people so if you multiply that you will see that some cells will have to have in **2** or **3**. My understanding is that it is **better** to put **3** than **2** for certain reasons beyond my knowledge.

As **far** as the Member for **Christ Church West** mentioned that we should have some work programmes for prisoners, I know that when people talk about this – not necessarily the Member for Christ Church West – they **talk** in terms of hard **labour**. We have got to be practical. There is nothing called hard labour now, even in the normal course of work. Everything is automated, power saws and you cook with gas. The last thing we had in prison was the prisoners cutting wood to stoke the fires but that is a health problem. We have to meet health standards so we had to install gas. With that let us say **30** or **40** or **60** men who normally cut wood no longer have that to do. We have to look for something for them to do as well.

The question of work again. The Member for Christ Church West gave us an indication of his travelling behind a work team. The work teams are properly selected. We select them on the basis that they would not **run**. Even if you had 4 prison officers to **10** men and one of them wanted to run, he would still run anyhow. So you select them on the basis that the guys who go out are trustees, they go to a work site, they work and they come back in. My view is really that there are too many prison officers to the work teams anyhow because if you have **2** to **10** there is very little difference between having **2** to **10** or one to **10** because if the guys are not going to run you have one to supervise and that is good enough.

Aside.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Pardon?

Aside.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: They have walkie **talkies** for the prison as well. One of the reasons why we are sending them out as well is because we are trying to develop a prison farm outside of prison. The space in prison is too small for what we want. I am happy to say that **FAO** has entered into an Agreement with us for a special project for feeding in which they are using sugar cane and feeding the animals. We **are** moving hopefully by the middle of February to Lower Estate with our sheep and cows and goats and pigs to raise our livestock there.

In prison of itself we have improved on the educational programme because, as the Member for **St. Thomas** said, we have got a different type of prisoner coming now. We have got youngsters from all the

schools there now and therefore the three Rs **are** not sufficient. We have moved into the CXC programme and that is doing reasonably well. We have prisoners themselves as instructors because if they have the necessary qualifications it is pointless putting them there and not using their talents. We have introduced a values education because we have found that youngsters nowadays do not understand as we understand what is right and wrong. They think that if they want something and they go after it, whether it is yours or not, they take it from you and they do not see anything wrong with that. We are developing a values education – I spoke about this already. – in which the churches are helping. We have brought in all the denominations and they drew up this values education, then sent it out to the Ministry of Education and other groups for comments. It has come back in and I believe that 3 courses have been run – it is a 16 week course – for the inmates there. So far it is proving to be very good. It obviously will not benefit all, but if it benefits some, that is what we are looking at.

As far as the prison population age, you know that it has always been a young population, the age group **18** to 25 has always dominated the prison population, **because** after 25, youngsters realise that to a large extent, **crime** does not pay and they **try** to straighten up. So you will always find that age group there. What worries us, of course, is the type of crime they go there for – the violent crimes now – the robberies, the shotgun crimes. This has been a serious problem for us. **This** means, as well, that the level of security we have in prison must be looked at carefully and I can assure you that on the maximum security wing, security is being beefed up and it is **better** now than it has ever been before.

1.00 p.m.

I would like to say too that in July, I visited England with the idea of looking at some of the prisons there and on the one hand I realised that to have a maximum security area is a very expensive affair, especially when we consider the types of crime and how small the world is becoming. Now we have gone into the area of drugs and there is nothing to stop a guy from coming with a helicopter, taking a prisoner and going. Now how do we provide for that? In England I went to one of their maximum security prisons. In a 30 square yard **area** it cost over £120 000 for that area alone. It is only an exercise area 30 yards square. So you will **understand** what we are talking about. The prison itself for 300 people would cost about £500 million to build so you will understand the type of money we are looking at. But in our own context we are still doing our best in having certain security systems in place that we can keep an around the clock watch on what is going on, and that is the most I would like to say, so we can see their movements and the searches which are necessary be carried out when they should be carried out to make sure that our security is at its best.

Even when we have these top security prisons, people still escape. I don't want you to think that when you spend **£540** million in a prison in England that people still do not escape. Again, we are not dealing with the average criminals. We are dealing with people who **are** more sophisticated than the police force and the prison service. They employ people, well paid people, highly educated people, with the best equipment, with unlimited sums of money at their disposal, to spring people from prison. We must understand these things.

The question of people going to prison for debt. I have always understood it to mean that people really go to prison for debt as a result of contempt of court, in that the majority of them never show up to show cause why they should not be in prison and as a result of that a warrant is issued for them and that is the result. That has **been** my understanding. I might be wrong. Very often people **go** before the Court and explain what is happening and the time is extended but more often than not the people who are collected **are** people who never show up to court to answer the summons.

The training of prisons officers: Because of the need to increase the powers of security we are using the Police Force and the Defence Force and we have also brought back Mr. **Harewood** as a consultant to ongoing training. The problem with the Prison Service is that **unlike** the Police Service there are not intakes like **30** and **40**. Usually people come in ones and twos. It is not big enough a service that you can take in even **10** at a time so training has to be on the job and experience plus. As soon as you get enough people you have a training course going. It is not satisfactory but it is the best ...

Aside.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: We have people **going** away as well but again you can only send away one or two people. We have had a lot of our senior prison officers trained in England. Again that is one person going on a course and when he comes back he tries to **impart** that knowledge to other prison officers. What I know has happened in recent **times** is that they have tried to use people who have left the Defence Force with some standing and to bring them in. At least they have some military training and they can absorb the knowledge quite easily.

The Prison Officers Association has indeed asked for an increase in prison officers but in looking at the restructuring of the whole penal system, we **are** looking at whether we have an alternative to imprisonment. I think you will understand that it will have to come as a package but my view is that possibly 100 to 150 prisoners, if

the system is changed, could easily be on the outside in community service and various things so therefore there will not be that need for the prison officers. We are looking at it in totality.

We hope that by now we would have had somebody in the Ministry to pay special attention to it. That is still with the Ministry of the Civil **Service** to get that person on board. When that person comes on board then we will look at it. I have the view too that I would like to see a separation at the Government **Industrial School**. The inmates at the Government **Industrial School** now go to age 18 or 19. I believe they should only go there until age 16. If it is a school then it should go to the compulsory age and then we should separate except in very serious crime and we should **have an** institution for those between 16 and 23 or 16 and 25 and not with the hardened criminals. The hardened criminals, we could deal then with them more severely but most of the young people I believe we can **still** change them but once they get with the hardened criminals then it might be a problem.

I did indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that I would be interested in having a committee. I am still to hear from the Leader of the Opposition. If you want me to call you, I can call you and set up the appointment. But busy as you are, I would prefer you to call me and set up the appointment because I am always there.

Asides.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Okay, we will **speak** at the end of this, and I will get my staff, Mr. Chairman, to make contact with the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for St. **Thomas** and we shall sit down and come up with something.

I do not want to make you believe that because other countries are having serious problems with crime that Barbados should necessarily have it but there has **been an escalation in** crime throughout the world, especially the **Western World**. It is a very serious problem.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Minister should conclude in 2 minutes.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: I heard on CNN, last week, where the hoteliers in Los Angeles were saying that they are **now** instructing their guests, not even to answer the door in the hotels, to anybody who comes up. If somebody comes up and he says that he is from maintenance, you call downstairs to find out if maintenance has sent somebody to you. Not in the streets, this is in the hotel itself. So, even in Los Angeles, wherever you go, there is a very severe problem. What happens in Barbados is that we publicise ours and people want to know what is the problem with

Barbados. We publicise and we believe that the more you publicise crime in Barbados the better it is for the country. I guess everybody wants to hear bad news and they buy the press and the press is **trying** to sell so they give you what you want to hear but we are no worse off than the majority. **This** is not that we should not do something about it. I believe something must be done about it but I don't want us to think that Barbados, even in **this** area, is the only place that is experiencing an escalation in crime. The Commissioners of Police for the area are meeting here today and tomorrow and **Thursday** and heading the **list** of topics to be **discussed**, would be solutions to the escalating crime in the country.

Mr. Chairman I will stop at this stage. Thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. **George South**.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I don't know, Sir, the Minister replied a bit soon because I wanted to raise one or two questions myself. I think, Sir, that this question of prison reform and prison administration, has **attracted** as many views as perhaps any social problem in this country. Everybody has a solution and while the solutions are flowing all around the place I believe something drastic needs to be done. There has been a lot of change in our society. In every area of social life in this **country** there have been grave fundamental changes. While **this** is happening, we hear for instance the disquiet in the society, discipline and the increase in crime, particularly crime of violence and so on. Yet, I get the feeling that the Government has not come around to fully understanding the important role of prison administration in this whole equation. We are seeing a different kind of prisoner and we are not dealing with 100 per cent of them. Eighty per cent of them may be the routine ones who can go out and plant plantains and there is no problem. But everything in the **last** few years has suggested that there is going into the prisons in Barbados a different kind of personality. They are people who have no values. There is a level of immorality that is pervasive among certain sections of young people in this **society**. That is reflected in the conduct of people in the prisons.

1.10 p.m.

What I marvel at, Sir, is the fact that someone could be brought down to Bridgetown to go to Court with a Task Force escort, 3 or 4 men with **M16's** who are all about the Court yard, to take one man out of a van into the Court and take him back. That is an everyday site now in Barbados. But at the same time the security in **Glendairy** Prison is so poor and I do not care what the Minister says. At Glendairy Prison during the night for 500 prisoners, they have 2 and 3 officers on duty in the yard. The Minister can put me right if I am wrong and they are still up there walking around with a **little** stick at their side.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Well, put me right. I go into the Prison, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I wish the Honourable Member would confine himself to his speech and not mind the asides because it throws you off a bit.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I go into the Prison and I see the Prison's yard full of prisoners and I see prison officers who to my naked eye do not appear to me to be armed. That is what I see. You can still go into the Prison today and have prison officers searching parcels that you bring in at the gate. They do not even have proper electronic scanners and all kinds of weapons are going into the Prison. Do not let the Minister, Mr. Chairman, get in here and lull Barbados into any state of security because things are bad and they need to sort that problem out. You go through there and there is no electronic scanners. They search a parcel by hand and people go in. On the western side of the Prison is a farm next to the women's section and repeatedly weapons are found in that farm which one suggests come from over the wall.

Sir, that is not to blame anybody in the administration of the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety. **But we first** have to have an appreciation of the **difficulty** and the problem before we can meet it. There is no point dancing around it. There are prisoners walking out of Glendairy and putting up all kinds of notices who they are going to kill and who they are not going to **kill**. These are dangerous and vicious men and we are having these academic discussions on prison administration. We come in here asking for refrigerators, transistor radios, blood pressure testers and so on, all of which may be necessary, but there is a whole lot more that is needed. The number of prison officers in Barbados per prisoner is a **poor** one and it is not safe.

In addition, they do not have enough prison officers to deal with all of these men. There is also the fact that they are working under conditions of tremendous stress and pressure and prison officers have to work too long. They are working under stress. Mr. Chairman, under situations of stress from prisoners, I have seen some prison **officers** go to pieces. These are the kinds of things that we have to deal with. When the Minister comes in here and dance around with this as if nothing is happening, he is not doing justice either to the people of Barbados or to the prison officers up there who have to risk their health and life trying to keep that prison functioning.

Why has the Police Force, for instance, been allowed to work forty hours a week but not the prison officers? I

know that the police officers worked 40 hours a week when I was the Minister responsible for the Police. If the Government has now changed it and is making them work more, that is a **matter** for the Police Association and the Government. But I am asking why are the prison officers not in the same position? They work under tremendous stress. It is a stressful job, Sir. You talk about the maximum security area. Nobody should be asked to work in that maximum security area for more than **3 hours a day**. Nobody should be asked to do that. These are the things that we have to consider. The Government has to get its priorities right. So we have to talk about shorter hours.

There is another thing, Sir. Why should prison officers work to the age of 60 for retirement? They are not clerks sitting down in an office. When a man goes in there working at the age of 21 years and who worked for 39 years as a prison officer, it is tremendous pressure on a man for much of his life. When people reach a certain age, Sir, they cannot take it. I believe that Government has to stop playing around with these things and meet this problem as a serious problem head-on. I go as **far** to say, Mr. Chairman, that Glendairy Prison is a powder keg and something will happen. We are seeing all the signs of it. Although the signs are clear, we seem to think that the worse will not happen.

We hear about the people in the yard. It is very easy in the yard for the prisoners...I do not want to say these things. I want to be responsible enough not to make a number of statements although I feel strongly about them. I am not making them because I do not want things to be carried abroad to suggest that certain things might happen. If the Government is interested in benefiting from someone who not only at one point was responsible for the prisons but who currently and previously has had a lot to do with the prisons because he works for a lot of people who live in them, I would suggest that the Minister listens a little bit more to people who have been dealing with these things instead of taking his own counsel and the counsel of the ignorant and uninformed who keep whispering in his ear. This is a problem that concerns all Barbadians. It is not a party problem. When the eastern part of Barbados was **terrorized** last year and **people** could not sleep, and children were getting all kinds of associated illnesses because of stress and tension and people could not leave their homes at night, when that was going on, anybody who was sensitive to what was going on would realise that the question of prisoners, prison, security and all of that does not **carry** a party political stamp, it concerns all Barbadians. We on this side talk about it in that context.

1.20 p.m.

I want the Government also to understand that pay and motivation are inter-related and that the prison

officers feel, and they say it, that they do not believe that from the risk factor, the danger factor involved in their jobs, the Government is paying sufficient attention to their needs in terms of pay. That is important in terms of motivation.

The people who look backward, Mr. Chairman, always have an answer that it was always so and therefore what was good enough in the past is good enough now. Glendairy Prison is not in that position. It needs some urgent attention, it needs the improvement of the security system up there to a level that Government does not seem now even to have begun to contemplate, and it also needs to do something about the morale of the prison officers, which is being badly eroded, because they feel that their legitimate requests, not demands, to Government in many areas are being neglected or treated with a great deal of indifference.

I should like the Minister really to **deal** with what the Leader of the Opposition has been suggesting to the Government for a long time and not wait for any reply. Let us try and adopt a bipartisan approach to these very important problems. There will be no need, just as there is no need now, for any elaborate finger pointing. This is not the purpose of putting up proposals for the solution to problems at **Glendairy**. We have to approach these things together, because Glendairy can constitute a problem in our society that **can** do far more damage than is being anticipated by a lot of people when you hear them talk about it today.

We **are** living in a climate where everybody believes that the answer to everything is to hang them, beat them, chop off their hands and lock them up. That is the solution to all the problems. Empirical evidence shows that that kind of approach can be counter productive, Sir, and that a lot more is needed in dealing with the problems of prisoners and the administration of a prison than a lot of the frothy **statements** that fall so easily from the lips of those who see the solutions in the way currently being expressed.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, what we have before this Committee....

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us have some order, please. Will the Honourable Member just hold a minute? It is not necessary for us to speak across the Table from our seats. The Honourable Member will have ample opportunity to contribute to the debate. The Honourable Member for St. James North may continue.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Yes, Mr. Chairman. What we have before this Honourable Committee is obviously to do with the question of the rehabilitation of prisoners. In this regard I am alarmed that a large number of persons who go to prison and spend varying lengths of time come back into society ill-equipped to re-adjust to society. This is my concern. For example, you might have a fellow who goes to prison; **as** a first offender, for **3 years**, **and** when he comes back out, rather than be able to adjust to normal living in the community, he seems anti-social or suspicious and not having learnt how to come back into the community and make a contribution. I am worried about that, Sir.

I know of one instance, Sir, of a **person** who ended up being a one time offender. He went to jail for a pretty serious offence, spent some years, and when he came back into the community it was obvious to all that this man was odd. He was eccentric. Fortunately, he did not commit any further crimes, but he seemed totally unable to cope out there. He dressed strangely, he behaved strangely, he did not seem to have developed any social skills in relation to how to deal with people, but he was not like that before he went to prison.

In this debate **too**, Sir, I would like to raise this. It seems to me as though the prison officers who function in the prison are either trained solely **as** custodians and security guards in a prison, or made to do jobs which are to ensure either that the prisoners do not get away, or that they feel comfortable in their cells, or to accompany prisoners to court and take them back up. It **seems** to me, from my distance, that a lot of prison officers do not themselves have any skills to assist with general rehabilitation. In other words, it seems that a large number of prison officers cannot really guide and counsel prisoners in a sense where they will assist the prisoners to become useful citizens.

Some prison officers seem to be specialists in providing a form of security only, to make sure the prisoners do not misbehave, that they follow prison discipline and such like, but in terms of being able to teach people skills, including social skills, in terms of being able to help the prisoners to come back out, these prison officers seem to be untrained. I believe that in this age for a man to be a Prison Officer would not only mean that this man should be a security guard, I feel that there should be a programme of training for prison officers where they can make a greater contribution in respect of assisting prisoners to come back out here.

The type of culture we are living in today is a totally different culture from 15 or 20 years ago. You might get in this age a fairly significant number of persons going to jail just because they were on drugs, including licit drugs

like alcohol. You might get fellows who end up in jail because they are hooked on drugs and commit some offence, but when they come back out they fall right back into their substance abuse ways. I am concerned that in this age, where drug abuse and alcoholism are clearly social problems in Barbados, with a potential to also create economic problems, like low productivity among the work force and things like that, if a fellow who was on cocaine, for example, and through his cocaine habit stole to support his habit, goes to jail, is not using cocaine for the 18 months he is in jail, but is not given any opportunity to be guided away from the drug while in jail, provision should be made to assist him.

They tell me that addiction is a form of incurable illness and that even if in jail you are off the substance, there is a likelihood of your repeating the use of the drugs unless given proper rehabilitation. I understand that in some parts of the world, including one or two Caribbean countries, there are programmes by which persons skilled in the knowledge of rehabilitation of drug abusers are permitted to go into the prison and offer counselling which the ordinary prison officers are not able to provide. I cannot see any reason, Mr. Chairman, why in this day and age perhaps some of the social workers from the Psychiatric Hospital cannot go up to the Prison and assist these persons who are only in prison because of drugs.

