
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 9, 1992

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. on Tuesday, June 09, 1992.

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

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**, (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)

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

Mr. R. L. **MORRIS**, B.A., Ccert. 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**

Mr. D. W. **BOWEN**, (Minister of Community Development and Culture)

Mr. G. W. **PAYNE**

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Ivan Harewood.

MINUTES

Mr. **SPEAKER**: The House is in session. Minutes of Tuesday, May 26, 1992.

Hon. P. M. **GREAVES**: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of the meeting of May 26, 1992 to the best of my knowledge have been circulated. I, therefore, move that they be taken as read and confirmed.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. N. K. **SIMMONS**: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Annual Report of the Immigration and Passport Department for the year ended December 31, 1990.

Hon. D. J. H. **THOMPSON**: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 1992 and the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 4) Order, 1992.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Barbados Community College for the year 1989-90.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of a Resolution to approve the lease to the Dive Shop Limited of the parcel of land at Aquatic Gap, St. Michael.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Health Services (Amendment) Bill, 1992.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Health Services (Amendment) Bill, 1992 be now read a first time.

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

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

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 1992 be read a first time.

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

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

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill to amend the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Cap. 117A be read a first time.

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

Mr. H. CEB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Honourable Member will give the usual undertaking as to Private Members' Business.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the order of the day. Order No. 7.

ORDER NO. 7 – SECOND READING OF A BILL TO AMEND SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE ACT, CAP. 117A

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, this is a short Bill before the Honourable House and the Explanatory Note is quite clear. It states that it is a Bill to amend the Supreme Court of Judicature Act in order to provide that any former Puisne Judge or Judge of the High Court who is later appointed Justice of Appeal may sit in the High Court for the purpose of delivering judgment or doing any other thing in relation to proceedings which were commenced before him whilst he was a Puisne Judge or Judge of the High Court.

The necessity for this Bill arises consequent on the establishment of the Court of Appeal. Your Honour will, of course, have been aware that 2 Judges of the Court of Appeal were formerly Judges of the High Court. Now the Chief Justice, who is the President of the Court of Appeal by virtue of the legislation, is unable to sit as a Justice of Appeal and also have a jurisdiction at first instance. So that in any matter which the Chief Justice may have started at first instance and had not completed when he became President of the Court of Appeal, he could still by virtue of the existing legislation return to the High Court and complete that matter. But the other Justice of Appeal who was formerly a judge of the High Court, Mr. Justice Husbands, by virtue of being appointed as a Justice of Appeal, could not return to complete any matter which he had commenced in the High Court.

The purpose of this Amendment would be, in part, to permit Mr. Justice Husbands to complete any matters which he had started as a Puisne Judge in the High Court prior to being appointed a Justice of Appeal. It also provides in the future that any judge of the High Court may be appointed to the Court of Appeal where he may not have completed any matters which that judge would have started. This would also enable a judge at a later time so appointed to return to the High Court and complete any matters which he had started for the purpose of delivering judgment or doing any other thing in relation to proceedings which were commenced by him.

The purpose of this Amendment is short and will facilitate, I am sure, the legal profession in having a number of matters completed which prior to the passing

of this legislation could not be dealt with by judges who now sit on the Court of Appeal.

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

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Bill has a limited objective. Let me say at the outset that I hope there are only a few matters still pending before Judges who have now been elevated to the Court of Appeal.

I believe we should have a Court of Appeal comprised of members who sit solely on appeal matters and that these members should rarely sit at first instance. Although I am conscious of the fact that the Chief Justice under the existing legislation has a right to sit at first instance, I would hope that we will reach the stage where his intervention at first instance becomes extremely limited.

I think it is necessary to strengthen the High Court Bench. The work before Judges of first instance and before the whole judicial system has increased tremendously. Between January and 30th April this year, on the civil side alone, the number of cases that have been filed has increased by 300 and I rather think that this works out at something like a 30% or 33 1/3%, if not higher, increase. We are short of Judges at first instance, I say by at least 2. The existing number of Judges cannot adequately service the work that is before them. From Assize to Assize we are having cases that are being traversed and going over to the next Assizes. This is not good for the judicial system. It is bad for the Judges, but it is even worse for justice, because you cannot have a situation where people are charged with capital and serious offences whose cases cannot be timely disposed of, because the Assizes are now running, as the last Assize ran, from the beginning of April right down into June.

The chances are that one at least, if not both, of the Judges who sat up to June may have to go and sit again in July. What the Judges are finding is that they are not having enough time to attend to the writing of judgments and the other matters that are coming before them in their civil jurisdiction, far less to adequately complete those matters that are before them in their criminal jurisdiction. I consider that 2 more High Court Judges at least are needed in Barbados.

For it is a mistake to assume that expenditure on the area of justice is not expenditure for economic development. It is only recently that the public has taken notice, when we have had a breakdown of law and order, of the significance of law and order to the economic well-being of Barbados. It is important, if one is to have

economic development, that you have a community in which justice is properly served. Justice cannot be properly served if the manpower to deal with the issues that come up day by day is not in place and able to function properly. I know for a fact, Sir, that there are judgments outstanding, on the civil side in particular, for several years. I am saying that this has occurred largely because we have not got the manpower available and that the Judges are being very hard pressed. The Bar Association has put up proposals, for a number of years now, for improvement of the functioning of the Judiciary. Some of those proposals, in my view, should be implemented. Let me give you only one, Sir, the idea that we should have continuing Assizes.

There really is no case for 4 Assizes a year, January, April, July and then October. The Judiciary should be so organised that there are at least 2 Judges trying and disposing of criminal cases, as they become available, continuously throughout the year. A very strong case can be made out for this. I would seriously urge that the relevant authorities give early consideration to discussing with the Head of the Judiciary whether that sort of reorganisation of judicial time should not take place.