I understand, Mr. Chairman, that a large number of nurses at the Psychiatric Hospital have attended seminars in the U.S. Virgin Islands, arranged by a man from Trinidad called Professor Beaubrun. I understand that Professor Beaubrun has for the last 15 or 20 years had this annual seminar in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands where some of our psychiatric nurses have gone to learn about how to teach people to come off drugs. I believe a lot of these psychiatric nurses come back on the wards in the Psychiatric Hospital and are not properly made use of in there and are certainly not required to go up to the Prison and assist prisoners off drugs.

I believe Honourable Members who have spoken so far have alluded to the fact that we have no remand prison. 1.30 p.m.

In other words, a fellow who is not a habitual criminal, truly a criminal or even a criminal, who may be denied bail by a magistrate and who may end up winning his case after being denied bail, goes up to prison in circumstances where he is exposed to hardened criminals and in circumstances where he is not even guilty of any offence. When he goes in, he comes out with a sort of maladjusted attitude and personality where perhaps he might very well end up by following the culture to which he has been exposed in prison.

I think that we have to look closely at 2 problems – the problem of the very young offender and the question of prisoners on remand whose trial has not even come up and who are clearly not guilty and who if exposed to wrong conditions in prison are likely to become problems when returned to society.

I believe that Honourable Members in this Chamber are aware that life in prison is a strange thing. The authorities in prison sometimes see certain prisoners as potential models – the well behaved and the ones with a little bit more education. Sometimes roles are assigned to some of these prisoners in which they end up looking after prisoners. There is such a thing, I understand, called a prison prefect. When you get status you are given something like a badge or insignia and as a prisoner you are given privileges by which you can supervise other prisoners and even teach them. In fact, one very famous prisoner whose name I won't call is by virtue of being a very sophisticated brain was permitted to teach literacy classes in prison. I have seen it with my own eyes. I go up there. I have seen this man teach literacy classes as a prisoner to prisoners.

It is a fact that a lot of persons who end up in prison go in illiterate and, notwithstanding the efforts of the prison, still come back out illiterate. This must be a concern, Sir, because clearly if a person's illiteracy contributed to his inclination to crime and he goes into prison and is supposed to receive literacy classes and he still comes back out illiterate, it means he has not been rehabilitated. Certainly not in respect of his problem of being unable to read and write.

These are my principal concerns in relation to rehabilitation. I think that we, in Barbados, are still at the stage when we imprison people we take them away from society possibly to protect society and possibly just to punish them for what they have done. I think, Sir, that to date we have not really achieved much by way of actual rehabilitation. In fact, I do not think we have done enough to discourage people from becoming repeat offenders. I do not know to what extent the prison is equipped to evaluate those prisoners who have a chance to come back out and be good and those who are just clearly criminally insane. There must be a category of fellow at the jail who is so hopelessly criminal as to be criminally insane and who really is not to be treated like a normal prisoner but who is obviously a medical case.

So Mr. Chairman, reflecting these concerns, I support the views expressed by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Member for Christ Church West, the views of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and of the Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I did not finish the first time. When the Minister intervened to reply to myself and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, he gave the impression that the educational programme at the Prison is something new.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West when he was Attorney General introduced that programme and the prisoners have over time been given the benefit of education in prison and the benefit of qualifying for external examinations. Indeed, when last year there was some exhibition of work that was nothing new. Years ago that was going on. The Prison used to exhibit at Queen's Park. All these chairs in here were made by them, all the furniture around the Courts. It is not a question of whether...

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member for St. James North was about to discuss the question of rehabilitation in prison but he did not get on to it. There is a lot of doubt and there has been a lot of doubt expressed from 1974 when Professor Norville Moms of the Chicago School wrote. What he wrote about in 1974 has been followed and is the view of the late Rupert Foster to my certain knowledge that there is doubt as to whether rehabilitation any longer can be an ideal of the penal system by trying to rehabilitate a person in prison. It is the most difficult social setting that you can have to try to rehabilitate a man who is sharing a cell with 3 other persons who might be there for different crimes with different backgrounds in that confined area of a prison. You might have a better chance in the open type prison which the Minister would have seen when he went to England in July where there is discipline and training but the regime is not as tough as in a closed type of prison.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a call for the greater use of Community Service Orders. Community Service Orders have been part of the penal system and have been on the books for many years. The judicial officers cannot however make the best use of Community Service Orders because they do not have staff. The Department that should be supervising community service does not have the staff to use adequately community service as an alternative to imprisonment. Now and then, sporadically and on desultory occasions, some judicial officers will resort to community service but there is no reason other than Government's finances and an inability to recruit the staff to supervise community service orders that should prevent the operation of that system in an efficacious way.

It is not everybody who commits a crime that should be sent to prison but everybody who commits a crime and

is to be visited with punishment ought to be entitled to have his case analysed by the sentencing authority as to what is the best type of punishment that this particular individual requires. In other words, what I am advocating is a subjective test for the sentencer to apply to the convict. You get probation, you get absolute discharges and reprimand and discharges which show that there are various gradations in the levels and types of punishment.

I am afraid that too often resort is had to imprisonment because the penal system does not have that range of order. I think that is where we have to concentrate. Otherwise, by just dumping people into prison we are going to contaminate and enhance the criminal learning processes of a lot of people who could perhaps benefit from not having a term of imprisonment.

1.40 p.m.

Why I say the Community Service Order is important is that I spoke of it during the election campaign in 1990/91 and as I say in the Paper I wrote, I advocated a greater and more liberal use of punishment within the community for several reasons.

First of all there is the question of cost. It is very costly for Government to keep people in prison over time, feed and clothe them. Forget the little pittance they may get towards earnings when they come out.

Secondly, apart from the question of cost, there is the appropriateness of imprisonment or the inappropriateness of imprisonment depending on the type of person you are dealing with. If we accept that it is not every person who commits a crime that should be sent to prison then I am saying there is a group of persons who are not worthy of imprisonment who should be treated, trained or disciplined in a different environment other than prison.

Thirdly, there is the question of the criminal making a contribution to his own society. Rather than society contributing to his upkeep he should also be turning back in something to society. That is why I am not critical of the programme that has started for allowing prisoners out under supervision to do agricultural work and so on. I would like more of that because I feel there are some persons to whom the message can get home if as a means of punishment you order that person to give up a 100 hours, whatever number of hours of his best time, leisure time particularly, where he cannot go to see Kung Fu, or he cannot go to watch Spice, Splash Band, or whoever, because he has to be out in the society painting some old people's houses or repairing them and saving the National Assistance Board that expenditure.

If we were properly organised and there was a department to supervise community service, a magistrate

could write an order imposing so many hours community service on a person who had 2 small drug offences, like marijuana, and rather than sending him to prison, deal with him in a different way. I am suggesting this as an example. I am not saying it would happen in every case or it must happen. I am saying for example that person be ordered to turn up at the National Assistance Board on Saturdays for the next 20 Saturdays, he be given a gallon of paint, or a hammer and some nails, a saw or whatever and he and a couple more would be out working on repairing some people's homes, cleaning up the area, whatever. There is a variety of things that can be done.

Right now Barbados' general environment is not aesthetically appealing. You go through the country and you see the amount of bush and overgrowth there is. Government's hands are tied because of the IMF Programme. They cannot employ people through the Parks and Beaches Commission with the same degree of liberalism as obtained some years ago. The result is that the environment is untidy and at the same time we are asking people to come here as tourists because we have this beautiful island. Come and see beautiful Barbados and when you drive through the country you cannot even go through some roads because of the overgrowth and so on. Now, a lot of this cleaning work could be done by people who would be sentenced by the court to do the cleaning up as well as some of the prisoners who have sublimated and who have shown themselves capable of assuming responsibility.

I used to have a programme as Attorney General where certain prisoners were let out under supervision to clean up some of the areas in St. Thomas, particularly in the area of Sharon Church, the churchyard just before Christmas and just before the rainy season started. A lot more of that could be done. Clean up places of interest. I am saying you can use some, perhaps a minority of the prison population to do that under supervision.

I am saying also that a larger group who do not deserve imprisonment but for whom there is no other satisfactory means of punishment can also be used in a structured way to ensure that they are making a contribution towards cleaning up their country or assisting in the repair of properties and so on. There are lots of things they can do. I do not necessarily agree with one magistrate who ordered a fellow as a community service to write 200 lines. That should have happened in school. That has been done as a Community Service Order.

I am appealing to the Government to look carefully at Community Service Orders. They exist. You do not have to pass any law. The law is there. What needs to be done is to prepare a department that can supervise and manage Community Service Orders in a meaningful way. Then the

message will get out to the magistrates that we have a department. Just as you have the Probation Department, you would have this other department, or within the probation structure, I do not mind how it is done. That is a detail, but you have this other department that will be prepared to find useful work for people to do who have been convicted of offences not meriting imprisonment.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, since no one else wants to make a contribution to this matter I would just like to close by referring to some of the points mentioned by Honourable Members on the other side and thank them for their contribution.

I think the question of penal reform is necessary but in anything we attempt we have to go further than that. We are looking even at family counselling because that is where it starts. Family does not necessarily mean the mother and father but brothers and sisters as well. What is happening in our society is that there is a breakdown in what we call the family values and even if a chap goes to prison and comes back to the same environment, the chances are that within a couple of weeks he is back in the same position which he left. That is one thing which we have to look at.

If we accept that drugs are rampant in the society we must also look at a proper drug treatment centre where when fellows who go to prison and we realise that the underlying cause of his crime is drug addiction, he should be sent to be assessed and go through a period of drug treatment, if not when he comes back out he will be back to square one again. So drug treatment is important.

Even if we look at the question of community service for young people, they must have some discipline training before they even go into the community service programme. Our young people, or too many of them at this present time are very undisciplined. I would daresay if we were to sentence them to community service they might not even turn up some mornings. I think a period of discipline training must be introduced so that they understand what is expected of them. This training could take 6 or 8 weeks anyhow.

The question of rehabilitation has been ongoing in prisons from time immemorial. You can only rehabilitate people who want to be rehabilitated. You can only attempt to. Some people go to prison and whatever you do there is nothing compulsory about prison. If they do not want to go to classes they need not go to classes or they might go and sit down and not listen.

1.50 p.m.

I know prison officers can be encouraged. We train prison officers. We have prison officers who go to the University now to study some of the social sciences and therefore they are equipped. We have people who go into prison. We have a team from the Psychiatric Hospital which goes in every two weeks to counsel prisoners who have psychiatric problems. We have a trained psychiatric nurse on staff. She is there every day to deal with problems of that nature. We are really trying.

I did not take the Member for St. George South too seriously when he spoke about the security problems at prison. I meet the prison officers on an ongoing basis individually and collectively as an association. They have never, ever complained to me about these weapons they are having in prison. Never! I thought he was talking about a battlefield when he started to speak. I am saying it is untrue. There is no truth in it at all. None whatsoever. I will not entertain this idea of prison officers walking around with guns at their side either. It is very dangerous for the prison officers themselves. If he knows about security he would not even think about it. That is foolishness. He does not know about security. You do not put a person in a group of 20 and 30 people with a gun at their side. All they would have to do is distract him and two people would take away the gun from him and shoot half of them. I would not even discuss that. It does not make sense. In no prison at all in the world do you have prison officers walking around prisoners with guns at their sides. It is dangerous. Some of the prisoners know more about the guns than the prison officers themselves sometimes.

Aside.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Of course. You do not have prison officers walking around in a yard with guns. It does not make sense.

The first time I am hearing that prison officers do not work 40 hours is now. I am convinced they work 40 hours. They have never complained to me about the long hours they are working. We have reduced the Fire Service from 56 to 48, the Police are working 40 hours and I daresay if the prison officers were working more than 48 hours that they would be complaining. But they have never raised that with me. And looking at the shift system, the shift system really indicates that they work sometimes less than 40 hours. That too is wrong. Where he is getting his information from... Probably he is thinking of when he was Attorney-General but that is a long time ago. It is not so today. I think that is wrong as well.

I want to re-emphasize the point that the security system in prison, as it is now, is better than it has ever been. I do not want to say what we have in prison. I just

want you to take me as I explain the situation and accept what I am saying, that it is better than it has ever been.

Having cleared up those points, Mr. Chairman, I want to repeat that I want to thank Members for their contributions and the Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that within the next few days I personally will be in contact with him and we can meet and discuss how we will approach the Committee and deal with crime, imprisonment, et cetera, et cetera. With that again, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. W. W. HALL: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. N. K. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. W. W. HALL, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. SPEAKER the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. N. K. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. W. W. HALL, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, this is the point at which we can take the recess for lunch and I beg to move, Sir, that the sitting be suspended until 3.00 p. m. today.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly at 1.58 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 5 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT CONSET BAY, ST. JOHN, FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FISHING FACILITIES

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to acquire an area of land as set out in the Resolution, that is, 7,237.8 square metres at Conset Bay in the parish of St. John for the development of fishing facilities.

I should point out at the outset that this is one of the projects identified for implementation in the 1988-93 Development Plan. Basically it talks about the development of **Conset** Bay and Skeetes Bay as joint projects for fishing and have identified them for funding under the European Development Fund on the **Lome 3** Programme.

A Government Notice dated October 14, 1988 inviting proposals for upgrading the facilities at these two landing sites and a local firm, a consulting engineering partnership, was contracted to undertake the work which was done with other consultants.

The acquisition of this parcel of land will enable the full development of fishing activities to be undertaken in the area identified. The proposed developments would include offshore and onshore developments. Some aspects of the offshore undertakings will be removal of rock heads, extension of jetty and the extension of piles for the long haul block.

With respect to the onshore construction, the following is included in the plan, the construction of a terminal building and the building with washrooms and caretaker's office along with attendant sea protection. Also the extension of the boat park to the south, the supply of security lights and electrical **outlets** on utility poles in the boat park and improvement of the St. Marks to **Conset** Bay access road.

This development of the **Conset** Bay area is considered desirable in view of ~~the~~ need for such a development at this site. The Government therefore considers that in proposing development that there is need to provide facilities for fishermen consistent with Barbados' stage of development and the stage of development of the industry.

What we are seeking to do here is to acquire this area of land which will complete the proposal for development of Skeetes Bay and **Conset** Bay as fish landing sites and the whole question of the further promotion of the fishing industry. It therefore means that since it is a further promotion of the Government's development of the fishing industry I would want to move that this Resolution do now pass.

I should say though, as one cannot necessarily anticipate debate in this particular area, but I have no doubt that the Honourable Members would be asking questions in respect of Speightstown.

Asides.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I beg to move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things which I would want to raise as far as this Resolution is concerned and particularly the question of **Conset** Bay and the reasons why this Resolution is before this Chamber.

No doubt the intention of Government is to accommodate the fishermen at **Conset** and this is not a new thing because the Barbados Labour Party has always given consideration to development of the fishing industry. Anything therefore that is done to facilitate and accommodate fishermen would be supported by this party.

As I said before there are some things that have been done by this Government which need to be spoken about and implore the Government to redress those problems. The Government has, at one time, been claiming that it is in support of fishing and the fishing industry but at the same time measures are taken which reflect on the fishing industry. We have to let the Government know that it was wrong. The advice it got in removing the **subsidy** from the gasoline propelled engines of fishing boats was wrong.

Asides.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I am saying that the advice that I know Government was given

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Honourable Member understands that that point has been raised.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Yes, Sir, I take the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: I also want to raise another point as well. This Resolution is for compulsory acquisition of land and it has an input from the development of the fishing industry but it is not a Resolution on the fishing industry per se. What I am trying to say to the Honourable Member, I think one must recognise the context of the Resolution. It is not a fishing industry Resolution. It is a Resolution for compulsory acquisition of land and I will allow, which I have always allowed some limited discussion on the purpose of the Resolution but it is not a fishing Resolution per se. That is all I am trying to say.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I take the point, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know you will understand what I am saying.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I have a point to clear and I think I can argue constructively without **trespassing** on the Rules. I set out by saying that this measure is no doubt to facilitate fishermen and what I am saying is,

if you are going to facilitate fishermen, then there are problems which the same fishermen are having and all I am saying is that there are people who fish in Consett Bay with diesel propelled engines as well as gasoline propelled engines. If you are going to provide land in order to develop the fishing facilities there, what I am saying is that there are some fishermen who are going to be disadvantaged. I am saying the people who are going to be disadvantaged are not the diesel operated and propelled boats but rather the gasoline propelled boats.

I am saying this is more so because studies have proven that the poor man – because the people who use the gasoline engines are the poor fishermen who cannot afford to purchase a larger boat. They cannot qualify for loans from the Development Bank to have a boat of that size to go deep sea fishing or for that matter out of low waters. I am saying that fishermen who operate from the same Consett Bay have complained that they are being hurt because a recommendation has been made that levies be put on their boats that they would not be able to operate the gasoline engines.
3.20 p.m.

All I am saying is that studies have shown from America that the use of gasoline boats are better. Therefore, I am saying that Government should look at that if it is a recommendation from any source whatsoever. I would like to see and I am making out a case for the continual operation of the gasoline operated boats. Those who operate them are the poor men and it is a benefit to the industry. The people in Consett Bay have to go abroad to Trinidad and they are affected as well. We know that you can fish east of Consett Bay. You do not have to go into Trinidad to fish. I am saying that this facility should be expanded in such a way so that you could take off from Consett Bay and land back there with your catch of fish rather than going to Oistins or Speightstown.

This acquisition is to expand. But what I am saying is that further studies need to be done with a view to making that a larger fishing port so that it can accommodate larger fishing vessels. The Government must listen at times. We do not want to have a situation like Bathsheba or Tent Bay. When we started, we had acquired lands there and up to this day that project is incomplete. Does Government not understand that it should listen to people when they voice their concerns to see that we will not have a similar project of this nature get in the same difficulty as the one in Tent Bay?

Sir, I want to know if Government is going to develop Consett Bay like it developed Tent Bay? That is all I want to know. I want to know that.

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: It does not matter, Mr. Speaker, who developed Tent Bay or Consett Bay. I want to know that the taxpayers' money which has to pay for this acquisition is well spent. The fishermen have to pay taxes too, if the Government does not understand that. They have to pay taxes too. They have boats and they have to pay taxes. Not only that, they have investments because some of them have borrowed money from the Development Bank or some other private bank and they have to repay those loans. I am saying that Government should consider putting down proper and adequate facilities so that the fishermen at Consett Bay can expand in a manner that we can call modern in fishing. We have to understand that. They must not listen to anyone who thinks or recommends to Government that gasoline engines are outdated. It is nonsense.