Sir, it is a mistake to assume that all a Judge has to do is to come on the Bench, hear evidence, listen to legal counsel and write a judgment if he can. Counsel at least has the opportunity well ahead of time to do research, and most counsel do serious research these days on these matters; but at some stage the Judge has to adjudicate between subject and subject, adversary and adversary or subject and State, and he therefore has to give consideration to the various authorities and will have to do, if his judgments are to be worthwhile, some of the independent research that is necessary.

I believe that a strong case has been made out, and can be made out, for giving additional assistance to the Judiciary in order to help them undertake the research that is necessary if we are to dispense justice fairly in this country. There is no longer the hindrance that people to fill these types of jobs are not available. There are several young lawyers coming out of the university. In addition, we can also draw on the precedents in Jamaica and elsewhere where students who are in between their law degrees and their professional degrees are attached for periods of time to the Judiciary to assist in basic research that is necessary. I do not believe that this would be a very costly exercise. But even if it were, Sir, it could not be of a level to overburden the Treasury. It would, however, contribute significantly to the increase in the speed at which justice is dispensed in Barbados.

But I repeat, Sir, that it is necessary, even before we get to the stage of appointing research assistants, that we increase the number of Judges at first instance. It is not fair for the Chief Justice to have to go and do the number of first instance cases he is still doing, and in the

process therefore his time and his assistance are not available to his brothers on the Court of Appeal. I seriously suggest that the appointing authorities should move, and move quickly, to **filling** the 2 vacancies that are there in the Judiciary.

Let me also focus on the Magistracy.
12.40 p.m.

It is the magistrates who dispense justice over a larger number of cases than the higher judiciary does. Magistrates are called upon today to deal with some of the most serious offences and to mete out some of the most serious penalties that the law has prescribed. I am concerned again that at the level of the magistracy we have a crisis as well. There are inquests outstanding, some go back as long as 10 years, in which persons have died and we have not yet found out the causes of death. I cannot understand a system where inquests are outstanding for 10 years and the coroners cannot find time to sit and adjudicate on these matters.

It has been suggested that one of the ways to deal with this crisis situation is to appoint some of the practising attorneys at law for a limited period of time to deal with those outstanding matters and to get them out of the way. I would seriously suggest that to the Honourable Attorney General that this sound advice should be given to the appropriate authority because it is not good for a **country** to have a situation where citizens and others have died many years ago and the true causes of death cannot be determined. Not only is it a problem for justice as a whole but it also is a problem for the estates of the particular deceased.

Likewise, I would say that having regard to the workload of the magistracy there is a case for the appointment of at least another 2 magistrates. The workload at District "A" in particular is extremely heavy. The same has happened at District "B", both Oistin and Boarded Hall. In fact we have had the position where one of the magistrates was on leave and no cases were being heard for a long period of time at either District "C" or the Boarded Hall Court of District "B".

Once again, I have to issue the warning that "Justice delayed is Justice denied". We cannot be happy about the manner in which we are responding to the obvious needs of the judiciary and the justice system.

I have previously asked the Government to set up a non-partisan National Task Force or Commission on Crime. The situation has worsened in this country. Well prior to the last elections I said (and I now repeat on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party) that we were prepared to bring all the wealth of our experience and ability to assist in a non-partisan manner in solving the problem of law and order and the crime in this country. The offer of the

Opposition has never been accepted or responded to by the Government.

I am going even further today to say to the Government that not only do we need to set up a National Commission on Crime but that we are at the stage where we should also establish a high powered Commission **on** the whole Justice System, particularly the Criminal Justice System, to see what improvements we can bring to that system. In this I include not only the prosecution process but also the prison system. We must ensure that we are able to dispense justice speedily, fairly and equitably **and** thus minimise and contain the growing crimes in our community. We must do everything to ensure that Barbados will continue to be a law-abiding society, operating within its Constitution and within all of its laws.

I use the occasion of this debate to state my Party's position clearly. We believe that the Opposition can make a tremendous contribution to this area of national life. The Government is free to take or reject our proposal. The time is, however, ripe for us to look at all aspects of crime and at the total justice system in this country. In the United Kingdom, in the United States of America and in other countries that are democratic and law-abiding ever so often it has been found necessary to take stock of what is going on and to review the whole justice system. There are a whole number of improvements that can be made to the system to minimise costs and delay and improve the function of the system; but unless we are prepared to sit down and give serious thought to this we will always have crisis situations and crisis solutions that eventually miss the mark by a long shot.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me as an Honourable Member of this Chamber of some years and also as a legal practitioner of a larger number of years experience to allow this opportunity to pass without attempting to bring to the attention of this Honourable House and, hence, the country the serious state of affairs that exist in the judicial system in Barbados. Let there be no doubt about it, the position with respect to the delays that take place with respect to hearing of **matters** in the Supreme Court as well as in a number of cases, however small the number, in relation to getting judgments delivered after the cases have been heard is one which is totally unsatisfactory. Judges in Barbados, throughout the Commonwealth and in many parts of the world, have been given very special terms and conditions of service, which is right. Every community recognises that because of the nature of the job and because of the importance of the job it is necessary to provide special conditions and terms of service for judges.

On the other hand, every community demands also that judges recognise that in return for those special conditions they are also under special obligations and

one of those obligations is to give judgment swiftly. They have to give judgments swiftly. It is no use anyone saying that because they are judges they are untouchable. They are no untouchable people in this country. Everybody in this country must be subject to the bar of public opinion.
12.50 p.m.

Their conduct must be subject to criticism like any other person's conduct. It is about time that we are men and women enough to let it be known that to keep judgements for a year, and some as long as 2 and 3 years, is conduct which is deserving of censure by all and sundry in this community.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would just like to remind the Honourable Member that Rule 28(9) is a good Rule which I know the Honourable Member knows very well. In view of the fact that the Honourable Member spoke about the conduct, that Rule specifically states that the conduct can be discussed but not in a general sense. It must be in the sense of a resolution. I do not want to give the feeling that debate is suppressed in discussing the conduct of any officer. I just want to make that particular point clear.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of that Rule. The point of principle I am making is that in return for the special conditions that judges all over the world, including Barbados, enjoy, they too have obligations. One of the obligations they have is to ensure that justice is given. Part of our concept of justice is that if you have a case before a judge, whoever he may be, he must give a decision. That is the position. No Rule in Parliament can be interpreted as to inhibit the making of the point that it is an essential adjunct to the administration of justice that judges must give decisions. I, myself, have heard a Chief Justice in Barbados say that the essential characteristic of a judge is that he must make a decision otherwise, what is the meaning of a judge? A judge is one who makes decisions.