We should be looking at giving the fishermen facilities so that they may have wider boats at Consett Bay. I am looking at a larger fishing port at Consett Bay and I am wondering whether this land is adequate or sufficient to accommodate the type of facility that I am talking about. We talk a lot about fishing but at the same time some people have a way of saying that the only thing that a fisherman is good for is an old hat and an old jacket. Now that should not be the perception of the fisherman. I look at the fisherman in Consett Bay as professional people who should earn a living like any other Barbadian. We should look at fishing as a serious industry and the Government must understand that. Too long we have sat and have seen fishing put on the back burner. We should correct that. The industry has gone through a lot of problems and we have heard the concerns of these fishermen. Are we now going to compound their problems and frustrate them further by saying that we are going to acquire land and then we cannot complete the facility? I am asking these questions. Can Government give the assurance that they have the necessary money to start this facility as soon as the acquisition is completed? It is not sufficient for us to acquire lands for any purpose unless we as a Government have got the necessary funds to start the project. There are lots of people in the area of Consett Bay, Skeete Bay and the surrounding area who depend on fishing as a livelihood. I speak for those people. The Honourable Member for St. John should be speaking for them too.

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I have had discussions with fishermen over the past weeks and months and they have all expressed concerns that they have been ignored. They want Government to take them more seriously and assist them in the fishing industry. I want the Government to understand that it must take this matter very, very seriously indeed. It is not one for us just to dismiss

lightly. It is all right for us to talk about a matter that is before the **House**, but these are matters of concern. I am saying, too, that **we** have to look at the type of vessels that will be accommodated in this facility at **Consett** Bay. I would like the Minister responsible for this particular matter to say what size boats will be accommodated in this facility. I want to know what buildings are going to be erected. I want to know how many people will be accommodated. What kind of services will be there? Is it going to have freezer facilities? Sir, I want to know all of that.

What about the parking facilities? I want to know if Government is aware that proper parking facilities should be there so that people will not experience difficulty as they have experienced at Tent Bay. Sir, do not let us fool ourselves. We have to look at whether this land is adequate for parking. I did not hear the Minister say that. But if you are going to have a fishing complex or fishing port, then you have to think seriously about adequate parking. That would not only mean parking for vehicles but also for docking boats.

Sir, I want also to say that some fishermen have complained that in times of high seas or stormy weather they do not have the facility to tow the boats to safe land. I want the Minister of Agriculture to understand that it is in the interest of Government as well as these people to have a tractor to pull them up and move them to higher ground within a reasonable time. We have to understand that many fishermen at **Consett** Bay have lost their boats because of the time which it took for them to have the boats moved to higher ground. Lots of money will have to be spent in dredging the **sea bed** so that these boats can be accommodated.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who are familiar with these areas will tell you that we have to be concerned. When you go east of Bathsheba, that is **Consett** Bay. We do not want the sort of engineering that was done at **Tent** Bay to be done at **Consett** Bay. I am asking the Government to make sure that everything is done to prevent a similar situation. That is all I am asking the Government to do. If the Government feels that it should **spend** money just to acquire and just leave the land and do not build the facilities, it is all right with me. But I feel that I have a duty to make sure that the taxpayers' money is **well spent** and that the fishermen benefit.

3.30 p.m.

When the fishermen benefit, their families, Barbadian families, will benefit as well. We have to put the facility there and allow the fishermen at **Consett** Bay to be able to transport their catch to Bridgetown or some other markets. We have to look at the roads **as** well. I am asking if all this has been taken into consideration. It is not just a matter, Sir, of building a facility, but the highways have to be

taken into consideration. How do you move your catch from there to St. **George**, to St. Michael or to Christ Church? We want to know that.

Lots of fishermen have moved from **Consett** and have gone to Oistins and to Bridgetown because they lack the sort of facilities that should be there. The Minister of Agriculture has not yet spoken, but I am **asking him** to let this honourable Chamber know whether these facilities will be provided, so **that** it can allay the fears of the fishermen. They say it involves too much petrol – diesel or gasoline – to come to Oistins or to Bridgetown to haul their catch in. I want to see the sort of facility at **Consett** where people not only from St. John but from St. **Philip** and St. Joseph can **take** their catch into the **Consett** area.

I want the Government to understand **too** that this is very, very serious indeed. We have to give support at this time. I have been told by fishermen that there is a lot of money to be made in the fishing industry. The largest fishing boat in Barbados is owned by a fisherman from the St. **Philip** area, and it is that person with whom I had a chat. Who is better to articulate the concerns of fishermen than people who are there?

I want the Government also to consider allowing those poor fishermen at **Consett** Bay to bring in larger engines for the boats.

Aside.

Mr. **DeL. O. BRADSHAW**: Not only diesel, because, if the Honourable Minister does not understand, the difference is that diesel boats are slower to take off than gasoline powered boats. In the United States most of them are equipped with gasoline operated engines. I want this to be done at Oistins because they say there can be some sort of modification so that the fumes do not affect **whatever** catch **there** is.

Asides.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: **We are** dealing with land acquisition, we do not listen to anybody else. We are not hearing anybody else.

Mr. **DeL. O. BRADSHAW**: Mr. Speaker, this is very serious. The country is going in the wrong direction when members on that side do not listen. The people who understand fishing, who are engaged in fishing, have raised these concerns and I have a duty to mention **them** on the Floor of this honourable Chamber. I do not understand how I could come in here and talk about acquiring a piece of land at **Consett** Bay and do not talk about fishing. There is a purpose.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: I do not think the Honourable Member has got me right. I did not say that. What I said was that the main purpose of the Resolution is to acquire land for the development of fishing facilities at **Conset Bay**. Therefore I will not allow a broad debate on the fishing industry itself. **That is** all I am saying.

Mr. **DeL. O. BRADSHAW**: Mr. Speaker, I have not gone into the fishing industry, I confined my remarks to **Conset Bay** and the poor people there. I am concerned about them. When we get down to Speightstown I will talk about that, but I hope the Government would provide the people in that area with adequate facilities, modern facilities that can compete with other fishermen outside Barbados. They are complaining that enough is not being done for them and that Government has always regarded them as being in a second rate industry. I do not share that view with the Government or with anyone, and I am asking that more serious consideration be given to the people who are engaged in the fishing industry.

Hon. **D. J. H. THOMPSON**: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to speak on the issue of the fishing development at **Conset Bay** again. I think this matter has come in varying forms before the House on previous occasions – during Estimates debates and a whole range of occasions – and I know that there had been difficulty over time in settling with the persons who are providing financing for this project, the actual parameters of the development.

The Honourable Member's contribution, though spirited, is somewhat confusing. It reminds one of the saying that criticism is seldom inhibited by ignorance. He really did not have a grasp of the situation at **Conset Bay**, even though he has a long history of involvement in St. John, and should perhaps pay a visit to the area again.

I cannot tell you the configuration of the boats that operate out of **Conset Bay**, but it would surprise me if anybody could produce a convincing argument to me that there could be any large number, or even sizeable number, of gasoline powered boats. The **Conset Bay** jetty is a pretty tall jetty and the only way they could get the fish up there is if they were swinging on a rope like Tarzan or some other strange feat, but anybody who goes to **Conset Bay**, or even, for that matter, **Skeete's Bay**, would realise that those are not fishing ports for those kinds of facilities.

Now, Martin's Bay in St. John, which has no jetty and just a channel, is clearly the kind of bay that accommodates a larger number of gasoline powered – what we call – Moses with outboard engines on them. The argument relating to gasoline powered boats has absolutely no relevance in relation to **Conset Bay**, and if it did have any relevance, it would mean that this project would be a

waste of time, because the person who would use the gasoline powered boats would not need the kinds of facilities which this particular development is going to provide.

But somewhere in that mass of confusion, Mr. Speaker, I detected a wise and sagacious commentary by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. He understands, and a lot of people are now coming to understand, that long line fishing and the use of the requisite fishing equipment, including boats and other things, is proving to be an area in which a large number of Barbadians are showing considerable interest. As to whether it will be successful or not, I do not know, because I do not profess to be particularly knowledgeable on the fishing industry, but I know that my predecessor in the Ministry of Finance and myself have approved a number of applications to give assistance to Barbadians who have embarked in this area in the fishing industry by way of duty waivers, waivers of various consumption taxes and so on. The Government acknowledges that this is an area of potential growth, markets have been secured by a large number of the operatives in this field, both markets that can earn us foreign exchange and also domestic markets in relation to the hotel industry, and it is an area that attracts the kind of person in the fishing industry who the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East quite rightly said is getting involved.

3.40 p.m.

Businessmen who one would not have thought immediately would have had any interest in the fishing industry but who now see it as a lucrative source of earning foreign exchange and contributing to economic development. It would appear to me that the development at **Conset Bay** is consonant with this kind of thrust in long line fishing. Let me make the point about **Consett Bay** because nobody can validly argue that there was any contrived delay by Government in hauling up boats at **Conset Bay**. The land around that jetty does not belong to the Government. All that belongs to the Government is a shed and one would assume the jetty itself. That is all.

Hauling up the boats itself was in a sense trespassing because the land belonged to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel better known as the Codrington Trust. It is quite correct that we need to acquire a large enough area of land to haul up those boats, but we also have to remember that **Consett** is a bay. It is not any long stretch of beach or any deep water harbour. There are going to be constraints to the physical size of the actual development and we have to be cognizant of that. It is not going to be the kind of area where these major berthing facilities can be provided. It is on the East Coast and we know the kind of problem that can result.

Let me also say that the road to **Consett** Bay is now in an appalling condition. It is almost impassable from Easy Hall. The road is deteriorating, largely because it is in the Scotland District and the repairs to that road are considerable and have been considerable to Government over time. This development as I understand foresees putting a new road through **Consett** Bay. The other road leading from College Savannah is fraught with difficulty because one has to pass over a bridge and if the tide is high or there is a lot of water in the spring you cannot pass unless you have a large 4-wheel vehicle. So there is difficulty with access.

The fishermen have complained and rightly so that the diesel trucks, not the gasoline trucks, which they use or will use shortly will not be able to pass down that **Consett** Bay road to the fishing port. I **am very** concerned about it and we have to be careful about planning that road construction so that we do not end up wasting money **putting** a road in an area that has considerable land slippage and is fraught with difficulty because of the large number of springs. This is important and I agree it is something that needs considerable attention.

I want to make the point for the Honourable Member's for St. Michael South East benefit that it is not the Government that is providing the funds for this project. This project is funded by the European Development Fund. It is providing the resources for this **particular** project, but there has been considerable problems in the technical work on the project and over time it has been delayed and resubmitted. I even remember the Honourable Member for Christ Church South saying that he doubted that the project would ever get off because of this controversy, but I am hoping that that would be solved and that we will be able to access those resources shortly. I can assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East that it would not be coming directly from Government and financing should not be a problem.

I am glad to hear the Honourable Member speak so eloquently on behalf of the people who use the **Consett** Bay facility, but he must also realise – and if he were really in touch with the area – that there are a large number of people from outside St. John who still use the **Consett** Bay area – St. Joseph, St. **Philip** and also some people who go into Oistins but who use **Consett**, probably **some** from St. Peter as well. As I say the road may be impassable but there are some who can scale any heights.

The point is this. The facility is used by a **large** number of people resident in St. John and also from outside the area. Some people find it more convenient to use those fishing ports like **Consett** Bay rather than use Oistins for a number of reasons which I assume will

emerge in this debate. It is not exclusively persons who live in a **fishing** village who use those facilities. There are people from outside the area who use it. Hopefully, the development that ensues as a result of Government's commitment to the development of the **Consett** Bay fishing port will encourage more persons to be involved in fishing particularly in the long line fishing and other related forms of fishing that **can** earn foreign exchange and perhaps develop fish processing industries in Barbados as part of our need to carry this economy forward.

I, myself, look forward to seeing this physical development take **place** in St. John because it was one of the features of the St. John Development Plan which was clearly outlined in 1987. I would like to ensure that we keep faith with the ideals of that **particular** plan in my lifetime.

I will give my full support for this particular Resolution.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, I rise conscious of the heavy hint which you gave not too long ago that we should not **turn** this business **into** a wide ranging debate on the fishing industry; that we should respect certain rules relevant in relation to this discussion.

I want to say I am a **little** disappointed that this matter is yet again before the House and that we seem to have made no progress from **the mid 80's** when **the** Barbados Labour Party **Administration** had planned and approached Parliament for funding in respect of the jetty and the upgrading of the on-shore and offshore facilities at **Consett** Bay. This Democratic Labour Party Administration has a very rich inheritance of its predecessor, the Barbados Labour Party Administration with respect to the modernisation of the fish terminals and **the** physical facilities in the fishing industry.

You will recall it was the Barbados Labour Party Administration that built Oistins and the Bridgetown Fishing Terminal and had indicated that Tent Bay where we had started work, Skeete Bay, **Conset** Bay should be subsidiary fishing terminals in the South East and the East of Barbados. The Tent Bay project had already been **commenced** since 1984 and it was seen as related to the **Conset** Bay. There were to be 2 subsidiary facilities in the East, North-east of Barbados. Work was commenced at great expense at Tent Bay clearing the channel removing the large stones that is part of what we are hoping to do at **Conset** Bay and also putting in a step way which I think was wrongly done. The professional **advice** was obviously faulty.

In addition to that, at Tent Bay there was supposed to be on-shore facilities. The land was acquired. There was supposed to be a marketing facility, a small sales outlet

and facilities for the fishermen to attend to the functions of nature and for bathing. There were also to be facilities for pulling up the boats in the **hurricane** season. For one reason or another that project has been abandoned, putting additional pressure, I believe, on **Conset** Bay because a larger number of fishermen from St. Joseph are now fishing off **Conset** Bay. That was the position in the past and that is because Tent Bay **has** not been proceeded with. It has been a project commenced by the Barbados Labour Party Administration and for one reason or another abandoned or discontinued, certainly, by the Democratic Labour Party Administration.

3.50 p.m.

I think the Honourable Minister responsible for Agriculture and Fisheries should tell us when he comes to reply precisely why the Tent Bay facility has not been proceeded with. I think that is a matter that needs to be clarified. I think all of us who are interested in the development of the fishing industry would want to know what are the Government's plans with respect to the future of Tent Bay. Would the facility be proceeded with? Does it come to a natural end or will it be restarted?

I think the Honourable Minister needs to tell us why this facility has taken so long to get off the ground. In so far as Government's money has been spent in the last 10 years at **Conset** Bay what precisely has been the extent of the work done so far? What exactly are we planning now? In the past it was conceived as a facility to accommodate no more than 30 boats. Will it now be accommodating 30, 40 or 50? Are we likely to have ice-making facilities there? What provisions will be there for the **maintenance** of the equipment that will be put in place?

I particularly mention that, Mr. Speaker, because one of the weaknesses of the present is that we are not maintaining the facilities at Oistins, for example, and at the Bridgetown Fishing Terminal. Oistins has fallen into a state of considerable disrepair. The facilities there that **need** sophisticated maintenance, including the ice machines, have **fallen** into acute disrepair to the disadvantage and hardship of those who use that port. I would hope that whatever is done at **Conset** Bay would not only be properly done and the work at Tent Bay was not at all properly done, but that there would be proper maintenance for the facility up there.

Now, I am particularly disturbed, Mr. Speaker, about the fact that we sometimes pay insufficient attention to the non-physical aspect of the industry. It is very good to build these attractive physical terminals. What are we doing to ensure the safety of the fishermen, the improvement of their directional and navigational equipment? What are we doing to ensure that their security is safeguarded for the

evening of their days? They have not been part of the NIS Scheme. Fishermen were never part of the NIS Scheme. That has been one of the weaknesses. They have been self-employed people who were only seasonal.

Aside.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: **They** have been self-employed of a seasonal nature and they have always found the Scheme slightly unattractive to them given the seasonality of their work. I think a renewed effort must be made to ensure that the fishermen of Barbados are brought into the NIS Scheme. The Scheme makes provision for them but for some reason or another they have never been attracted to it. Whether the NIS needs to do a promotional job with them, I do not know but something must be done at the level of Government to ensure that the fishermen are brought increasingly into the NIS Scheme. We cannot have a situation for the future where fishermen in their old age must be thrown a \$20 here and be bypassed as though they are not men who over the years have made a significant contribution to providing the nutritional needs of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, though I am conscious of your heavy hint that we must not turn this into a wide-ranging debate on the fishing industry, I think we cannot leave the subject of fishing without dealing with the non-physical aspects of the industry. I am particularly anxious to hear from the Minister what are the developments with respect to new equipment, navigational and directional aids to the fishermen? How far we have got in ensuring safety at sea for our fishermen? What provisions are we making for the increased marketing on the part of fishermen rather than allowing them to be at the mercy of others who lake the fish off them at the most part when they are at their point of maximum weakness when they have been out for 7 to 10 days and they are exhausted. We normally have offers from others who come along and say "We will give you X dollars per 100" which, in truth and in fact is not the best price they should be **getting** but they have no institutional framework to ensure that the best bargaining goes on. They are given adequate returns for their labours.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I am really going to make a speech a little later on all aspects of this matter but **there** are just a few things I would like to disabuse the minds of some Honourable Members on. **Conset** Bay, as I understand it, has never been seen in the same light as Oistins, Spcightstown or Bridgetown. The physical conditions of the site and the conditions of the sea in that area just do not lend themselves to that type of development. On the other hand, because of the long tradition of fishing in the area and because of the fact the area is situated on Barbados' east coast, which is nearer to some reasonably good fishing grounds, it **was** always

felt that it was necessary to provide conditions which would lessen the burden of the fishermen who worked from that area. Without the jetty at **Conset Bay**, it meant that fishermen had either to have small row boats to take them out to their boats, or they would have to swim out with the diesel, water, bait and fishing lines. The jetty was built to facilitate the servicing of the boats. The boats would come alongside and they were able to use the jetty as a means of conveying the water and other things there.