Now, I believe also, Sir, it is necessary that we have more judges in Barbados. I strongly support the point that if you look at the state of litigation and disputes in Barbados you need more judges. One of the reasons, of course, is that you have more lawyers and more lawyers will create more problems so that they would be able to have more cases before the court. That is true. In all the countries in the world where there is a high proportion of lawyers in the population you have more disputes going to court because the lawyers see points that if you did not have lawyers would not be seen.

Sir, students of comparative law in this area will recall that in the United States the ratio of lawyers to population is very high. In Japan it is very low. They always tell you that part of the difference between the societies is that in the United States they have more

disputes than they have in Japan because people will settle their disputes if they are not advised there are areas of disagreements. That is a well known fact, Sir. Our position here in Barbados is, quite apart from that, we must recognise that as our society has developed commercially and economically, there are more disputes that are likely to exist in that area.

It is a known fact too, that because of our law reform there are a number of new **areas** of disputes which have gone before the courts not only in Barbados but all over. The area of family law has created a whole new area of additional activity for judges, the settlement of disputes between man and woman, whether they be husband and wife, or christened by some kind of church relations of the law or not. The position is we must recognise that there are more matters going before the courts and the judges need more manpower.

We understood when the Court of Appeal was created that the same number of judges there were formerly to do high court work, namely 5, would continue. The fact is there seems to be a view that by the creation of the Court of Appeal you can save on one of the judges so you can have only 4 Puisne Judges instead of 5. That is what is happening in fact.

We also must point out that as a result of the increase in criminal activity in Barbados in particular areas, not only offences against the person but also in a number of other areas, drugs, *et cetera*, more work in the criminal area has been created. We have reached the situation where at every Assizes there are a number of cases that cannot be reached. If you are an observer of this matter you will find I do not practise criminal law, but I do have a number of people in my constituency and **around** who are affected by the administration of the law, they point out to me all the time that one of the things they feel is responsible for helping to increase criminal activity in Barbados is the fact that it takes so long between the committing of an offence and the trial of the particular person for that offence. It particularly impacts in areas where you have **people** who are witnesses from abroad. I have repeatedly pointed out how people have complained that they have been summoned as witnesses in breaking and entering matters and 3 years have passed, the police still have **their** property and the case has not been tried.

It seems to me we must recognise that there is a defect in our court structure in that there is no level of judicial officer between the level of magistrate and that of the High Court. In the criminal areas, other societies faced with this problem, particularly the United Kingdom, created the Crown Court. The Crown Court is there to do a large amount of the criminal work. We do not have the equivalent. They have to go to the Assizes.

Obviously, the time has come when we should have a sufficient amount of manpower which will have a continuous sitting of a criminal court with only short breaks, 2 months or so, for vacations. You can always divide it up. The time has come for that because some members of the legal profession both in here and outside who practise criminal law point out that we even have the phenomenon of murder cases which have been traversed not once, but twice. We have that phenomenon in Barbados. That, certainly, cannot be satisfactory.

Similarly too, Sir, on the civil side, Barbados has built up a reputation as being an international business centre. We have been encouraging the formation of companies in Barbados. As night follows day, there will be an increase of litigation **surrounding** those companies because it happens in every jurisdiction. If you follow the law reports you will see in the Bahamas there are going to be disputes between directors and shareholders with respect to those very companies. Once they are incorporated and are **run** from Barbados the natural court will be in Barbados. Therefore, you should expect that there will be an increase in the amount of litigation with respect to corporations in Barbados.

Again, in other countries on the civil side there are intermediate judicial officers known as "Masters of the Court" who look after a number of matters the judges in Barbados have to look after like the taking of accounts, assessment of damages and things of that kind. They are not done by judges receiving the same pay and the **same** conditions of service in those countries as the High Court judges. They are done by intermediates. They get more pay than magistrates but they get less pay than a judge so that even in the context of the financial stringency in Barbados – and do not let us fool ourselves, they do not even have money to pay the civil servants this month, the overdraft is at \$268 million – I mean it is hard to get up on your feet at this particular period of time and talk about matters of this kind. Because the first question the Honourable Members on the other side are going to raise is "How are we going to persuade the IMF who really makes the decisions now to allow us to increase the establishment?" What you must tell the IMF is this, that because of the laws that we have now, particularly in relation to the Misuse of Drugs Act that it is possible for a judge to pay for himself now. It is true. The increase in litigation that you have had, under the Misuse of Drugs Act, if the people pay the fines you will pay for 20 judges. It is a fact.
1.00 p.m.

At the last Bar Association Dinner when I made a speech I had to point out this, that in the United...

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: It was not a political speech. It was a profound study of the comparative conduct of

administrations who had been under IMF policies and it was pointed out that in Australia the Australian Federal Attorney-General in his speech to the Bar Association and the judges pointed out that every item of expenditure had to be justified and if the judges wanted more money they had to prove that they could increase the revenue to the Treasury to pay for it. That is a fact. I believe that an analysis of our situation will show that it is possible that there are opportunities for revenue enhancement in the Registry and in matters connected with the Administration of Justice. The magistrates have a cast iron case that they can prove that one day a week they can **earn** all of the money that is necessary, particularly the magistrates' court at Oistin. We must not look at this in isolation from the facts. We must look at all of these things together. There is definitely a strong case for increase in personnel at the level of magistrates, because the time... It is really ridiculous the time that you **see** taken. I am not going to comment on cases, but you see cases which started so long ago on important matters and how they **take** so long. You only have to go into any police yard in the country. Sometimes you even see cows in there. Therefore we must take this matter very seriously and we must on the one hand demand of the judges a standard of conduct in relation to judging and on the other hand we must equip them with the tools that are necessary.