It also facilitates the landing of fish. **From** my memory there were always 2 problems. There has been the problem of hauling up the boats. Disputes arose whether the area of land on which the boats are hauled up are within the area which traditional fishing rights were exercised or whether it was leased land to other people. They used to be a problem with that. Secondly, there was a problem of access. The fishermen in that area always operated under the difficulty of wholesalers who were buying fish not wanting to come to the area because of the **damage** which their vehicles encountered when they were going down the steep hillside road and also because it was damaged periodically by rainfall.

There was also a problem that many people who visited that area very often experienced. When there was a heavy rainfall they could get stuck down there. That is a problem because there is a watercourse to the east of that area. The Labour Party's Manifesto in 1986, which long pervaded any development plan – no doubt the Development Plan for St. John **borrowed** heavily from this statement – stated that the landing sites at **Conset Bay**, **Skeete's Bay** and other sites around the island would be upgraded. There is no doubt that was so. Everybody recognises that. Now, as I understand it, this is one of **the** projects it is envisaged will be financed by the LOME Convention.

I think the House should as **well** know that there is an argument and a dispute between the directorate of the European Development Fund and the Government of Barbados with respect to what is the appropriate institutional machinery to manage the fishing harbours in Barbados. There is no question about that. When Oistins Fisheries Scheme was **created** – and this would happen at **Conset Bay** – when the **Speightstown** Fisheries Scheme was being developed the theory was **advanced** – **there** is a fair amount of merit in it – that having regard to the number of fishing facilities that you have, you should have **adequate** institutional management to ensure that these facilities are properly managed and maintained. There is no question about that. That this is not an area in which yardfowlism should operate. This is an area in which people of the greatest competence in a lot of disciplines should operate, like marine engineering and so on.
4.00 p.m.

Conset Bay is going to be an area in which these considerations will definitely have to apply because when you have a long jetty you have the problem of fendering. If you do not have proper fendering on a jetty the boats that go up alongside with the action of the tide and **with** the action of the sea are going to be hitting the permanent jetty. That is one of the problems that you have. Therefore if you are going to lead the public to understand that this is going to **be** an area in which you are going to get money from LOME you must let it be clearly understood that all who use this facility must understand that there have got to be some rules and regulations which must apply and there must be some discipline in the area, otherwise you are not going to be able to get the money.

I would be very glad to see the development take place there because I am very happy that, over the course of the years, all of those great plans that I used to speak of in the 1960s in relation to fishing are coming to fruition, despite the opposition that we have had from no less a person than the Prime Minister of this country and a representative of St. John whose concept of a fisherman was a man whose only interest in life was hanging around the Fire Brigade station so that when the clothing of the Fire Brigade was discarded, he could pick it up – including the cork hats – and that they had no ambition and whenever they caught fish they spent their money straight in a rum shop. This is a fact. I have lived to see a whole change has taken place in the fishing industry. We are now talking about people who are navigating boats by use of satellite navigation. We are talking about people who are indulging in long lining despite the fact that it is taking a lot of time to persuade the Government that they need incentives. We are talking about people who have made an outstanding contribution to the development of such indigenous resources as we have had. And it will go ahead.

I am particularly glad to be associated with any exercise which seeks to improve the physical conditions under which these people operate. I **try** my best to improve their mental attitude and to tell them that there is hope for them despite the fact that this Government is in power.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am past that. The people in my **area** have never believed in that. I give my support to this Resolution, Sir, but I just wanted to make it clear that it is not easy.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to make one contribution to the debate, Sir. There was a plan for the **eastern** part of Barbados of which this area forms a part, the intention of which was to earmark lands running from Pico Teneriffe to Ragged Point as some of the best

remaining natural **lands** in Barbados and to preserve them from over development, if one may call it that, Sir. There are **areas** like Conseu Bay, Bath, **Glenburnie** and Foster's **Funland** which are the few last remaining places in Barbados in a natural state where Barbadians can relax.

My contribution to this debate **as** a person who enjoys these **natural** areas of Barbados fully would be to ask the Minister if the plan for **Consett** Bay, in this particular matter, has been looked at in relation to the other broad plans for the preservation of the east coast in as natural a form **as** possible and to ask the Minister, what specific measures his **Ministry** will make to ensure that there is not over development, in the true sense of the word, in these specific places **as** a result of the commercialization of activity in the areas?

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, the debate on this acquisition of land at **Consett** Bay has ranged far and wide and while you have allowed a certain amount of latitude on the debate and it has trickled over into the area of fishing therefore I am constrained to reply. I am sure that the Minister of **Lands** will deal with matters relating specifically to the acquisition. But it is incumbent upon me to enlighten the House on a number of matters relating to fishing at **Consett** Bay and, especially, the **Honourable** Member for St. Michael South East and the **Honourable** Member for St. Joseph. My colleague the **Honourable** Member for St. John addressed the question of financing in a very cursory way.

I would just want to say that the financing proposal for both **Consett** Bay and Skeete's Bay is going before the **European** Development Fund Committee this month. We are seeking \$1 M1 800 **ECUs** which when converted at the present rate is about **BD\$3** million for **Consett** Bay and \$1 million for Skeete's Bay. The Government's contribution, to a large extent, is made up of the land that we would be putting into the project.

I would want though, Mr. Speaker, to highlight the main features and in response directly to the invitation from the **Honourable** Member for St. Joseph to give the highlights and the benefits of the proposed new **Consett** Bay fishing area. I deal first, Mr. Speaker, with the offshore facilities at **Consett** Bay. At present we all know that the harbour silts up on a very regular basis. At present it is silted up. We have had ongoing discussions and dialogue, indeed exhaustive dialogue with the fishermen of the area on this matter. We **intend** to carry out the necessary dredging as a major **component** of this project.

Another area of concern to the fishermen which has been represented to us and which indeed forms a major

component of the offshore facility is the matter of the launching and the hauling up of boats. Provision is being made to assist the fishermen in this regard. Those of us who are seafarers would know that the **Consett** Bay **area** is a very tricky area. The first 200 yards from the shore outwards is a very tricky area. We are going to **try** to demarcate that area and identify the reefs **and** the boulders and by so doing make it safer for the fishermen. Some persons were of the view or gave advice relating to the blasting of the boulders out of the sea. We recognise that this would have caused certain environmental problems and we did not go that route. We **are** going to make the necessary demarcation and we believe that when this is done we **are** going to make the area safer for the fishermen.

4.10 p.m.

The other point relating to the offshore facility that I would want to raise and which was raised by the **Honourable** Members on that side, relates to the jetty and upgrading the jetty facilities.

The fishermen, for too long, have been complaining that the jetty is too high and what we are planning to do is to add a lower deck to facilitate the hauling up and the **landing** of the fish so this is the whole component. There are a number of components but these four that I have identified, to my mind, are the major ones and in identifying **them** I am at the same time responding to queries raised from the other side.

Sir, in respect of the onshore facilities, Mr. Speaker, the **Honourable** Member for St. John dealt with some of these but the area that I would want to reinforce which he dwelt on, related to the present access road which is very long and winding and it would obviously be very costly to repair that. We believe that given certain financial constraints that it would be less costly to approach the whole question of access from the St. Marks area and that is what is provided for in our plans.

The **Honourable** Member, again **for** St. Joseph, obviously drawing from his experience when he was in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, raised the question of facilities at the terminal building. Again these are areas that will be addressed in the new facilities. There are plans for a weighing room, for a storeroom for fishing gear, toilet facilities and changing rooms. Regrettably, at this stage, there are no plans for the ice facility but I believe that within time this matter will be addressed.

At present there are 28 diesel boats operating out of the **Consett** Bay **area** and **there** is obviously the need for an improved boat park where the fishermen can do their

minor repairs and maintenance. Again this forms part of this Development Plan for Consett Bay.

On any visit to **Consett** Bay you would notice at a glance, Mr. Speaker, how congested the area is. This boat park, the primary purpose of this facility, is to free up this congestion.

The final point that I would want to speak to in terms of the on-shore facilities relate to the drainage problems which we are having in the area. At present **water** drains from the surrounding **districts** and comes into the harbour. It is obviously bringing the usual silt and so on and blocking **up** the system, in certain cases even bringing trees into the area. It is our intention in this proposal to provide a settlement area whereby we would attract the silt and we would make the facilities much more amenable to the fishermen.

The overall benefit, Mr. Speaker, by way of encapsulation, is to improve the fish quality at **Consett** Bay. Thank you.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, after that discussion on this matter which obviously shows that there is bipartisan support for the proposal to establish a fishing complex at **Consett** Bay and of course the accompanying one at Skeetes Bay, let me just say that the matter relating to the point raised by the Honourable Member for St. Peter in respect of what the Government proposes to do in the area from Pico Teneriffe to Ragged Point, that is, Pico Teneriffe in St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. **Andrew** and Ragged Point in St. **Philip**.

Asides.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Quite seriously, Honourable Members are aware of the fragility of that particular area in terms of its land stability and also the fact, not only the coastline, but a little inland and the Government has, in the first instance, set up a soil conservation board to administer that particular area. At the same time I think that Honourable Members would be aware of the fact that the Government recognises that that area has tremendous potential for the **further** development of eco-tourism and certainly it will be developed in that particular respect.

We are not going for the suggestion which has been made by some people who know it all in this country, where in talking about the need for a golf course that **that** is the place we should take the golf course. The fact of the matter is that we think that there are other more compatible developments that can take place and as I said, the whole idea of developing it along the lines of promoting eco-tourism which is one of the big areas for tourism

development, not only in Barbados, but around the world, is something that we are giving serious consideration **to**.

Indeed, Sir, in the area around Morgan Lewis there are proposals which have gone into the Town Planning Department for the development of a facility in that area. All of these are matters which would have to be taken into consideration in terms of what can best be done for the area in terms of preserving it and at the same time **ensuring** that we develop it in as much of its natural **state** as possible.

I am sure that Honourable Members are aware of the work which is also being done by the National Conservation Commission in that area in the development of foot paths and trails which they have been in the process of developing. So the Honourable Member can rest assured that this administration would try to preserve that area in its natural state as much as possible and try to develop it for the advantage of this country.

With those remarks and with the comments **from** the Honourable Minister of Agriculture who gave a general outline of what the proposals **are** for the development of the Consett Bay and Skeetes Bay area, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 3 – A BILL TO **AMEND** THE CONSUMPTION TAX ACT, **CAP. 62.**

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, this proposal seeks to remove **the** subsidy for gasoline which is presently granted to fishing boats. If we are updating the House on the existing legislation, Subsection 4 of Section 6 of the Consumption Tax Act, Cap. 63 provides as follows:

"Notwithstanding anything in this section and the First Schedule, there shall be a refund of 95 per cent of **tax** paid on gasoline where the **Comptroller** is satisfied that the gasoline has been used in fishing boats."

It is **the** view, Mr. Speaker, of the Government that this subsidy has outlived its usefulness and it is of no real benefit at this stage to the fishing industry. Therefore, we see no reason to continue the policy. We have facts to show that commercial fishing in Barbados is **carried out** mainly by diesel power boats. At present, there are **428** registered diesel power boats. The price to the public for diesel is \$1.30 per litre and we have retained up to

now the subsidy on diesel. The price to the fishermen is, therefore, \$1.08 per litre. It is \$1.30 to the public and \$1.08 to the fishermen.

Sir, we believe and we have information to substantiate this. It is more than a belief, Mr. Speaker, that the system has been abused over time not generally by authentic commercial fishermen, but by persons who use the boats for pleasure and fishing use of the boats is probably 10 per cent or 15 per cent overall. It is really secondary. Mr. Speaker, it was very noteworthy that provision was made in this year's Estimates under Item 313 for an amount of \$15 000 for this subsidy and that amount was used up in a hurry. This confirms our suspicion clearly that amount could not have been used as subsidy for fishing. It obviously had to be used elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, it is against this background that we are moving the amendment to the Act. On this side, we remain committed to the livelihood and the welfare of the fishing community. Our track record in this regard speaks for itself and we will continue to do all within our power to improve and enhance the life of the fishermen. By retaining this subsidy, it is not going to address the issues and the matters that need to be addressed in order to enhance the life of the fishermen. We have to look at matters like modernisation of the fishing industry. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East spoke on the question of boat design. I do not know where he heard it from, but that was a good point and these are areas that we on this side would address and would form part of our development plan for fishing and in time these would be adequately addressed. As I stated, the existence of this subsidy is to my mind wasteful. Therefore, I move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: I beg to second that, Sir, and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, here again after listening to the Minister, I must restate the position which I have made on this particular subject. The Minister said that he is convinced this subsidy is wasteful. I want the Minister to understand that it is best to listen to the people who are directly involved in matters of fishing in order to determine certain decisions. I have listened to a group of fishermen who have complained and they said that the matter should be raised as to Government's decision to remove the subsidy tax on gasoline. Having listened to the Minister, I am not satisfied that we need to go this route. I can understand where there is abuse of any Government subsidy that Government should move to correct that, but I question the methodology. Could Government not have sat down and amend the Note? I am only asking if it was possible that Government could have amended the Note so that the definition would be clear on

what is a fishing boat as against a pleasure boat. We do not have to go that far in school to understand that. Why do you have to make sweeping changes which will affect all fishermen when your main target, according to what the Minister said, is the pleasure seekers? I am just asking that.

I must remind the Minister that there are still some small men who are unable to purchase or even qualify for a loan from the Development Bank or any commercial bank. Those are the persons you have to be concerned about. Are you going to put them out of business completely? This is what you are doing at this point in time when jobs are hard to come by and where people want to feed their families. I am saying that every opportunity should be given to embrace those persons whether it be one, two or three people. That is what Government should be looking at. By this measure, you are hurting people who are genuine fishermen who have spent most of their life fishing and who have families to support. I am not talking about those who can afford to buy a diesel boat and invest \$100 000. I am talking about those who build a small boat themselves to go and catch some fish. Sometimes they only have a small engine and you are now putting them on the breadline.

Sir, I am saying that policy needs to be looked at. It is absolutely wrong. You are putting people out of work. What are you going to do with those persons? The Minister has not said how many persons are involved. I want the Minister to say. If you are going to say there are 228 persons, I want the Minister to say to this Honourable Chamber how many of them are gasoline operated or gasoline propelled. If there are 10, I am saying to the Government that those said persons deserve some serious consideration. After all, they are family providers too. That is the point I am making. You are hurting those people. People want employment. What are you going to send the poor fisherman to do? He cannot go and ask the big boat operator for a job. You have asked him to put down his lifetime investment. It is as simple as this. Those persons who have got donkey carts who are working out there and, if you decide not to let them work, you are putting that sort of person out of a job. Just because you have motor cars should not stop a guy from buying and riding a bicycle as a means of his transportation. I am saying that you should look to see how best you can deal with this situation.

4.30 p.m.

All I am recommending to the Minister is to look at how best you could make the appropriate amendment. You have draughtsmen in the Attorney General's Office, consult them and see how they could best put up the amendments which will not affect those persons! Allow them to operate! We cannot afford to drive those people on the breadline. Every possible job and all ways and means of providing for

a family should be encouraged. You must have a flexible policy and one that can embrace the small man as well as the big person.

I am going to say this to you because I have heard people laugh when I mentioned diesel as against gasoline use. If you do not do your research, something must be wrong because it is making a decision based on what we feel rather than what has been proven. Certain analysis can be carried out on these matters. I have been reliably informed by an engineer, a boat-builder, who used to live in Flagstaff in the very Minister's constituency. He was here recently at a funeral and he sat down over an hour and a half speaking with the President of the Fisherman's Association. They were discussing this and I happened to be there. He said we are making a mistake because you do not have to outlaw the engine or remove the subsidy on gasoline-operated boats.

They say that in case of difficulty the gasoline engine turns over faster and there is a quicker get-away.

Asides.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I am *talking* in terms of bad weather and you want to get back in a hurry. I am just putting on record what was said but the Government need not take heed. As far as I am concerned, it can go on its collision course, but I still have a duty to say. They say that the diesel engine makes too much fumes and is slower. That is why the United States in cold weather opt for the gasoline-operated boats. What they said is that the area which the diesel engine takes up could be used to provide more room for storage facilities if you used a gasoline engine. They also pointed out that with certain adjustments you could also have your boat refrigerated and have a larger refrigeration area.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is a bit too much noise.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: We have to look at the capacity of the boat. I was informed that it would *mean* that with certain adjustments as are *taking* place now in the United States and other developed countries that you will have more space and the boats will have a larger capacity for bringing their catch to Barbados. These *are things* we have to think about.

What the measure seeks to do is to remove the \$15 000 that was in subsidy, a small sum. There are people who abuse larger sums in Government on a daily basis. I call that nay-nay money but I want the Government to understand what it means to the small man. Sometimes \$50 would not mean much to some of us but to most people

\$50 is a lot. I am saying we must not discourage the small fisherman, the man who can have that small boat. Can we say to this Chamber that there are 20, 25, 100 gasoline operated boats and can we say how many people operate them? What about the multiplying effect? There is something called the multiplying effect. Traditionally fishermen usually have large families and their only source of income is from going to sea daily.

Asides.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: How are you going to feel when you go to *Consett* Bay, Oistins, St. Peter or St. Lucy and you see men there building fishing boats to put in a gasoline engine, who do not have the money to put in a diesel engine and cannot borrow any because the Government makes it difficult to borrow money nowadays and they are on the breadline. I want you to answer that.

I would like to see Government make provision to embrace those persons rather than driving them away completely. As I said, Government could look at those people. I know that there are some people who abuse everything that Government does, but there is a way of doing things and I do not think that Government's approach is correct.

I want Government *to understand* seriously if we are going to be serious about *fishing* or any industry. Let us not talk in terms of mechanisation. Think about the small man that is still using a fork. Some think we can have *farms* but we do not understand that there are people who are living in very humble circumstances because they do not have the money and cannot get the loans in order to bring their establishment up to date or at the competitive level. What are we going to do now? Are we now going to see in Barbados that because you are poor and you cannot get money to do something to compete *with* another person who is financially better off that you must not exist in this country? It is a sad day when this sort of thinking is allowed to prevail. It is wrong.