The last point I would like to make is that I know that it is a total impossibility to conceive of any new Supreme Court building. That is mythical. You are not going to get that. In any event Sherbourne has to be finished and the St. Joseph Hospital. Both of them have to be finished.

But the point is this. I want to make a very simple suggestion. Long ago I felt that for small expenditure with the use of a steel building, you could join the old Supreme Court and the new Registry and you could have more than enough accommodation in there. It was just done in relation to No. 1 Court, the introduction of a floor below the high ceiling has brought a lot of space. The same thing can happen because you have a perfect U in there and it is quite possible for an architect and an engineer in conjunction to fill that floor very easily, very easily blend the whole thing together and you would be able to get an additional space in there. It is easy. It is a square. I remember when it was being built. You could have all your walk way. As a matter of fact you have a better thing because you have a covered walk way. The only sufferers would be a large number of people who have cars who park them there. But there is a car park opposite, if you have to provide car parking. As a matter of fact in many countries of the world you pay for car parking places you prohibit parking within a certain area around it. This is a good opportunity. You can say that you are so poor that, just as you had to take that \$150 000, you have to

deprive the people of parking. It is true. Do you get what I mean? That is the position. These are practical matters that can be done and there should not be a reason for postponing them now.

Tomorrow is going to be a very serious day because I know people who have come from all parts of the world for particular cases to be heard. We have a real phenomenon that the case is set down before one judge for one day and then set down before another judge for the other 3 days that have been allocated to it. That is what is happening. You do not want to reduce the dignity which people feel for the High Court when you force the High Court because of lack of manpower into the position where they must operate like a magistrate's court that you have to give **adjournments**, adjournments, adjournments because they have so many cases, where the list on this particular day is so long that they have part heard cases that cannot be completed.

I would just sum up by saying, Sir, there is a case for at least one more puisne judge. That puisne judge, in my opinion, should be one that is skilled in the criminal law so that **you** can have a continuous sitting of the criminal sessions. There is no doubt about it at all. All who appoint judges must understand that the experience is not going to be different from anywhere else. A proportion of your judges must come from the Bar. You must get a proportion. I do not believe that with 250 lawyers out there in a population of 250 000 that there is going to be any difficulty in persuading some of them to go on the Bench. I do not believe that, Sir.

We also need to have at the low level a category of judicial officer who is better paid than a magistrate but not as well paid as a judge who will relieve the judges of a lot of the work. I regard the Registrar as one of those levels of officers. I believe in other countries they call them Masters of Court, whatever you call them. The point is that in respect of a great amount of the work that is done by judges today, it will be dealt with at that level, taking of accounts, dealing with all those husband and wife matters that come with valuations of properties and all of those little things, assessment of damages after liability is established. All of those matters in there can be **dealt** with and relieve the judges to get ahead. If the judges have this pressure they have the excuse. I do not want them to have the excuse that they do not have time to think and to write their judgements. What is going on is wrong.

Thank you, Sir.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is not much that I can add to this debate and indeed I enter it with some hesitation because there is a perception abroad that the lawyer class in the House of Assembly seems always to be making points for the improvement of the

administration of justice, which in effect means, in part, their work environment, and they ought to remember the environment of a lot of those whom they represent rather than themselves. Conscious of that I very rarely myself speak on matters affecting the administration of justice in the country.

But the particular amendment before the House is one that I have pressed very hard for behind the scenes. It really arises from a drafting omission in relation to the Supreme Court of Judicature Act as it affected the appointment of judges of the Court of Appeal. As was pointed out by the learned Attorney-General no provision was made for the one judge who was promoted and who does not have any original jurisdiction to the Court of Appeal to finish matters which were part heard before him when he got his appointment to the Court of Appeal. I myself happen to have been involved with a few of those matters.

1.10 p.m.

I found it very difficult to persuade the clients that it was a technical problem that stands in the way of their having their cases completed. So that I welcome this particular amendment and only wish it had come a few months earlier because some of the cases in which I am involved would have been affected by this omission. The cases have been running now for 3 **years** so that they are really long outstanding indeed. I think it was right that we should have taken this opportunity, while discussing the amendment, to talk about wider issues affecting the administration of justice.

We tend, Mr. Speaker, to take the administration of justice for granted. It is only when, as is happening now, we are having manifestations of crisis, that all of a sudden we realise how important the administration of justice and the maintenance of law and order are. Even in this environment of financial stringency, I think the Government has a responsibility to ensure that this area of national life does not fall into crisis and suffer decline such as we are experiencing in other areas.

I think both the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South have identified, quite clearly, the problems which are confronting the administration of justice. I think they have pointed **in**, quite clearly, to the solutions.

There is one area which does not call for the expenditure of a large amount of money, and has fallen **into** decline and is badly affecting the administration of justice. It has got to do with the fact that the Barbados Law Reports have not been attended to in recent years. I think the last year for which we have Barbados Law Reports is 1981. This is an important matter. What it means is that often lawyers are busily trying to argue points that

have been determined, but because they have no easy access to the decisions, the Judge himself is not aware of the fact that the point has been determined and lawyers are wasting time re-arguing matters which have already been settled. It does not take a lot of money to bring out the Barbados Law Reports. The Contingency Vote in the Ministry of the Attorney General, for example, can attend to a few years of reports. What it needs and what my learned friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, did in his day was to give it some personal attention by identifying one or two people at the University who could work, in those days, with the Chief Judge and make sure that the cases which were worthy of reporting were identified and to set about doing the head noting of them.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West had a part in that exercise a few years ago. He is complaining *sotto voce* that he was not well paid but at least he made some contribution towards ensuring that the reports were brought up to date. It is now 10 years since we have not have those reports and I think it is important that we ensure that the reports are brought up to date.

I support the call, Sir, for the appointment of at least one, if not 2, additional puisne judges. The point has been made that there has been an enormous increase both in the volume and the complexity of the work before the High Court. It has arisen from the fact that legal aid is now available for a much wider range of cases than in the past. It arises, too, from the fact that we have wide ranging new legislation in the offshore sector, dealing with drugs, with family law matters and with administrative law. Those areas have produced a volume of additional work for the High Court.

I support too, Sir, the call for continuous Assizes. There was a time when, except for one or two matters, at every assize within 3 to 4 weeks the calendar could be completed. These days there are upwards of 20 matters sometimes that are traversed from one assize to another and the assizes now are lasting 6 and 7 weeks as opposed to 3 to 4 weeks as was the case when I first came to the Bar a little over 20 years ago. So that there is now such an enormous pressure and volume at the criminal assizes that I think we have now reached the point where, as in several other jurisdictions, we have got to have continuous assizes.

One of the matters too, Sir, that has really affected the speed with which the cases are heard is that the work day has been reduced to 4 hours now at the assizes. In my day, when I first came to the Bar, we used to work from 9.00 o'clock or 9.30 on mornings until 4.30 p.m. with an hour's break and sometimes you worked until 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock. I worked until 10.00 o'clock in the Dudley Holder murder case. Sometimes you had to come back on Saturday mornings. All of that now is a thing of the past. You work from 9.00 to 12.30 or 1.30 at the latest and that is the day's work.

Now, unless you bring in the system where the note taking is done mechanically, that does not give you a lot of time in any one day. So that in saying there has been an increase in the volume of work, which there has been, the point has **also** to be made that the judges are working less than the amount of hours that they used to work in the past at the Assizes.

The situation with respect to inquests continues to cause considerable **concern**. There are still breadwinners, and I am particularly concerned with breadwinners who have died in accidental circumstances on our roads ten years and more ago. The insurance companies have put aside a reserve but they cannot pay out until there is some fact finding with respect to the circumstances of the accident. If only they could get an inquest report that their insured was speeding, was driving on the wrong side of the road, was in any way negligent, they would be happy to pay out to the family of the deceased. But, in the absence of that inquest those families have been without financial assistance and that is a very sad situation indeed. It seems as though you would have to have a shoot out with the police and die to have a soon and speedy inquest. For many of the decent law abiding citizens of this country, who have met their deaths on the road, their families have had to wait 10 years and more before there has been an inquest. That is unacceptable and even though within recent months heroic attempts are being made in some jurisdictions to bring on the inquests there are still some outstanding, dating back from before I went into the Cabinet in 1981. That is totally unacceptable and should not be.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Government, and in particular the 2 Ministers who are directly concerned with the administration of justice and the maintenance of law and order in the country, will pay particular attention to the problems that have been identified and the solutions which have been proposed by the Honourable Members on this side. They are not new. Many of them do not call for any large outlay of expenditure. The important thing is that, in these difficult times in which we live, we must ensure that at least that particular area is not allowed to fall into crisis and into decline. We need to ensure that law and order is maintained. We need to ensure that Barbados remains a safe and secure place for all its citizens. We need to ensure further that investors can have confidence in the country and that all fellow citizens can have faith in the judicial system and in the administrative justice system.

1.20 p.m.

Sir, I would hope that a few months from now we will not be here making the **same** points and not able to report that any progress has been made.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, this amendment has become necessary because of the creation of the

Court of Appeal and it is really to tidy up some difficulties which arose as a result of the independent Court of Appeal and, therefore, all of us will agree with this. I just want to respond to some of the points made by Members of the other side. I believe it was the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who made mention of the Task Force and crime.

Sir, I personally will have no objection to meeting a Member or Members of the other side. If he would be kind enough to drop me a line setting out what he considers, we can then correspond and make sure when we meet we know why we are meeting. Crime is everybody's business in this country and we are all concerned. I do not think that any one person would have all the answers. I know that a lot of us would like to look at the causes of crime. When we look at the suggestions, they will be there but we will be looking for the answers to the problems. We will have to sit down and have a discussion. I dare say that we will not only rely on the politicians but we can bring in other people as well to sit down with us so that we have one common objective to try and do something about it. As soon as the information comes, I will work on it as speedily as possible to reach some decision.

I also agree that there is need for more judges. The fact of the matter is that at the present moment we have not got the space. We have 5 courts altogether in the Supreme Court. There are only 4 judges. We have been looking at the St. Matthias School to convert that into a court for civil, domestic and juvenile cases. That would ease some of the pressure or overcrowding at the Magistrates' Courts in Bridgetown and the Juvenile Court in Country Road which really is not a court. It is somebody's office we are using. When you go there, you have to move them out and it creates a lot of problems. Also, at the Juvenile Court in Country Road, there is no safe place to put some of the youngsters once the case has been adjourned. That is very important. We have at St. Matthias sufficient room to really bring some of the people there.

As to the question of continuous sittings of Assizes, I agree with that but one thing I think we should look at as well, the fact that the Court has a vacation in August. I believe that all judges should take their vacation in August as well. We have been having a slight problem stopping in August. It creates a little problem. Either we all should take vacation at that time or so arrange that is taken into consideration when vacation is taken. But I agree with the continuous sittings because Assizes go on. There are some people who are in prison for 2 years. Because of the nature of the offence, the person cannot be granted bail and sometimes within a year or 2 years they are acquitted. So where a chap who has been working, for example, and is charged and has been out of his job for 2 years the employer will hardly take him back. His place will be

taken by somebody else. I think that is something we must look at to get **cases** out as quickly as possible. **The** only way it can be done is to have continuous sittings of Assizes and, if possible, an increase in judges.

As far as the space is concerned, my own inclination was at first not to do as **the** Honourable Member for Christ Church South has said, but to have the steel frame there where the judges' car park is at the present moment and have 2 courts above that **car** park. I have not gone into the cost as yet. We are looking at it. That would ease up some of the space. Of course, we will have to bring in the architects so that the space is properly utilized as well for everyone concerned and we are thinking about that.