I am saying that the Minister cannot get up in here and convince this House or bring any statistics today to prove that it would not affect X number of families. It has not been said and the Minister has enough time. He is a new Minister. He has enough time to go back and ask for this information so that he would be better informed in making a decision of *this* nature. It is not a reflection on the Minister. It was brought to him by public servants, no doubt, but the Minister must be given time to go back having heard some of the arguments put forward to sit down with some of these fishermen to carry out his own *private* investigations to find out if these points

are reasonable. I would hate to know that the Minister will proceed along the lines of trying to get a piece of legislation through and at the same time realise after the fact that some mistake has been made. I think that the Minister has better judgment than that. That is all I **am** asking him to do. This is information that was revealed.

I do not want to hear this argument that the Ministry's officers have been out there and have canvassed. Canvassed who? They must go out there and tell me how many of these small people have been canvassed and how many families they are and what are their earnings. Unless they can tell me that I cannot support it. We need to have this sort of thing. Ever so often decisions are made based on what is assumed. There is too much assumption and that is why in our society there are so many small groups up in arms against decisions that are taken because these are decisions that every group no matter how small or large it is needs to be heeded. This is Barbados. There are elements in this society. That is why I say we need to make sure that the facts **are** there. If you want to determine whether the boats are used for fishing have them registered. I am telling the Minister a way of doing it. Have a register and only those persons who are registered and are bona *fides* members with small boats can get the subsidy.
4.40 p.m.

I have seen a lot of **people** abusing another system in the Ministry of Agriculture with duty-free vehicles. I see that and I know what the Minister is talking about. Every move should be made to correct that. That is why I am saying to the Minister to go back now and see how best he can save the taxpayers of this country and protect the people. You have a duty to protect the fishermen and at the same time penalise the pleasure **seekers**. Peter should not pay for Paul.

I want you to understand it. If someone goes and builds a boat, most of them by hand, you think they are really building a boat for fun or pleasure to go out there to bring in **flying** fish, shark, albacore, dolphin or something like that? You really think a fellow is going out there for fun? You are talking about a guy who is out there with a pleasure boat. It tells you something. You need to amend the law to prosecute those people who breach the law or who seek to cheat the Government out of its money. Ask the Attorney-General's Chambers to advise you how **best** you can lock up those people and jail or **f**ie them for cheating. That is what you need to do but do not penalise the fishermen. You must not take away their subsidy now because you suspect there are people out there abusing the situation. You know them. You can tell who have speedboats. They have to be named. I am telling you what to do. Have a register with names, John Brown, Jack Jones or Mary Haynes. Put them down on a register. Do like

what the IDC has been doing. If you want to get duty-free concessions for small businesses you have to register them. You will have a register and when you have a register people would not take the chance.

As I said, you are talking about \$15 000. That cannot be much so the subsidy cannot be **spreading** to more than about 20 to 25 people. I am asking to keep them in because there are not many fishermen. It is just like talking about mechanising certain industries and forgetting people out there who **are old** and steeped in their ways, but we need them. Let them phase themselves out rather than we drive them out. All I **am** saying is they can be phased out. The time will come when some of these same people will be able to develop so they and their children can raise enough money, then they will see the necessity of having boats of a size which can compete with others. They will see that but let us not be the architect of destroying them. I will not be part of that. Do not push them out there. You will see the boats there. I will say to you that anybody knows when a fisherman is vex; he is not too sweet. You do not trouble them. We need the fishing industry. Everybody must have a chance to go out there.

What we are looking at, Mr. Speaker, is there are people who are able to go out there and borrow money to buy a diesel boat. I will show you the system. I have also been told that there are people who know how to beat the system. If they bring in a complete engine they have to pay duty. You know what they do? They go overseas, bring in the engine partly completed, pay no duty, or very **little** duty, and they put them up. The system is **beaten**. I am just telling you. Listen to me. I listen to them.

How do you get out of that? On the one hand there are thousands of dollars involved and those people are allowed to escape and **benefit** but now you penalise the small man. Tell me how you are going to do it. I want you to look at ways and means of how to beat the system. The fellows make money with their fishing boats. I know that. I **am** not going to say they do not make money. But if you want to tax them or get revenue for Government you have to find your system. Do not leave it for me. If I was in a position I would know what to do because there would have to be a register. **There** would be the **tax** man and certain declarations made. We have to look at this thing now. Every year they talk about this.

I know what the Government should be thinking. Government is thinking they should lock in this whole fishing thing. They want to get out of it because the fishermen are up in arms. We cannot go to Trinidad and fish because the small boats cannot go over there. I am saying to you what anybody can say. My understanding

is that Barbados need not go into Trinidad and fish at all because they can go east of Barbados. But what you need to consider seriously is to let those officers in the Ministry of Agriculture recommend to you how best you can equip the fishermen and the kind of boat that is necessary to go east of Barbados and fish. That is what I am saying to you.

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: It does not matter what kind of diesel boat. You can have a mixture. I am recommending a mixture. Let it be optional. I was told the fumes affect the fish but you can have the boat in such a way that you can have a greater capacity for fish. I think the largest fishing boat in Barbados is owned by a guy in St. Philip. We need to encourage that. I want you to make a policy on that, not really destroying the small man. There are places where these small boats can go. I know there are certain beaches in Barbados where you cannot bring a diesel boat at all. I have been around the island. I will say this to you... Have you ever considered why people opt for these small boats? They opt because the bays in which they come are suitable for that particular boat.

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: If I am hearing this from the Minister who introduced this talking about a Moses boat, and if I know the Moses boat, I do not know if he knows about fishing or fishing boats at all because if he goes down Bathsheba and sees those boats down there that have to go out fishing they are not Moses boats.

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. At least when I make one point it is a new point in **here**. You have to give it to me. I am giving you something new all **the time**. Mr. Speaker, that is all I have to say on this matter.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the Honourable Member has made a strong and valid point in that there still is an inshore fisherman in Barbados, a pot fisherman, a **trawling** fisherman or a net fisherman who drives his boat which is usually somewhere between 20 feet and less by an outboard motor, the **majority** of which use gasoline. There is no question about that at all. You see it every day. From 6 o'clock in the morning you see the people who catch bait for the other fishermen with big boats. You will see him driving a small boat with a man at the back, a 5 or 10 horse power Johnson or **Yamaha** or any of those engines. So, therefore, if you are depriving them of the subsidy that they hitherto got, you are, in effect, increasing their costs. This piece of legislation does not surprise me. I sat in here and listened

to a Government: this Government, come in here and remove all of the concessions that successive Governments over the years introduced in order to encourage local manufacturers, local fishermen and others. So this is in consonance with the policy directives, the new philosophy that is in vogue which this Government has to accept from the multinational institutions that you must not give subsidies to **your** own people to exploit your own resources. This is all it is – a multinational **institution** telling this Government, "You are not to give subsidies to your own people to exploit your own indigenous resources. You must let them pay the full cost of all of the inputs." Never mind that in their own country in the United States of America the fishermen there have access to fuel at a cheaper price than ours with a lot of subsidies. That is what is going on.

4.50 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Both subsidy and less taxes. If you do not believe that the American Government subsidizes their farmers and fishermen and all that, you are living in a fool's paradise. If you do not believe that the European Economic Community does it to industry, you are living in a fool's paradise. This is a very serious thing, how we have been hoodwinked, this Government, not this side. This Government has been hoodwinked by a lot of bogus arguments. It is a very serious thing.

Sir, I heard the Minister in introducing this Resolution say that there is a lot of abuse. What is the abuse? This is not new. There are people within the Ministries who object strenuously to people using initiative. If you have a boat and you fish with it in this area and sometimes you carry out tourists – that is a fact – there are boats that are used both for fishing and tourists. They charter the boats. I see it with my own two eyes in Silver Sands regularly. Some of these same small fishermen who use the boats for "sea egging" – that is another important point, when sea eggs were legal or when they were out there –...

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No, no. There are plenty of them. The fishermen tell me they are young and they are going to leave them. If you all had not objected when we were putting forward the proposal for banning sea eggs years ago we would have sea eggs now. But you all objected. That was one of our faults because we listened to your objection. We could have overridden you.

The position is that in 1989...

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No, no. You were in favour of banning them. In 1989 my understanding is that a new Consumption Tax Order was in existence. That Order makes automotive diesel for use other than road vehicles eligible to Consumption Tax at **45.434** cents per litre. Automotive diesel for use other than fuel for road vehicles - 23 cents. So that the diesel boats, as I understand it, pay Consumption Tax at the rate of 23.107 cents. Gasolene boats pay at **52** cents. There used to be a rebate system in respect of the gasolene of 95%.

My understanding is that subsequently the Government has now been persuaded that in respect of the gasolene that they should remove the subsidy altogether and the reason that **is being** advanced is that it has been subject to abuse.

I want to put this to the Honourable Minister. Even if it could be proven that some of these fishing boats do use the fuel not only for fishing but also for commercial exploitation in the tourist industry, what is wrong with that? Okay, you say it is motor cars. But you are talking about integrity. I want to know this. You are telling me about motor cars. Let us stop here. Do not let us be fooled on this. Because if it is beyond your capacity to devise a system based upon average use and giving a voucher for so much credit, so much duty free fuel to each of these registered people, something is wrong. Because I see here with my own two eyes that a scheme is being proposed that all of a certain class of goods in Barbados should be duty free. Do you want to know about abuse? There is mole abuse in the duty free scheme in Barbados than there **is** among the fishermen with the gasolene. What foolishness are you talking about? There is more abuse of the duty free scheme for sale of goods to tourists than there is with the gasolene. Why do you not do something about that? You are not going to do something about that because you do not want to deal with the powerful interests who get the benefit of that abuse. But you are going to **deal** with - as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East said - a few fishermen whom you are going to damage because you are going to **force** them to convert into a different type of engine. There is no inboard engine that they can buy. You are going to increase the cost. This thing wants looking at.

It is possible to devise a voucher scheme that all of the registered fishermen can be given a number of vouchers based upon their average consumption over the course of a period. The only abuse they could have is if they sell it. That is all that would happen. You would be able to control that. This is a very serious thing. This is a sledge hammer to kill an ant. It is not necessary. The real **truth** is that people in certain places object to the fact that there are a few boats that actually make money. Some of them use the boats for carrying out tourists to the reefs, that is true.

You see it for yourself. Next to Fisherman's Wharf and along there, you would see some of those boats are powered by gasolene. Some of them use it for coastal cruising. Some of these boats have big Johnson **250** horse power engines at the back of them and they **are** cabin cruisers. That is **true**. They are registered as fishing boats. So what?

According to the Inter-American Bank and others you are supposed to ensure that everybody who earns foreign exchange should be able to get access to inputs of production at cheaper rates. If you use gasolene for the purpose of **carrying** on coastal cruises you should be encouraged. You are earning foreign exchange. There are all kinds of difficulties in this problem. I have been trying to think through this. The real abusers of this system would be the people who use the cars and the second one would be the people who use it for private pleasure, water skiing and things of that kind. That is all. Of course knowing the **Barbadian** - the Barbadian is not a fool - if he sees that he has a boat that he can use for his pleasure, water skiing, there is nothing in the world that is going to stop him if he finds that he could make a dollar out of that boat by renting it to tourists. He is **going** to do it. The capitalistic instinct is very ingrained. It is the same thing with the little vehicles, the **Suzuki** vans and so on. There is a large number of them now that are ostensibly vehicles that are in private ownership but are pirates.

This is a little thing that you have to learn, that sometimes you have to have your principle, carry it to the logical conclusion and try and prevent abuse. But I say this, Sir. I know this is going to cause trouble. It is going to cause trouble among a number of people who actually use gasolene because it is the best engine for their particular type of fishing. There is such a fisherman in Barbados known as an inshore fisherman. That is a fact. You must be able to devise a system to give them a voucher to prevent abuse because they cannot buy a diesel engine. I will tell you this, diesel fuel is abused too. You cannot stop people using road vehicles from buying the fuel at the 21 cents a gallon. You must understand that it is sometimes impossible to pass a law **which is** perfect.

I feel that the Government should look at this again, Sir, and devise a voucher system. The Honourable Member has the points:

- (1) you have to be registered as a fishing boat; and
- (2) you get a voucher system.

Nowadays with computers and all that you could trace everything. Let us have a look at it, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to be very long but I cannot imagine that a matter that appears to be as trifling as this could throw up as much steam and heat from Honourable Members. There is not anybody who has spoken, neither of the 2 Members of the Opposition, who have not acknowledged in some way the fact that the subsidy exists and it is possibly an inefficient subsidy because there are people who are able to abuse it.

The only fortunate thing which has come out of the entire debate is the suggestion by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South that perhaps some kind of voucher system should be used. But let us make the general point, that it appears to me that in times of economic difficulty when the Government has to stretch its dollar and target that dollar to those who are most in need, then transparent subsidies appear to be a better way to achieve those goals than subsidies like this which can be abused by persons who do not need to benefit from the system. If anybody wants any elucidation, for example, a voucher system, you can say that but a subsidy must be identifiable in amount and identifiable by the person who benefits from it. The basis on which they benefit is the basis of need. That seems to me to be a policy for any sensible Government, regardless of whether it is receiving pressure from multinational institutions or any of the other arguments which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South regurgitates constantly in these debates.

I am saying that the commitment of the Government is to ensure that where resources are available to the productive sectors that they are placed in the **hands** of people directly who are going to **earn** foreign exchange or who are going to benefit directly from those resources. This seems to be the direction which we have to take.

So that if we accept that the subsidy as it exists is inefficient, then we have to accept that in the future – not only in this area, I am speaking about the general principle – we have to be sure that these arrangements which should benefit selective classes of persons in selective areas of economic activity in a way that will enhance their income earning capacity. There are 227 registered boats of this class. The provision is \$15 000 for this year which means that if it were divided by the 227 each would **receive \$66**.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The point that I am trying to make is that it would seem that if out of those...

Asides.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It would appear to me that if in those 227 people there are 150 who are benefiting but who should not benefit then it seems that you could give more to those who most need it. That appears to me to be the best way for you to allocate scarce resources. That is just my view. If I had 200 people who are potential beneficiaries, 100 of whom are potential abusers of the system, who I **cannot** monitor, or 100 of whom **are** persons who do not need the benefit, it would seem to me that I should take that same amount of money and **try** to channel to those who would most benefit from it. That seems to be the best way.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has recommended a voucher system and I think it is an eminently reasonable recommendation. I cannot see that the Minister of Agriculture, if faced with a case where **60** of these people come to him and say: "We **are** the people who most need to benefit from this, not the people who are carrying tourists out on a boat or people who are using it for jet skis or people who are using it for pleasure craft." The people who are involved in fishing, who the Fisheries **Department** can identify as the people who most need the benefit, if those people came to the Minister of Agriculture or to any Government Minister, I cannot see why those persons should not be the persons who should be most able to benefit from this. I believe the Minister will deal with that when he comes to speak.

I think there are many trifling subsidies that exist. A lot of them need to be **gotten** rid of, even if they are subsidies of a dollar, which are being inefficiently used, or subsidies of \$60 million which are inefficiently being used. I am saying that the fact it is a small subsidy is no basis for it to be ignored because the people of Barbados need accountability in relation to how the taxpayers' funds are being spent. If they knew that people were benefiting, whether by \$20 a week or \$40 a week, to put gas in a jet ski or in a car or in some other vehicle for personal pleasure then it would mean the system needs to be analyzed to ensure **that** there is greater transparency. All the arguments have in fact pointed to inefficiency and to the fact not that it needs to be changed. We have heard arguments from the Honourable Member for Christ Church South that persons who most benefit from the system would be affected by its elimination and I believe, I am certain that he knows that there are more efficient ways to take care of them than the present system, and, on that basis alone, he should give his support to the measure which seeks to remove an inefficient subsidy which is not **targetted** at the people who most need it.

In relation to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, I understand the point he makes about people engaged in the fishing industry, particularly those who

have very slender resources and who are making a contribution and the fact that they can be most vociferous. But again those people need to be targetted for assistance and there are people who should not benefit from these subsidies – not just this, many others – and who are benefiting from them.

5.10 p.m.

It is clear that in these difficult economic times abuses of the system cannot continue. The integrity of the system, therefore, needs to be established. Listen, we had an agricultural subsidy here in Barbados with agricultural vehicles already and everybody knows what happened. So let us not talk about removing it because it is trivia.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is what I am trying to say. Both kinds of things need very careful attention to ensure that Government's resources are not squandered and that is the mode which the Government is presently in. Under that system some who most needed it benefited and some who did not need it also benefited. That is well known, that is not a secret. The time has come for us to pay some attention to these issues and to ensure ... I am not suggesting means testing.

In addition to that I wish to go on to make the point and it was made earlier and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South heard it – I know he did – that both my predecessor and myself in the Ministry of Finance have approved waivers in the fishing industry for persons involved in going into new initiatives, particularly long line fishing and if there are other areas where there is potential for growth then the Government will examine those areas and offer the necessary assistance. There has never been a closed door. Anybody in Barbados can feel free under any legislation to write to the Minister of Finance and request a waiver in respect of any taxes or duties that are imposed on any class of goods which exist in Barbados and on which taxes are exigible.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is true and that is why I am hoping that it may come to an end soon and that you can have direct and transparent, clearly thought out incentive structures which do not require the intervention of Ministers, because that in itself creates its own problems because people have different views about who should benefit. The point is, so long as the potential to earn foreign exchange is there, so long as the persons can establish that they are engaged in the kinds of economic activity which sustains a family and contributes to our national well-being then they can benefit from the incentives which Government offers through various forms

of legislation. This should not go down in history or be recognised by Barbadians as any attempt to disadvantage small fishermen in Barbados and replace them by any other benefits which go to a higher or, if people wish to use a pejorative word, a better class of people in the fishing industry.

With those few words, Sir, I give my full support to this measure.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very brief on this matter. I have discovered, Mr. Speaker, recently that the Government tends to do things that could only get the Government into trouble. If you are telling me that the subsidy is \$15 000 but that only a few people benefit, my point is, and I have seen this same attitude and decision making being done too often as of late. What has happened is, that the Government, obviously because of pressure, decides, "Okay, I have a subsidy there." For example let me say the mortgage interest rate, and I am only giving an example... I am not dealing with housing or anything like that. You say that you had a system where people could claim their mortgage interest rates but the big boys were benefiting. That was the argument used. So what did you do? You threw the whole thing through the window. It does not matter whether the small boys benefited or not, the big boys are benefitting so the whole thing goes through the window. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that in that situation, with the mortgage interest rate, if you know that the big boys were benefiting you could have put on a limit and say, any houses valued over \$300 000, no mortgage interest rate can be claimed. The same thing is happening here.