Another thing I think we need to look at – and when I was a magistrate I always felt that the magistrate's jurisdiction could be extended – at the present moment what is happening so as not to burden the Supreme **Court** with too many cases is that a lot of magistrates are taking on cases which really should **be** done on indictment. Of course, the accused knowing the extent of the magistrate's jurisdiction will opt to go before a magistrate because if he is convicted, he will get 2 years. However, before a judge, he will get 5 years. So he will opt to go there before a magistrate. It is less expensive when it comes to paying the lawyer. I think one way we can solve the problem would be to extend the magistrate's jurisdiction. I would say to allow a magistrate to give a sentence up to 5 years. It is **true** you may have to increase the number of magistrates because they will have more cases. Even in civil matters – I think that is \$2 500 – a lot of the matters can easily be done by a magistrate. There is no law involved and, if there is, the magistrate can interpret it. Accident cases can easily go up to \$5 000. It will reduce the number of cases going before the judges. This is from my practical experience having sat on the Bench myself. I think with the creation of the court at St. **Matthias** will allow us to have space for 2 more magistrates anyhow. That is how I am thinking at the present moment.

Regarding the Coroner's Inquiry, I want to emphasize that people **seem** to think that it is somebody else's inquiry and the coroner hears it. When somebody dies a natural death, the coroner should really impress upon the Police, the people who are investigating, that he or she needs the file within a specific period. If you are a coroner and somebody dies in your district, you should say to the Police that I want the file in 3 months because you are going to start in 3 months and it will be **done**. But if the coroner does not appreciate the fact that it is his or her inquiry and they depend upon the Police, the Police will always have something more important to investigate than somebody who drowns because there is no foul play. That does not occupy the policeman's attention as if it were a murder. So he does it in a casual fashion. Six months go by, a year goes by or 3 years go by and nothing happens. It is important that the coroner impresses upon the

policeman that he or she has set a time in which to get the file and be able to go through the file and then call the witnesses. Very often in the Coroner's Inquiry, it may take a half hour to complete the whole thing because you call in the persons you want to call and you know what they are going to say so you more or less write before they start. That is the end of that and then you give your decision. But, because of the nature of things, a murder case does not go before the coroner. Most of them are accidents or drownings which can be done within a half hour. Therefore, there is no need to have such a large backlog of coroner's cases to be heard.

Those were the points I wanted to clear up and I think we are very clear on that. Both sides agree on the difficulties and I am hoping that we can have most of these matters cleared up so that the administration of justice can be effectively **carried out**.
1.30 p.m.

The Member for Christ Church South said that there are more lawyers and there is more litigation. I think, too, with the population of Barbados beaming into the United States so often and seeing that as soon as there is an accident everybody wears a collar, because that is one way of indicating that something is wrong, because before, when there were accidents, people took it, said "I am sorry" and went along. Nowadays everything goes to the court because in the United States of America the awards are so great that everybody in Barbados expects that one day when you take a matter before the court you will 3 or 4 million dollars, not realising that sometimes you only get \$1 500. That is one of the problems we have here as well.

With those remarks I want to support this amendment and I know that with that amendment a lot of the problems we now encounter will be solved.

Thank you very much.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall not be long in this debate because much of what needed to be said has already been said and it is very difficult not to agree with much of what has been said by those who have wide experience in the practice of law in the courts.

I sent for the debates to examine how this issue had been dealt with in the past, and, Mr. Speaker, you will not be surprised to know that it has been some considerable time since many of these issues have been discussed in this Parliament and many of the Honourable Members who have spoken have been consistent in the views which they have expressed. I have always found it difficult, not having myself practised in the courts, to understand some of the delays, why some of the administrative techniques which ought to be used and some of the administrative steps

which should be taken to improve the quality of the dispensation of justice have not been done. I have come to a conclusion myself, Mr. Speaker, that there is a kind of administrative malaise as it applies to the courts. Of people, both in administration and out – I have been on this issue both in Opposition and in the Government – it seems to me that the fear of tackling the courts extends even to those who are to make qualitative decisions about the courts if they themselves are not involved in the courts. It is a conclusion I have reached after many years of observing that the simplest task of, let us say, repairing something at the courts seems to take longer than it does for other areas of administration. I suspect it has to do with a certain respect which has been transformed into something else, but it turns out to be a malaise.

One thing we all should reiterate each time is that justice delayed is justice denied and there are a number of people in Barbados who, through no fault of their own, have had their justice denied because they have not had decisions made in the courts at all levels. Those decisions have taken, in some instances, years. I know one man in my constituency who has been waiting for a decision for in excess of 3½ years. He has written to everybody that it is possible to write to and he is still without a decision. I told him recently that I do not believe he is going to get any kind of decision and that he should get accustomed to the idea that no decision is going to come. I also feel – and if I were still functioning in another place I certainly would be saying it and I see no reason not to say it now – that in instances like those, those persons really ought to bring a case against the Government.

The Honourable Member is reminding me that in the United Kingdom, where for 800 years it was felt that no one could bring a case against the courts, the European Commission and the European Human Rights Division of the European Court has now been ruling on all manner of things affecting the human being. There is a fascinating debate going on in Britain now between the old guard and those who are involved with the United States of Europe, as it were, about whether the European Court is a desirable thing, but it is a fact of life that the European Court has been holding that a number of decisions made by the English courts have been against the interest of British citizens and they therefore have awarded damages to these citizens.

I am saying that where a citizen has not been able to get justice in the courts, through no fault of his own, he should be able to bring a case against the Attorney General. I think I should take this opportunity to clear up something that has been happening. A couple of my constituents have asked me what has happened that so many people are bringing cases against the Attorney General. They say, Sir, that the Attorney General seems to be a very bad **man**, because everybody is putting him in court, but the **truth**

is most people are not aware that the only way you could put the Government in court is by making the Attorney General....

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am not talking about the Honourable Member, Sir, I am talking about the Attorney General. There is a difference between the Honourable Member and the Attorney General. What I am saying is that I think, since the Honourable Member said there are 250 lawyers out there, there is nothing wrong with the lawyers drawing to the attention of those persons who cannot get justice that they may have a cause, because we cannot say, as we go toward the 21st century, that we are a country that practises democracy, a country that is at the highest level of human rights protection, and yet persons are not getting justice.

The other point I wish to put on the record again, has to do with the work of the Judges. Mr. Speaker, for as long as I have been in this House I have been making the point that Judges ought to have assistance at the level of the law. I believe fervently that Judges at all levels ought to have Clerks, they ought to have recourse to assistance in the area of research. I think most people believe that a Judge has only to sit and listen to the two sides and then come down on the side of one or the other, but the truth is that, if a Judge is going to give a decision worthy of the system, he has to do his research, and very often it would be more useful for the Judges to have someone who has the energy and the time and who is interested in doing the research to assist in that research. I can think of no reason why in Barbados in 1992 we do not have at least 2 Judges' Clerks who might be made available to all of the Judges, if we could not afford to make one available to each Judge or to every 2 Judges, which would make it possible for the very bright graduates, those who have just come back from law school, who have **demonstrated** a capacity for research and for understanding the law, to be available and to provide the training for the potential Judges who would come from the private Bar, as has been called for by Honourable Members on both sides.

Sir, one of the things which we really should do is to give those persons in the private Bar some opportunity to get some experience in how the Judges do their work and how the work of the Judges can be done. The opportunity of a Judge's Clerk would be good training. I have found difficulty with this long before I got involved with the law. If your training is that you are going to be a Crown Counsel in the DPP's office or in the Attorney General's Chambers, you work for the Government, then you become a Senior Crown Counsel and then a Principal Crown Counsel, and then you move to senior positions and eventually become a Judge. You do not have to be partisan or to have a particular posture as you approach problems. You don't have to be partisan to have a particular posture

as you approach problems. Problem solving when seen from a particular point of view tends to come out in a particular way. It really is desirable that you have, from time to time, someone whose views were fashioned differently or in different circumstances, even though they are surveying the same set of facts. Honourable Members on that side **are** sometimes the Government and sometimes the Opposition. We have been the Government and we have been the Opposition and we are the Government again. From the different sides, one has had an opportunity to view issues in different perspectives and, therefore, you can bring a certain roundness to the problems that cannot be brought if you had a single view. There is scope and there is reason to consider persons coming from other than the set standard method pattern that has been established in the creation of judges. In fact, it might even be useful if, from time to time, a judge is plucked out of the university system. It would help to bring some level of scholarship to some of the appearances and utterances which come from within the **court** system.

1.40 p.m.

I am hearing **sotto voce** that scholarship is not experience, but experience without scholarship can be very dangerous. If I had to err I think I might be willing to take my chances... But that is not the point.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, let me finish by saying that I think that, as we move towards the 21st century and as we look at the Courts, we have to bring some of the thinking that is going on in other places to our appreciation of the Courts. There is no point going on believing that all that has been done in the last 50 years is all that is necessary to be done. We need to modernise the methodology we use.

There is no reason why a judge should have to write in longhand what somebody says when we have electronics that allow us to telephone a man on the moon, to speak to someone in Geneva from Barbados. There are people in New York who get information about what is going on in Barbados before some of us do, while in the Courts you have to speak a sentence and then stop and wait until somebody writes it down and then you say another sentence. Only those who are accustomed to that on an on-going basis understand it. Most people who speak in normal tones have difficulty **remembering** sometimes what they said a few sentences ago.

Mr. Speaker, we continue because that is how we have done it and apparently interfering with it would bring some gremlin into the court structure and so we do not have in the courts some of the modern appliances which we have at home. I believe that that does not enhance

the quality of our judgments. It does not interfere with the quality of justice in the fundamental sense, but I think that our judgements and our justice can be improved in the sense of the efficiency with which it is dispensed.

It is also believed in Barbados that you cannot criticise a judge and I notice recently that a philosopher from the university has sought to criticise a judgment but in a way which may lead to confusion. I am not going to touch that. I leave that for another occasion. It has to be understood that speaking honestly and fairly and giving an opinion about a judgment that has been made is part of the rights of a citizen. If a judgment is given and a citizen does not feel that the judgment was right then the citizen can respectfully criticise that judgment. There seems to be some strange feeling that you are not to say anything about the judges and conversely that judges can say anything from their seat of judgment at any time about anything to anybody. I do not know that that augurs well for orderly growth and development and it is something which, as a society, we will have to examine in a little more detail.

I notice the Honourable Member who is the senior practising attorney in the House....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: ... the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has been here long enough that when he says certain things with impunity one can listen to them. The Honourable Member recently, on a panel, made some comments which I thought were very interesting, when he talked about the need for assistance for persons who serve at the level of the House of Assembly or in Parliament.

I would like to say that it has to be recognised also that judges and magistrates also need assistance from the people who operate in the society. If they make judgments and give decisions and there is no vigorous examination of those decisions among the profession and within the written and spoken word in the community, the judges and magistrates are not being helped. I consider it a travesty that there are 250 lawyers and you can get a decision in Barbados and you can listen to the radios and hear the call-in programmes where all the people who know nothing about what has been said or do not understand the intricacies will speak. You will read the newspapers and you will see leuers from everybody and you will not see, except in rare circumstances, one of those practitioners making a comment about the judgment or the decision. I think that that is an indication of intellectual poverty. Now, Sir, that might be dangerous, but it is something which we need to deal with.

Many years ago in Guyana, before Guyana fell into more difficult times, there was a vigorous exercise on legal decisions. In Jamaica today there are serious examinations

from time to time. I hope that some of the younger lawyers, as they come out of the university, will get into the habit. I notice that Jeff Cumberbatch is doing it and he is very good, and I think it is desirable. I hope that more of them will get into the habit of examining some of the decisions that **are** made because it is only in this way that persons in the society can be better informed about some of these decisions.