You have \$15 000 for 200 people and you say that only a few people benefit. So what is done, you take the whole thing and throw it through the window and you use the word that is an IMF word, morning, noon and night – "transparency". They use it all day, all night. Governments have to sit down and decide and look at the reasons why things were put in place in the first place. One cannot just get up, Mr. Speaker, and abandon all subsidies, everything, because the IMF or World Bank tells you that you have to abandon all. You have to look at the reasons why these things were put in place and check whether the reasons are still valid or not. You should be able to tell the IMF or tell the World Bank, "Look fellows, I can do A, B, and D, but I can't do C, because it will cause social dislocation in the country". I am only giving an example of what a Government should do. You cannot just sit down and everything they tell you to do, you decide to do. I don't understand. You have the Minister saying there are subsidies in the system now that should be gotten rid of. That is what the IMF has said, "Get rid of all subsidies". So the Government decides okay, the IMF says to get rid of all. I am getting rid of all. There is no sitting down and looking at the reasons why these things were put in

place. Looking at the results of removing these things and see the social dislocation that could come about in a country before you decide to do everything that is suggested to you. This is what I have been complaining about all the time, for the past year and a half, that you sit down and agree with everything that they tell you.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South suggested a voucher system which found favour with the present Acting Minister of Finance. At least that is a suggestion, but whether the Government, having removed the subsidy, will be able to then use a voucher system to at least give the money or the funds to the people who really want the money is debatable. I am saying, that to remove \$15 000 mainly because you were told to remove all subsidies is really carrying the joke a bit far, because I believe there are small people who will be benefiting from this just as there **would** be rich people who may be benefiting.

Mr. Speaker, a reference was made to the agricultural subsidies on vehicles. Mr. Speaker, that decision was taken and it has always been my view from the time I went into the Ministry of Finance. I was agitating from the time I went into the Ministry of Finance that that should have been moved because I said to the **Prime** Minister that those persons who wanted to benefit from that system would have used it already because it was in place for 4 or 5 years and there is no sense allowing a system like that to **run** for 5 years because what was happening, by the time I went into the Ministry of Finance in 1991, was that people were getting the subsidy, buying the vans and their children were driving them to school at Queen's College and Harrison College and all over the place. My suggestion was to remove that subsidy on the vehicles and use it instead to give to persons in order to encourage them to plough up their lands and get it back into agriculture. That was the suggestion I made and I have always been against the subsidy from the day I went into the Ministry of Finance so I think the two things are different. The subsidy to agricultural vehicles was so much more massive than the \$15 000, that to juxtapose the two things as though they are the same thing, is really a joke.

Mr. Speaker, I really don't see the logic behind getting yourself into confusion for \$15 000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance argued the very strongest case for this House to vote against this piece of legislation. He told the House that it concerns a subsidy which amounts to \$15 000 and that the Government's difficulty with the application for subsidy was that there

was this transparency, how it was applied, that it was intended, Sir, to benefit you but it ended benefiting the Leader of the House, that is what transparency means.

It was suggested to him, Sir, that there was an alternative to the abolition of the subsidy, that is, putting in a system that could make it transparent, a voucher system. He has agreed, Sir, that the voucher system **would** allow the Government to accomplish the purpose of helping the fishermen. Therefore, Sir, since we have an alternative that the Government finds acceptable, the only amendments to the Act that we could possibly support would be an amendment that calls for the implementation of a voucher system, that the Minister has agreed to, that would make the system transparent rather than the abolition system in itself. I believe we in this House who have heard the Minister's argument recognise that the Government had been given an alternative to the abolition that the Government accepts and, therefore, we could only be subscribing to foolishness. Now we are being called upon to abolish a small subsidy.

5.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there is a broader point in all of this. This Government seems to believe that economic policy is about dealing with a lot of ignorant little irritants that do not substantially affect the Treasury but cause a lot of dislocation to a number of small people across Barbados. We have a responsibility in this House to put an end to what I feel, Sir, is an encroaching form of economic tyranny where the Government by a series of measures incrementally affect the withdrawing benefits of small people without substantially affecting the Treasury.

In the course of our discussion of the Income Tax Act, the Government justified the withdrawal of a number of concessions from people on the grounds that it did not reduce revenue by substantial amounts. That was an irritant, Sir. In the course, Sir, we have seen the Government now decide that Barbadians cannot purchase goods duty free when they are leaving the **Airport** just to cause irritation. Throughout the whole range of recent legislation that has been brought to the House, what we have been confronted with as a Parliament is a large number of little things being devised by Government to cause great economic confusion in this country without the possibility of Government accomplishing any substantial progress where the economy is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we have to tell the Government through our voting on this measure that we are tired of coming here as a Parliament and have to agitate on the question **as** to whether or not fifteen thousand dollars of subsidy should be granted to fishermen or not. We

are tired of having to come to this House and support a Government which is not governing.

Sir, when a Government starts dealing with all kinds of trivia like how we are going to allocate fifteen thousand dollars for 225 people, it is not governing. It is so caught up with trivia and niggly little things that it is missing the big points. Therefore, I feel, given the long list of trivia – little irritations – that this Government has put in the place of sound economic policy that we have a responsibility in this House this evening to vote against this impediment as a way of telling the Government that the time has come for it to stop bringing to this House things that are known to be foolishness. This is foolishness. The bottom line is simply that the Minister has agreed that there is an alternative to the **abolition** of the subsidy. When the vote comes, Sir, I certainly will not have a basis for voting for the amendment proposed by Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: I just want to ask the Honourable Member if he thinks that I will sit here and listen to foolishness.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: You do not have a choice, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, in winding up this debate, the discussion has ranged far and wide. I think to a large extent the Honourable Member for St. John adequately summed up most of the points that I wanted to make. I think there was a lot of emotion honestly. I heard things about putting people on the breadline and about social dislocation. Having done, as the Honourable Member for St. John did, to **equate** arithmetic calculation, it could be seen that we are talking about between \$60.00 and **\$100.00** in subsidies to those persons who applied. In any event, Mr. Speaker, the intention of the subsidy was for persons who did fishing and not necessarily for persons who buy a **14** feet or **18** feet fiberglass, go and register it as a fishing boat and then use it for other purposes. I am satisfied **that** the subsidy was inefficient and, as a **first step**, we are recommending the removal of the subsidy. That would not preclude me, Mr. Speaker, from making the necessary recommendations to the Ministry of Finance for waivers if any fishermen feel hard done by as a result of the removal and that is the route I am going.

I recognise and I appreciate the invaluable role that in shore fishing is doing. Granted, that contributes only marginally to the overall fishing catch but at the same time it is important. The measure is not meant to hurt those persons with the small outboard motor who do Sunday and Wednesday morning hauling of the fishing pot. The measure is not meant to hurt those people.

Therefore, with those few words, I now move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative with the House dividing as follows:

Ayes: Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Hon. M. A. KING, Hon. E. E. GREAVES, Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, Hon. W. HALL, Hon. C. V. WALKER, Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, Hon. D. W. BOWEN, Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, Mr. J. O. TUDOR and Mr. T. C. ESTWICK – 11.

Noes: Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN, Mr. H. deB. FORDE, Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. L. R. TULL, Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW and Mr. R. C. EASTMOND – 9.

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly. 5.30 p.m.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to draw to the Honourable Leader's attention that during the course of the morning I asked that an item on the order paper be deferred.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: To ask the Minister of Education.

1. Is the Minister aware of the following conditions existing at Holy Innocents' Composite School in the parish of St. Thomas namely:

- (a) that there is an asbestos roof on the building comprising the original block and there is a real fear among staff, parents and children that the nature of the said roof may be injurious to the health **of** persons using the school on a regular basis?
- (b) that there is debris, thought to be bat droppings, among the rafters of the said roof?
- (c) that the **Parent/Teachers'** Association of the school has by its own efforts, bought 96 **gallons** of **paint** to redecorate the building but they are unable to pursue their desires by reason of a lack of painters?
- (d) that the **curtilage** of the school needs to be fenced and that the school authorities have themselves raised some funds for that purpose but are unable **to** undertake **or** complete the necessary work?
- (e) that water settles in **two** areas of the yard which is itself in grave **need** of paving?

2. If the answers to the foregoing are in the **affirmative** will the Minister **please:-**

- (i) carry out necessary investigations and assessments of the problems **or** conditions;
- (ii) state what are the results of such investigations and assessments; and
- (iii) state what plans the Ministry of Education has to assist in a resolution of the problems or rectification of the conditions?

Mr. SPEAKER: Same Honourable Member - rough surfaces of hard courts at Holy Innocents **School**.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: To ask the Minister of Tourism and Sports.

1. Is the Minister aware that the hard court at Holy Innocents in the parish of St. Thomas is in a temble state of disrepair in that :

- (a) the surface is rough and broken and
- (b) the fencing to the court is now non-existent?

2. If the answers to the foregoing are in the affirmative, will the Minister please state what plans **his** Ministry has for **carrying** out remedial works to the hard court?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter. Facilities for females at Boscobelle School.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: To ask the Minister of Education.

- 1. Is the Minister aware that the Boscobelle Boys' School and the Boscobelle Girls' School have been amalgamated without proper provision being made to accommodate female students at what was formerly the Boscobelle Boys' School?
- 2. Will the Minister please state what measures his Ministry proposes to institute to correct this problem?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same Honourable Member. School fees and **services** at St. Joseph Hospital.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: To ask the Minister of Health.

- 1. Will the Minister please state the range of services presently being provided **and/or** planned by the St. Joseph Hospital and the fees and other charges being levied or proposed to be levied by the Hospital for the said services?
- 2. Will the Minister please state whether the Hospital is now providing or intends to provide services primarily **and/or** exclusively for the benefit of the people of the Northern parishes, namely St. Peter, St. Lucy, St. Andrew, St. James, St. Joseph and St. **Thomas** and, further, the nature of such services and the terms under which the residents of the said parishes will have access to **any** such services?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same Honourable Member. Replacement of Four Wings Bridge, St. Peter.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: To **ask** the Minister of **Public** Works, Telecommunications and Transportation.

1. Is the Minister aware that the Four Wings Bridge at the Risk, St. Peter was demolished three years ago?
2. Is the Minister also aware that the absence of proper signs on the road **leading** to the former bridge makes that stretch of road extremely hazardous to the general public and that the closure of the bridge has created great inconvenience to the travelling public in the district?
3. Will the Minister please state when the Four Wings Bridge will be replaced and so relieve the inconvenience and hazard to the public caused by its present state?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same Honourable Member. Repairs to road at Church Street Gardens and Tenanui in St. Peter.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: To ask the Minister of Public Works, Telecommunications and Transportation.

1. Is the Minister aware that roads at Church **Street** Gardens, St. Peter are in a state of acute disrepair?
2. Will the Minister please state when the said roads will be repaired?
3. Will the Minister further state which tenantry roads in St. Peter his Ministry proposes to **have** constructed as part of its **programme** in the fiscal year 1993/94?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same Honourable Member. Roads for Maynards Housing Development in St. Peter.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: To ask the Minister of Housing, Lands, Community Development and Culture.

1. Is the Minister aware that part of the housing development of the National Housing Corporation at Maynards, St. Peter has not been serviced with roadways?
2. Will the Minister please state what measures his Ministry proposes to put in place to rectify that situation?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Repairs to various roads in St. James and in St. Peter.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, to ask the Minister of Public Works, Telecommunications and Transportation.

1. Is the Minister aware that the following public roads are in urgent need of repair, namely, Store House Gap, **Yearwood** Road and Husbands Road in Mount Standfast, Halls Road, Rock **Dundo** and Trents Road to Greenwich Village, all in St. James, and Lower Bakers Road from **Mullins** to Upper Bakers, St. Peter?
2. Will the Minister indicate what plans Government has for fixing those roads?

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: To ask the Minister of Public Works, Telecommunications and Transportation.

1. Is the Minister aware that South Cemetery Lane, St. Peter needs **street** lights as a matter of urgency?
2. Will the Minister indicate what **plans** Government has for installing **street** lights in **South Cemetery** Lane?

5.40 p.m.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: To ask the Minister of Housing, **Lands**, Community Development and Culture:

1. Is the Minister aware that **there** is a problem of a **serious** shortage of windows to **the** sea along the **West Coast** of St. James?
2. Will the Minister indicate what **plans**, if **any**, Government has for the provision of windows to the **sea** along the West Coast of Barbados?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same Honourable Member reports facilities for Mount **Standfast**, St. James.

Mr. K. C. EASTMOND: To ask the Minister of Tourism and Sports:

1. Is the Minister aware that there is no playground or other facility for sports for the youth of Olive Gap Road, Layne's Gap, Paynes Bay, Mount Standfast, the Garden, **Weston** and Lower **Carlton** in the parish of St. James?
2. Will the Minister indicate what plans the Government has for the provision of such facilities?

Mr. SPEAKER: That brings us to the end of Notices of Questions.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, Question No. 33.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: To ask the Minister of Housing and Lands:

1. Will the Minister please state the policy of Government on the sale of its rental units?
2. Is the Minister aware that tenants in the Belleplaine Housing Area who wanted to purchase their units were given the undertaking by the National Housing Corporation that if they cleared their arrears, no further sums would be payable until finalisation of their conveyances?
3. Is the Minister aware that the National Housing Corporation's legal representatives are now threatening renewed legal action against tenants in the Belleplaine Housing Area notwithstanding liquidation of those earlier arrears and the delay by Government in completing the conveyances?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 33 is as follows:-

- (a) The policy of Government on the sale of its rental units is as follows:
 - Tenants who had signed Agreements to purchase their lots and/or units at the concessionary rates set out in the 1963 policy decision, or those who had made deposits towards the purchase of the said lots and/or units at the said concessionary rates, should be allowed to complete their purchase at the said rates;
 - Tenants who had never signed Agreements to purchase their lots and/or units at the said concessionary rates, nor had paid deposits towards their purchase, but who were renting the lots and/or units from the 1960s or before, should be given the option to purchase the said lots and/or units at the said concessionary rates. If they fail to exercise the option within 6 months, they should be made to pay the fair market value for the said lots and/or units when they are ready to purchase them;

- Tenants who commenced renting the lots and/or units any time between 1970 and 1978 should be given the option to purchase the lots and/or units at a new concessionary rate of .50¢ per square foot for the land, plus the cost which the Corporation incurred in having the respective lots surveyed. If the option is not exercised within 6 months, they should be made to pay the fair market value whenever they are ready to purchase the said lots and/or units;

- All other tenants should be offered the said lots and/or units at the market value.

(b) There is no evidence to support this claim.

(c) Any legal action which is being taken applies generally to all delinquent tenants of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Is the Ministry taking into consideration in calculating the purchase price the rents which have been paid by persons who have been in occupation of these units since 1970?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: At the moment the National Housing Corporation has not taken that into consideration.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Will the Minister please state what notice is given to the tenants to make them aware of Government's policy?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: As far as I am aware the National Housing Corporation indicates by letter to the tenants or prospective purchasers the conditions which have been set out here. As a matter of fact, there are a number of people whom I am told by the National Housing Corporation have been so informed and have not responded.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Will the Minister state how many people, in fact, have taken advantage of the seemingly generous terms of the Government's offer?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I am in no position at this point, Sir, to state how many people have taken advantage of that but I do know that a sizeable number has taken advantage of it. I will undertake to get the respective numbers of persons who have been offered and those who

have accepted for the Honourable Member and for the benefit of this House at some future date.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Will the Minister please state what is Government's position in a situation where there is substantial arrears and a tenant is interested in purchasing the property at the market value?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I would assume, Mr. Speaker, that the person who owes substantial arrears should first seek to put his house in order before he seeks to purchase the house from the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Will the Minister please state what arrangements, if any, are made for payment by instalments? If there is a rate of interest charged what is that rate of interest?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether there are arrangements for payment by instalment but I am sure that the National Housing Corporation is sympathetic in these matters and would make arrangements with a prospective purchaser if he or she goes into the National Housing Corporation and arranges to have a plan in terms of instalments which would be acceptable to both sides.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Will the Minister please state what mortgage funds, if any, are available either from the General Workers' Housing Fund or through the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation to assist those tenants who might be interested in making use of the offer?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Sir, in responding to the previous question from the Leader of the Opposition I omitted to respond to the second part of the question in respect of interest rates. Again, as I said, I would just want my previous reply to be couched in an understanding that whatever arrangements or plans for instalment would be put in place that naturally there might very well be an arrangement in respect of what interest rate would be charged. The general interest rate which is charged by the National Housing Corporation is relatively low. It is not horrendous. I do not want to commit myself because I am not sure about that.

Let me state in respect of the question which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has asked, the National Housing Corporation, I am informed, has about \$5 million in the General Workers' Housing Fund. It has started to lend that money to persons who have applied. We have lots of applications. We are seeking during the coming financial year to have some further replenishment of that Fund.

The Honourable Member is very well aware of the fact that there is a Housing Credit Fund which is also available. In some circumstances arrangements are made with the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company to make funds available in this particular area. I cannot put a handle on the amount of funds which are available there.

I would also make the point that in some of the arrangements which the National Housing Corporation has particularly for the sale of some of its lands through the Housing Credit Fund the Ministry has made arrangements with some commercial banks also, particularly the Barbados National Bank, to make loans available for those persons who qualify. A prospective purchaser would have to meet the qualifications which are laid down. We do have funds there which are now being disbursed and arrangements are made through the Housing Credit Fund and also through the Barbados National Bank and through the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation. I cannot put a handle on the total amount.
5.50 p.m.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that due to the imperfection of the records at the National Housing Corporation, that a number of letters of offer of Notice to Purchase go to the wrong addressees and are not received at all, or are sometimes received very late, by the true tenants.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: That is quite possible, Sir.

Mr. L. R. TULL: It is not possible. It is true.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I said, it is quite possible.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Since the Minister has accepted it is quite possible that a bona fide tenant may not receive the letter within the 6 month period to exercise his option, what plans has the Minister made to accommodate those persons when they do in fact get notice?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I am sure, Sir, that the National Housing Corporation is not so unfeeling that if a person who should have received a notice indicated to the National Housing Corporation that through some particular problem, in terms of the inadequacy of the record, they did not get the letter in time, that the Corporation would not still allow the person to exercise his option. I want to give the Honourable Member the assurance that if he knows of any such cases and he indicates them to the National Housing Corporation or to me as Minister, I would personally follow it up and see that this is done.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the Minister, because he seems to be giving more a

hunch than practice. Is the Minister aware that in respect of the Waverley Cot Housing Area in St. George that there are a number of people who have ...

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you are now going into a question.

Mr. L. R. TULL: But, Sir, what is wrong with?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a **supplementary** question in' reference to the question before us. It is a **separate** question.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, the Honourable Member has given endless answers relating to housing areas in Barbados and I am pursuing ...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am being heckled ...

Mr. SPEAKER: What I **am** trying to say is that supplementary questions cannot **introduce** new material.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that there are housing areas where people have not received notices of option to purchase and have had the National Housing Corporation give them notice that they will have to leave?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that. Whether it is in Waverley Cot, **Baxters** Road, or any place. I would just want to give the Honourable Member an undertaking that if there are any areas which can be pointed out to me where people have not received such notices, I would look into it.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Will the Minister please state the position of Government in situations whereby people have paid partial substantial **arrears** of rent and the actual conveyances are not ready, whether it is the policy of this Ministry, and I can speak of specific cases, still to pursue legal action against these tenants.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: The question, Mr. **Speaker**, is a little confusing. The Honourable Member asked a question about the case where people have paid ...

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Honourable Member is a bit ambiguous or very difficult to understand. I think, in this case, if the Honourable Member wants to put his question much clearer I think I will give him the opportunity to do that.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I **am** dealing with situations whereby there have been substantial **arrears** ...

Mr. SPEAKER: In respect of this supplemental question?

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Yes, and I am speaking of specific cases in the Belleplaine Housing **Area**. I know of **2** cases that I can acquaint the Minister with. The conveyances are not **ready** and yet Government is pursuing legal action against these tenants. Is this **the** policy of Government?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I have some difficulty, Mr. Speaker, in understanding the question but let me just state: If a tenant owes rent to the National Housing Corporation, rent has to be paid. I don't know, about this part payment on a conveyance, because presumably if a conveyance is being prepared it would suggest to me that there is some agreement between the landlord and the tenant for purchase so that I really have a little difficulty in understanding exactly what the Honourable Member is trying to say.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did partly allow it but I think it would be better for the Member to bring it in a better **form** as a question and get a straight answer rather than be sort of not **too** clear as to whether it applied to this or if it is a fair supplementary question.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I don't see there is any difficulty with the question it relates to what has been said.

Mr. SPEAKER: You see, you are asking about Government's policy **and that** will carry you into a new area.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware that there are instances where people pay for NHC property and then because of problems **within** NHC, NHC is unable to convey these properties which have been paid for?

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I **am** aware that that is a problem and I am concerned, like the Honourable Member, about it. There are people who have completed the purchase price but some of the problems, as I understand it, relate to the surveying and the other problem relates to finalisation of the conveyance. Again, I have indicated to the National Housing Corporation that it should try to conclude purchases **as** expeditiously as possible and they should not **really** keep people hanging like this for too long. I **am** sure **the** Honourable Member

aware that once the money is paid and the purchase is completed that the particular tenant would have no problem as far as the property being conveyed to that person is concerned. I, like you, am aware of that difficulty and would want to give you the assurance that we are working to overcome those problems which have been identified –

- (1) which is a legal problem, that is, in getting the Conveyance ready, and
- (2) the surveying, which as I understand it is the greatest problem.

Mr. SPEAKER: End of question time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

NO. 1 – TO MOVE THE FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION CALLING UPON GOVERNMENT TO TAKE STEPS TO RESUSCITATE THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the timely resolution introduced some months ago by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, calling on Government to take urgent steps to resuscitate the sugar industry. Unfortunately, Sir, we ran into the summer recess but the events that have happened since have only served to emphasise the urgency of this matter because a Receiver has actually been appointed for the processing side of the industry, not the farming side. Within recent weeks there have been 2 developments of great human significance which we ought to be concerned about. In the first place the 400 or so persons who worked in the factories have been laid off because there is no money to pay them as they set about preparing for the next reaping season.

The second thing is that there are about 190 persons, many of whom have contributed upwards of 60 years of service to the sugar industry who were being provided a pension by the industry. It was an unfunded pension scheme and they have not been able to receive their pensions in the last 2 weeks because the processing side of the industry has virtually run out of money.

The urgency of this debate has increased quite considerably since it was introduced and I consider it important that this Parliament should have an opportunity to express itself with respect to the matters affecting the sugar industry. In particular, Sir, I would hope that a spokesman on the Government side would take the opportunity, Sir, to indicate what is the Government's

policy with respect to a lot of unsettled issues of policy which only the Government could speak about.

There is no doubt about it, Mr. Speaker, that the sugar industry is in serious decline and depression in this country, both physical and psychological. In fact, I agree with the sotto voce remark of the Honourable Member for St. Peter who says that we can go further and state quite categorically that the industry is in serious danger of extinction if the Government does not take certain clear decisions with respect to policy issues and if the Government does not give a positive signal to the industry that it is interested in its survival and resuscitation.

It matters not, Mr. Speaker, what index of evaluation and measurement is used in determining the physical depression of the industry. We have only to remind ourselves that 7 years ago – 1986 – we were producing 110 000 tonnes of sugar in this country and that last reaping season we realised little over 50 000 tonnes and the indications are that we will reap less than 50 000 tonnes in the next reaping season.

We have only to remind ourselves, Mr. Speaker, that in 1981 some 9 000 acres were under cultivation by small farmers, those who produce under 100 tonnes of sugar, and in 1991-92, 10 years later, we have only 2 000 acres under small farmer cultivation.

We have only to remind ourselves, Mr. Speaker, that the average output per acre was as high as 4 tonnes of sugar 25 years ago and that the national average of the industry has fallen 2.4 tonnes per acre in 1991-1992. We have only to remind ourselves, Mr. Speaker, Barbados for the first time in its history is importing sugar for domestic consumption and that that situation is likely to obtain for the balance of this century and beyond, if we are not careful.

In addition to sugar, we are also importing molasses, an unheard of situation in the history of this country.

As far as the physical plant is concerned, I ought to remind the House that there is the boiler at Buckley Factory. Of the 2 boilers, one was put up in 1957 and the other dates back to 1906/1907. So that gives you some feel, Mr. Speaker, of the extent to which the industry is in physical decline, and when it is borne in mind that the total indebtedness of the industry, taking the field and factory side together is in excess of \$200 million, with the factory side owing the bank over \$120 million you get some feel of the extent to which the industry has become totally unviable.

One of the great concerns of all of us who follow the debate on sugar in Barbados is the fact that the Democratic Labour Party Government, apart from its inactivity, its delay, in making important decisions of policy with respect to the future of the industry is the fact that whenever they speak of sugar they do **so** with a considerable amount of historical and emotional overlay reminding us always that sugar is associated with an exploited period of our history on the part of the mercantile and the planter class of the period.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to remind ourselves that whatever the historical connection with sugar and exploitation, sugar is important for Barbados as a major national asset and as a major industry and we ought to view the sugar industry with that son of detachment and objectivity and we ought to rescue it from its sorry historical past in many respects.

We ought to remind ourselves that sugar is important because of the fact that it still employs 600 000 to 700 000 people. It helps to keep Bridgetown viable and alive because of the sale of the inputs and the finances of the industry by Bridgetown. It **also** helps to keep many people in rural Barbados at work.

We ought to remind ourselves too, **Mr.** Speaker, that notwithstanding all of the advances made in crop research, that given the rainfall pattern and the soil composition in Barbados, sugar remains the only crop that can cover the acreage which we have in Barbados available for cultivation.

In addition to that, it can earn an average \$60 million or more of foreign exchange, badly needed for the country, without at the same time costing a lot of hard currency by way of inputs to earn that foreign exchange. To that extent there can be no question whatsoever that sugar is an important foundation of this Barbados economy and if we talk seriously of reviving the national economy we have to focus and concern ourselves with the revival of the sugar industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to spend too much time enquiring why is it that the industry is in the state of physical and psychological depression that it is in. I do not want to pass that question without making a few observations. In the past and continuing even now, except for the fact that the Receiver is in and that the management class therefore on the processing side, by definition, no longer has any job, except for that situation, we have had a situation obtaining in Barbados where, because of the accident of birth and because of ascriptive considerations,

persons who inherit these large plots of lands ended up managing the processing side of the industry. The time has come in Barbados for the sugar industry to be run by a sophisticated and competent team of professional managers recruited on the basis of merit and competence unrelated to ascriptive considerations and unrelated to accident of birth. If the Government is to continue to play any part in supporting the sugar industry, I would urge that one of the first things it must do is to insist that the industry be **run** by professionally trained and competent managers and forget about the notion that Warrens can be run and managed by persons who are there simply because **of** the accident of their birth and because of the closed system that operates based on ascriptive consideration. That has to come to an end.

6.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that when we brought in the system of price support we in the Government at the time should have insisted that one of the conditionalities of continuing price support would be that professional management had **to** be recruited **at** Warrens. That is not to exempt the Government from the responsibility for the decline of the industry in recent years because the Government has no clear policy with respect to land use. We cannot be talking seriously about the future of a sugar industry when some of the best lands which have traditionally been devoted to sugar cultivation and agricultural activity **are allowed** to go out of production and to change use by a Government which accommodates speculators whenever it is in office. We cannot have that, Mr. Speaker.

We need to have a clear policy with respect to which lands in Barbados are going to be identified and reserved for agricultural activity, including sugar, and which lands are going to be used for other things, whether it be leisure, entertainment, housing, manufacturing and so on. But we cannot have the heart of St. George and St. John, the sugar belt of Barbados, being invaded by speculators, supported by the Government of the day. This Democratic Labour Party Administration must bear heavy responsibility for some of the difficulties which are being experienced, not all by the sugar industry and, to that, we must add the indecision of the Government.

Let me elaborate on that particular point, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the massive debt which the industry is facing both at the processing side and at the **farm** side, I think that Government as a matter of policy must indicate what it is going to do via the Barbados National Bank with respect to interest forbearance and debt forgiveness. I think that policy must be enunciated and made clear to all concerned so that there will be the beginning of a new confidence in the industry. I think that Government must indicate too what is going to be its taxation policy with respect to agriculture generally and **with** respect to the sugar industry. It is **total**

madness, Mr. Speaker, for us to be seriously interested in the revival of agriculture in Barbados including sugar and have a taxation policy which says that the major inputs whether it be machinery, pesticides, herbicides or otherwise will be taxable on the same basis as if it were a manufacturing input in the manufacturing industry. That has been the policy enunciated within the last year and that has done a lot to lame what remains of enthusiasm in the industry and it has added considerably to the psychological depression of which I spoke.

Sir, the Government has an important role in the industry not only in relation to marketing but in relation to taxation, in relation to land use policy, and an indication to as to what sort of production targets that we are going to be aiming at in the future.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when I was a boy and you were perhaps a little older when Barbados produced 200 000 tonnes of sugar. It has been a long time since we have realised that son of target. In more recent years, however, we have been talking of 120 000 tonnes, then 100 000 tonnes, then 90 000 tonnes and then 75 000 tonnes. It is a matter of common knowledge that we have not even been realising that but we are 50 000 tonnes and below.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that Government signals to all Barbados what is going to be the production target that it is going to set with respect to sugar production and what acreage of agricultural land it is going to devote to the realisation of that target. That sort of indicative planning and that sort of positive signaling is important if the industry is to know where it is going. But the industry has had within the last 30 years a considerable number of expert studies. You will remember the report prepared by Dr. Rawle Farley in the early days of the Democratic Labour Party Administration in 1961-66. That was followed years later by a report which was prepared largely by a team of Australians and headed by an Australian by the name of McGregor and in more recent years we have had the Landell Mills Report and we have also had the Booker Tate Study. In each case, I think it is correct to say, Mr. Speaker, that they indicated what they regard as viable production targets.

Within recent years, the Government has not said what is its target and the impression has gone abroad that this Democratic Labour Party Administration does not seem to mind the sugar industry collapsing under its watch. I think that is an unfortunate perception that they should allow it to go abroad that the Democratic Labour Party has no particular interest in sugar. They think it is good politics for the management of the industry to disappear under them because it is consistent with the thinking of a lot of

people out there who associate the industry with its history of exploitation. When people begin to look for hard evidence by way of investigation of the truth or otherwise of the statement, they not only come back to the failure of the Government to make timely decisions with respect to the industry but they look around at the ADC plantations and they recognise that they are all under grass. They ask themselves – Is this Democratic Labour Party serious about the revival of agriculture and the sugar industry when we have Vineyard in the run-down state that it is, when we have Graeme Hall virtually abandoned as it is, when we have Spencers, River and the Belle in the state of serious disrepair that they all are in? I think that it is quite appropriate for us to appeal to the Government to make up its mind with respect to the future of the sugar industry; the precise role it will play in earning foreign exchange; the role that it will play in the employment of Barbadians and the role it will play in the environmental management of our landscape because it has an important role to play in that regard.

6.20 p.m.

Now, it is wrong, Mr. Speaker, to put all the problems of the sugar industry at the feet of the Government. I, myself, never attempted in my analysis to do any such thing. In fact, I began by saying that we need professional management, but there is no doubt that it has an important role to play at this critical moment in helping to turn around the industry, a role which it is not playing. I think we must continue to press them in the most vigorous way to make the timely decisions which are necessary if the industry is to get that signal that Government is interested in its continuation as an industry.

I want to say that a line of credit is needed immediately so that the industry can prepare itself for reaping in another few months. That line of credit has to come from the Government and up to a few days ago there was no clear indication that about \$7 million which is needed by way of a line of credit has been given either by the Central Bank or by the Barbados National Bank. I am again calling upon the Government to ensure that the industry is given that line of credit of about \$7 million so that it can prepare itself for the next reaping season.

I want to say further that the appointment of the receiver in a sense is long overdue but is not without difficulty because when a man or a firm is appointed receiver unless the business over which the receiver is managing has the capacity to generate revenue the person who has initiated the receivership must provide the receiver with money to manage. It seems to me that the present receiver should demand that of those who have appointed him. It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker, asking a man to be receiver of a business which has no money unless those

who have appointed the receiver are prepared to provide the money. Without that, he cannot manage. That is why it is important that the Barbados National Bank which appointed a receiver over the processing side of the industry which owed over \$120 million should supply the receiver with the wherewithal to manage.

The second point is that the management of the sugar industry, the processing side, on a day to day basis calls for some level of expertise and there is a case for separating the day to day management from the overall receivership. There is such a case which the Government may wish seriously to consider.

What is also of some concern in the industry is the fact that the receiver is a sole practitioner as opposed to a company. Should he take sick or die a lot of persons, particularly the farming community, are concerned about making contracts with a receiver who is a sole practitioner. That is a point of some significance to which the Government may wish to pay some attention.

I want to return to an important question with respect to the future of the sugar industry. **Booker Tate** in its study and several others who have been concerned with the industry made the point that the wage structure is too burdensome. **Booker Tate** said that a devaluation of the Barbados dollar would help the revival of the industry. We only have to look around in the Caribbean where other industries are competitive and doing much better to note what is the value of their dollar *vis-a-vis* the U.S. dollar. In Guyana, we are talking about G\$100 to \$US1, in Jamaica, J\$22 to US\$1, in Trinidad TT\$4 to US\$1 and so on.

I am not here making any case for devaluation. All I am saying is that the time has come when the Union, Government and the industry must sit down and find ways of revisiting that wage contract so as to ensure that it would be less burdensome on the industry, and hopefully the industry will be more competitive. That calls for a lot of new and creative ways of thinking with respect to the future and the Government may itself have a role to play bearing in mind that the average age of a person in the industry is about 60. It might very well be that they can make a contribution in those discussions and negotiations whereby we can find a new, creative and imaginative way of revisiting those wage contracts.

For example, Mr. Speaker, it might very well be that while the wage contract may be broken, the Government may wish to ensure that insofar as the last 3 to 5 years of the workers involved NIS contributions will be on a lower wage than they have enjoyed in the past that the

Government itself will make some contribution towards ensuring that their pension which they will realise at 65 will be based on a contribution as though the wage level were still in force. It may very well be that the taxation policy itself of the Government may be reorganised in such a way as to contribute towards a renegotiation of existing wage levels.

Without claiming to have the answer or providing all the specifics as by way of illustrations and examples, it is going to be important, if the industry is to survive, that the whole question of the wage structure and the wage rates which constitutes 50% of the cost of the industry be revisited and something done about it.

Mr. Speaker, with my time rapidly running out, I want to call upon the Government to realise that it has a vital and important role to play in the future of **the industry** and its immediate resuscitation. I want to call upon them to act with despatch in enunciating a clear-sighted policy dealing with the whole question of production targets, the whole question of credit, land use and the **role of the Barbados National Bank** in the future of the industry. I want to call upon the Government to signal what its interest forbearance will be with respect to the debt and what debt forgiveness will be given. I want the Government in particular to indicate what is going to be the role of the small farmer in the future of the sugar industry. I do not believe, as I hear, that the small farmer has no role. I would concede that the small farmer has a limited role but I do not accept that he has no role. The role for the small farmer must be indicated along with the support which the Government would give for the future.
6.30 p.m.

The Government needs to enunciate a taxation policy with regard to agriculture generally and the sugar industry in particular. It needs, as I have said, Sir, to sit with the industry and the union and see how best the wage agreement can be renegotiated to make the industry more competitive and reduce the present wage costs. The industry is being suffocated by Government's indecision. The Minister of Agriculture must not follow the example of his recent predecessors in office, those over the last 6 to 7 years, and not ...

Aside.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Yes, I served with distinction. When I had the responsibility I made the statements and I made them in time. It must be recalled that when I left in 1986 we had produced 111 000 tonnes of sugar. Compare that with the situation now and that is the evidence.

The point I am making is that the industry is being suffocated by Government's failure to take decisions with respect to critical issues outstanding in the sugar industry. What the industry needs above all is a positive signal from Government that it is interested in its revival and resuscitation and that the Government is prepared to play its **part** with respect to taxation policies, marketing, land use policies and credit support.

I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, this is the second opportunity I have had since entering this House to debate in this way the issue of agriculture. This particular debate has been characterised as not being short on questions and being very low in relation to answers. Members of the Opposition have posed all of the right questions that everybody else has posed over time and have parroted all of the right issues that seem to arise in relation to the sugar industry. But even though they call for national commitment to the solution of problems, there has been a shortage of answers.

I cannot conceal my disappointment in the contribution of the mover of the Resolution who obviously was not in **the** frame of mind to set the tone for the debate which **took** place back in July. That is an important exercise because, obviously, he **had** some experience in the issue like the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, and he probably should not have let his mind be jarred by the prospect of golf balls and should have paid attention to the issue that was critical at the time which is the future of the sugar **industry**.

There is nobody who can doubt any of the assertions he has made. I **daresay** the people in the sugar industry, if they were to be honest for once, would make the very important point that from the beginning of the process Government has undertaken in relation to reform of **the** sugar industry that we sat down with them and gave them an idea of **the** direction we would be taking. Of course, they themselves do not have any consensus on most of the issues anyway as is evidenced by the debate that has presently erupted. I want to make the point very clearly because I am not going to accept any criticism that is juvenile and irresponsible in relation to this Government on the sugar industry. We have constantly made the position that further financing will not be available to the sugar industry on the basis of business as usual. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph or any other Honourable Member can make any number of calls on Government or any number of demands on Government and the response of the Government is going to be that the reform process will have to be initiated and we will have to see sound proposals for the reform of the sugar industry before any

further sums of money are thrown at the sugar sector without a commitment to reform. Even though you reach the high levels of production that you did when you were Minister of Agriculture, you did not carry out the vital reforms that all of the same reports you quoted said were necessary in the sugar industry. There was no commitment to rural reform. There was no better or more creative land use policy. There was no determination in a **very** sound and clear way of the level of subsidy to the sugar industry. If I said that it was a fluke the Honourable Member for St. Joseph would probably be hurt and therefore I will not describe that as a fluke. It was a fortuitous circumstance where all of the factors came together at the right time and meant fortune.

I am saying, and there is nobody in this Chamber who can deny that **there** has not been any commitment to substantial reform of the sugar industry even when the industry was performing well. I am not talking about reforms through piecemeal incentives. I am talking about an overall structural reform of the **industry**. That structure has to address the issue of ownership and the issue of ownership has to be addressed through the **means** available to Government and that is via the question **of** the indebtedness of the sugar industry.

This Government took the decision that we would go the route of consensus. There are people on that side who thought we were foolish. I am not going to say who but I know which of you spoke to me who felt the best solution to this problem was to acquire the factories, acquire the estates and carry out the reforms from there. We could have done that. Other Governments in the Caribbean have gone that route. Another Government in the Caribbean has attempted it, like St. Kitts, which brought in **Booker** Tate after acquiring the estates and the factory operations.

We decided on this side that we would take the approach of seeking consensus, that we would sit down with BSIL and find the best route by which BSIL would be put into receivership, that we would discuss with the estate owners, particularly indebted estate owners, how we could lease their properties and so provide a management company both with lands from those estates and from part of the **ADC** estates in terms of a critical mass of **land** which was necessary for a viable management operation in Barbados in the terms proposed by **Booker** Tate from April when I myself went with the Minister of Agriculture to BSIL's headquarters in Warrens and told them we would give them a commitment to finance up to the 1993 sugar crop. That was what the Cabinet had agreed. We told them there are reforms that will have to be put in place and it seemed as though they could not understand what was going on. They could not themselves get in the mode of change.

The problem with the appointment of the receiver was a simple matter. The Government was committed to providing resources for BSIL and the legal advice to the Barbados National Bank which was the disbursing agency was that we could not serve notice on BSIL while at the **same** time providing them with further resources.
6.40 p.m.

That was the legal advice, Whether that is wrong... The point is the **Government** waited on the basis of the advice it was given – the **BNB** that is – until it had stopped contributing further and then served the notice on the debtor and the receiver was appointed.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well maybe you have another solution and perhaps you should have pursued it when you had the chance to do so.

I want to make that point that BSIL itself could have acquiesced at a much earlier stage in relation to the appointment of the receiver. Arrangements could have been entered into but basically it ended up being a legal issue. It was dealt with by the law courts on the basis of consent and the Government is indebted to those parties who in the end came together to pull the arrangement together. The point is the receiver is now in place.

With relation to the estates, I am **sorry** – and I do not wish to be contentious – that the Honourable Member who moved the Resolution did not declare his own interest in this matter.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is accusing me of **speaking** on this Resolution at a time when I should have declared my interest. It is not correct to say that at the time when I moved this Resolution I had to declare an interest.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: My understanding is that on the 25th June, 1992 the Sugar Producers Federation moved a Resolution appointing Attorneys-at-Law, one of whom was the Honourable Member. This debate was in July so a whole month had passed.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not being contentious but I am saying the history books ...Because it is important for this reason...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...that when historians go to **analyze** what happened in relation to the determination of the sugar industry, in my view, they should have the relevant information. I am not imputing any improper motives to the Honourable Member. The point is this, Barbados is a small society, the interests interlock.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member is not being impugned by anything I am saying.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just one moment. It is very difficult for me to decide on matters when so many people are speaking. It means that the proper procedures are not in place. It is obvious that if a Member is offended by a statement the rightful thing for that Member to do is to draw it to the attention of the Chair. If that statement has not been drawn to my attention I take it that it is part of what was accepted in the House.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had risen on a point of order and I make the position very clear because I have a right to reply and when I reply I am in a position to state what my position is. The suggestion that at the time when I spoke I concealed from the House **the** fact that I was appointed **as** the legal adviser is a **matter** that I must draw to your attention that I take exception. He said it. He said, "it was a pity" that I did not. Those **are** the words that I heard, "it was a pity". If you say it is a pity it means that there is something there. That is the position.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The point is that I was indicating that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South should not himself – this is all I am going on to say – give the impression now and perhaps not at that time subject to what he has just said, that he did not know or was totally unaware that arrangements were being made by the Government of Barbados to enter into some arrangement with the indebted plantations for the provision **of a** lease or whatever in relation to their operations... I could not imagine that the sugar producers would pass a Resolution to appoint somebody to act on their behalf without discussing with them that issue. That is all I am saying. I am saying the impression should not be given to the House that nothing was being done. I am not saying he gave that impression. But I am saying to you that perhaps he had a duty, at that time, to acknowledge that something was being done by Government by way of establishing a relationship with the sugar producers or the growers or whatever in relation to the leases. That is all. I am not impugning his integrity. I think they have chosen the most worthy person to do **the** job. That is not for me to question.

But I am saying that when we play politics sometimes... I saw the story of Independence yesterday, Mr. Speaker and the historians say one thing and the people who were there sometimes say another. Well therefore the House should be fully seised sometimes of these interlocking relationships that they can make value judgments about the people involved in the exercise. There is nothing wrong with that.

The point is this, that the Government agreed to a consensus arrangement and is attempting to enter into a lease agreement with the owners of the indebted estates. **This** option...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, the BNB. The **BNB** is acting in relation to what is desirable policy because Government has acknowledged that going the foreclosure route is fraught with difficulty.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph has spoken about Vineyard earlier, assuming that he was attempting to say that it is a Government plantation which it is not. The attempt to complete the foreclosure on Vineyard has taken something like 7 years and the owner of **the** plantation does not even live in Barbados. Can you imagine that?

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Maybe. I do not know. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West knows the story **m**. The foreclosure route was a non starter because many of these estates have securities over them and other arrangements in relation to the estate which make it very difficult to carry out a foreclosure. So we went the route of consensus. This consensus itself has been fraught with great difficulty because, among the sugar producers, among the shareholders of Barbados Sugar Industries Limited **there** has not been consensus on the route that we should take. Therefore the route that we have pursued, though it has **borne** some fruit, is not going to produce the instant results which the Honourable Member for St. Joseph wants. I **am** saying to him that there is no other route **that** would have produced those results other than acquisition of the properties. That is the only route that could produce the instant results that you are calling for. That has been ruled out - I think you would wish to rule it out yourself - as being **inappropriate** in the circumstances.

The Government has agreed therefore to take the entire non performing agricultural portfolio of the BNB out of the BNB and establish an Agricultural Credit Trust. The debts as well as the rights in relation to the securities that

BNB held will be transferred to the Credit Trust and an attempt will be made to provide the Barbados National Bank with bonds of varying kinds of maturity, varying kinds of interest rates to replace that debt and the objective will be to work those assets so as to reduce the overall indebtedness of the industry.

The 'second tier' is that we **establish** an agricultural management company and this management company will seek to manage those assets in respect of the owners of the estates, by virtue of the lease - in respect of the owners of the indebted estates - and in respect of the factories providing management for the operation of the factories. They would probably have to take over the machinery that **BSIL** now own, pay them, or whatever, for it. Take them over and manage both factory and field; The agricultural management company will contract managers, whether it is **Booker** Tate or whomsoever will may come, who have the necessary qualifications and provide a proper mandate for the reform of the industry, they will then manage the field and the factory operations. The profits will go to the management company. The management company will then pay those profits over to the Agricultural Credit Trust. 6.50 p.m.

Well all the Agricultural Credit Trust essentially is, is a clearing house. It just receives the debt, holds the securities. The object of that is this. You cannot totally remove your rights under those mortgages and Government still has to maintain its rights to foreclose or take any other action which is necessary, should the asset not be performing. Now, if they were one company there would be great difficulty in dealing with it like that.

Now, I want to say, in relation to the **1994** crop that as I understand it this morning the Barbados National Bank, on the basis of submissions made by the Receiver about budget and the future operations, has agreed to make the necessary advances for the **1994** crop. The Receiver, as I understand it, has entered into an arrangement with **Booker** Tate to provide a limited management consultancy for a fixed period so that they can have an opportunity to come in and Government has agreed to pay the costs of having **Booker** Tate assist the Receiver in this.

Well you know there is a cost to the reform method. You say you want us to carry out reforms and obviously there is going to be some costs. But we are going to provide that kind of support to the Receiver so that he can do what he wants to do. The point is that the question of who the Receiver appoints to advise him on the management is a decision he has to make. It has nothing to do with Government. But the question of financing **that** assistance is a different matter. We deal at arms length. We are not getting into bed with anybody on this as has

been done in the past, because it is not business **as** usual. So all of this interlocking confusion that started years ago and was continued and compounded by the agricultural **wing** of the BNB and has continued right through the sugar industry has to come to an end. The point is that sugar needs a breath of fresh air in relation to management. That is the point the Honourable Member for St. Joseph made and I agree with him **whole-heartedly** and that breath of fresh air has to come from the most competent source, whether Barbadian or for the **time** being non Barbadian. But something has to be done to help people to understand the reforms that need to be engendered in the sugar sector.

The line of credit is on the way. That should not pose a difficulty. There are some other broader difficulties. I don't want to deal with the agronomic questions which you have asked. Let me say to you that **as part** of Government's investment sector loan negotiations with the IDB we have agreed to the structures or essentially ... Some refinement is necessary to the structures that I have spoken of. But we have also agreed, in relation to the matter of subsidies, that they must be direct and transparent. We get back to those words,

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I understand that the Ministry of Agriculture would determine the level of direct support that the industry needs for its operations, that will be quantified and those sums would be made available to the sugar industry. So that all of the convoluted financing arrangements that existed before will come to an end and the subsidy to the sugar industry will be clear. You will say it is this amount and you will expect performance on that basis. That I think, clears up the process for the time being. I believe there are going to be snags along the way. I hope that the growers will be able to complete the lease arrangement shortly. I understand negotiations have been progressing smoothly and those persons who shall remain nameless, who are involved in them, I commend for the speed with which that is being done.

I think the Honourable Members on that side understand the path that we had to take with this and the whole blow up with the sugar industry which occurred a couple of weeks ago, which forced the Government to take the position that money would not be advanced on the basis of business as usual, was because some voice from Barbados Sugar Industries Limited sought to give the impression that it was the Government's fault that BSIL had shut down when we had constantly been talking with them week after week, advancing the moneys they required, discussing how soon the Receiver would be in place and as soon they reached the court door, on the day in question, when we thought a consent order would have been given they decided to back out and file an affidavit

contesting the contents of the **BNB's** affidavit. How can you blame the Government for that? We went into court on the understanding that there would have been agreement on the appointment of the Receiver on terms set out in the Order.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well that **may have** been the problem as subsequently **came** about, to justify what happened. But those things could have been **dealt** with later. You could have come back to court on a subsequent date to amend the order.

Let us not be unreasonable. The appointment of the Receiver appeared to be the most important thing in relation to continuity. If the Receiver was in place and his powers needed to be augmented or reduced you could return to court and have that done. I can't see that is going to be a problem and I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who knows about these kinds of things will tell you that it is **likely that** the Order will probably have to be **further** amended at some point to **give** effect to the kinds of restructuring that is necessary in the industry. No one Order can give a Receiver all of the rights that he needs immediately. And there are things that will occur in the process which are going to need to be refined and the courts will obviously have to be invoked, at that point, to augment the powers of the Receiver.

The level of subsidy will be determined by the **Ministry** of Agriculture in due course but Government anticipates that in its attempt to resume growth in the economy there will have to be substantial investment in the productive sectors in the next fiscal year and part of that investment will have to include contributions to the sugar industry by way of this direct subsidy.

On the question of land use policy, **the** Government has been looking at the issue but you will have to remember that many of the same estate owners see a flexible **land** use policy as their way out of the debt. So let us not fool ourselves that Government itself ...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well some of them have some more grandiose plans and you should probably become more acquainted with view points in **the** industry on these things before you speak. Many of them have subdivided land, sold it at the agricultural rate to developers and then reaped some massive capital gain through the back door when the developers sell the land at the residential rate and they don't pay a cent to **the** Barbados National Bank. Some of them are subdividing

land on the pretext that they are subdividing it under the Agricultural Holdings (Option to Purchase) Act so they do not have to get town planning permission. That is going on in this country. You had better check it carefully. Check it and see – conveyances under the Agricultural Holdings (Options to Purchase) Act – because under that legislation and the **Tenancies** Freehold Purchase Act, it is my understanding that the permission of the Town Planner for the subdivision is not necessary.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But they recite that in the conveyance, even though the person is not qualified. So you will have to understand what is happening, that there is a lot of bad faith out there and one has to be careful about the attitude of people in relation to their land.

Now, the question of land use policy, therefore, is one that we have to analyse carefully and ensure that the critical mass is there if we think the sugar industry has a future. I am one who thinks that in terms of the short term requirements for Barbados that we have to pursue it. I can't see any other option. Even if we are only buying time let us get back to reasonable levels of production, reduce the cost of production and ensure that the inputs are coming in free of high imposts which is what you are calling for and earn the foreign exchange that is necessary. But there is another point and it is the last point that is of more significance. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South made the point in the debate that the aspirations of people who are now employed are completely different from what they were in the 1950's. I think what he was trying to say is that they may be more inclined to be involved in the **agricultural** sector. I am not too sure. Anyway, I want to make this point. Unless there is some commitment to reform by modernisation of the rural sector, both in terms of the services provided and in terms of the quality of life for the people which must be supported by vibrant economic activity, nobody is going to want to **remain** in that sector and remain in agriculture. So that commensurate with the agricultural policy there has to be an entire rural reform which would make it attractive for people to want to own land and remain in the agricultural sector.

7.00 p.m.

Sir, I have said in this House many times that if I lived in one of the tenancies in St. John and got up every morning to discover that ... If I lived on a piece of land 2 by 4 and every piece of land around me which had some resource base where I could grow something was owned by somebody else, I would leave the agricultural sector too. You are going home to a lot that your grandparents lived

on and nothing around that lot belongs to you at all. Why would you remain in the agricultural sector?

Sir, the final point I want to make relates to examples. There are lots of people who point to Mauritius as this example of successful reform of the sugar industry. In fact, there are no clear examples in the world of successful reform of a sugar cane industry. Cuba has heavy subsidies. I am talking about a competitive and efficient sugar industry. Mauritius has had an almost disaster with their sugar reform. A recent copy of the Financial Times in September posed the **same** problems for Mauritius that we are having in Barbados. So there is no example which we can point to and we have to understand that the international institutions themselves do not see much hope for the sugar industry. We are battling against very powerful forces both internationally and domestically to reform the sugar sector. But the Government is committed to that reform and I think that the reform will work.

Sir, I think that I have answered all of the major questions the Honourable Member for St. Joseph asked in relation to the short term problems that the sector is facing. It is now for us to address some of the long term problems. I know that we have some people on the front bench who are familiar with the agronomic aspects and who can address those aspects. But the short term future of the sugar industry is something that this particular debate has highlighted. I suppose that unless one has a Private Member's Resolution like this the opportunity is not always given to the House to explain these policies. Do not say that the Government has not been explaining them at all because we have held a Press conference and we had meetings with the sugar producers. The Barbados National Bank has stated its position time and time again. The Central Bank has also stated its position in relation to advances to the sugar industry and I think that a lot has been said. What I think is that a lot of people are not internalising it because there is a tremendous resentment by a large number of people still to the question of the future of the sugar industry. As soon as you start to talk about sugar in Barbados, there are lots of people who simply tune out. Let us not fool ourselves about that and that issue is just as important as any of the other issues that we have debated in here. Some of our best brains themselves do not see any future in sugar and, whenever the issue is raised, they tune out. This happens throughout the gambit of policy making and right through. As long as people are tuning out on this issue, the reforms will not be created and will not carry us into the 21st century. But I believe that the process I have identified today will indicate that attempts are being made to resuscitate the sugar industry and I hope they meet with success.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I am moving that further consideration of this Resolution which was introduced in February be postponed. As I understand it, Sir, this was in February of this year not June or July.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that further consideration of this Resolution be postponed was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, the time now being 7.05 p.m., I am going to move that this House be now

adjourned until Tuesday, December 8, 1992 at 12.00 o'clock noon.

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

The question that the House be now adjourned until Tuesday, December 8, 1992 at 12.00 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.
7.05 p.m.

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