I have seen **the** most atrocious statements made about the recent decision of the Chief Justice on King vs. the Attorney General. I have seen one of the most atrocious statements made. It was remarkable in its lack of scholarship. Now, I have not seen any other lawyer take that particular lawyer to task for the simplicity with which he has inundated the people of Barbados. What I am saying is it is no point having the University of the West **Indies**, having the Law Faculty, and having all of 250 lawyers if they are all going to sit around and not get involved with what is going on. I expect that people who know should assist.

1.50 p.m.

When the 6 or 8 economists in Barbados are having their debates - there are only 6 or 8 worthy of any consideration - they write letters, there is vigorous discussion and the newspapers and radios are up and down for months on the same issues. When there are important legal decisions that affect the lives of people, you get commentary from 2 or 3 people who read the law in simplistic terms and make some very damaging statements, usually wrong. But you do not see anything coming from those who ought to be helping to enlighten the population. That is a form of poverty. I hope, Sir, these kinds of things are in the process of change.

When you consider, Sir, that on the other side there are 5 Queen's Counsel, Barbados is extremely fortunate to have a House of Assembly in which there are 7 Queen's Counsel. Seven out of 28 Members **are** Queen's Counsel. I know they make statements about lawyers from time to time but to have 7 Queen's Counsel in a House of Assembly of 28 persons is no mean feat. The point I am making is we do not always take as seriously as we can the opportunity which that combined experience can have for the **country**.

If these Honourable Members go to New York and Tony Best asks them a question and they answer, it is then said that they only speak up in New York. The fact is that, except for the other day when the Barbados Labour Party had a panel discussion about adult suffrage, there has **not** been in recent times any serious discussions or lecture except when Sir Roy **Marshall** comes in and the University puts on something during University Week. Why should this community be deprived of the minds of these 7 and

the others, the senior people at the Bar? They should be out there talking to the people about law and what law is. There is too much mystery surrounding the law. Therefore, you have a lot of people who fall into the difficulty that we heard about which I do not wish to repeat.

First of all, it is all that everybody says it is. It has majesty and all of that but it can be explained. There is no reason why Honourable Members in here could not over a **period** of time – and you will notice, Mr. Speaker, the least antagonistic debates in this House of Assembly occur when we have to discuss a serious matter of law, all Honourable Members will agree that the best debates in here have occurred when the debates have been moved out of the arena of the political meeting and the records will show this – there is no reason why that should not be made available to the country as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has provided an opportunity for some things to be said. Those things have been said. I hope they will not just be left hanging in mid-air. We are in difficult economic times. It is very difficult for the **administration** to consider the appointment of posts at high levels. Let us be realistic. Even so the fact that an appeal court has been appointed has gone somewhere, I think, towards relieving some of the pressure of decision-making in the courts.

Now, Honourable Members are saying there is need to make that other small step to complete the process. I think the administration has to listen to that. In all the circumstances and all the economic difficulties that is something which has to be listened to. I cannot find any quarrel with it, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I am not going to quarrel with it. I support the Bill. I hope it will not be long before when we discuss these matters we can say, "Yes, this thing has been done and the courts are working better."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am now moving, Sir, that the sitting be suspended until 3.00 p.m.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 3.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.
2.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, there is not really much that I need to respond to because the debate has not produced anything which has really been contentious. The points which have been made by Honourable Members on both sides are points which do not, as points which need to be addressed, present any area of contention. The fact of the matter is that the administration of justice is an area which unfortunately has not had serious political attention over the years. The issues which have been raised and which have been debated in here on this occasion are issues which have been raised and debated on any number of occasions previously. They are areas which really do need **to** be addressed.

One of the immediate problems of course is the current financial situation which the country is in. All of us are of the view that perhaps at least another judge of the Supreme Court needs to be appointed. The points about continuous sittings of Assizes and continuous sittings of a family court are things which we from this side as well agree on. As I say, they are not areas of contention. They are areas which clearly need to be addressed and which, in the fulness of time, will be addressed.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. M. A. KING, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, 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 to 3 inclusive were called and passed.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 6.

STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1992

Order No. 6 was called – To move the Second Reading of the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 1992.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the purport of this Bill is to amend the Stamp Duty Act in order to substitute the new tariff heading numbers contained in the Schedule to the Customs Act for those contained in the Schedule to the Stamp Duty Act under the heading Customs. As the House is already aware, I am certain, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean member states, at their meeting in Nassau, Bahamas in 1984 decided that a Common External Tariff should be put in place and at that meeting the Heads mandated the Common Market Council of Ministers to take the necessary steps to put in place a single Common External Tariff which should be designed to serve as the principal instrument for the protection of regional production.

The objectives of the Common External Tariff are well-known, Sir, and I would not delay the House by going through them at this time. But in pursuance of this, on the 1st April, 1991 the Barbados Customs Tariff was reviewed on the basis of the Common External Tariff for the Caribbean Community and Common Market. It then came into effect through the Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 1991. Included in this revised Customs Tariff was a change in the tariff heading numbers under which goods are classified for Customs purposes from the systems used under the Customs Co-operation Council Nomenclature to that used under the harmonized commodity description and coding system known under the acronym HS. The CCM method is a two digit system of classification while the HS method carries a four digit system. As a consequence of the change to the HS system, it has become necessary to replace the tariff heading numbers in the Schedule to the Stamp Duty Act under the heading Customs with the new numbers and the tariffs so that these goods will also have their HS classification. Hence this Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill.

With those few words I introduce this Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill for the consideration of this House and beg to move that it be read a second time.

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

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the specific piece of legislation before the House is a relatively trifling matter, Sir, which is characteristic of the way in which the Government would want to deal with very serious issues.

The truth is that I very much regret that the substantive Minister of Finance is not here, Sir, because, if ever there was an occasion when thoughtful people should sit back and reflect on what is happening and express themselves in a forthcoming matter, it is now. I do not too often and I will not speak in an intemperate way about economic issues in the country. But for the first time ever I must say that I cannot see the future in Barbados. I lived in Jamaica when Jamaica....

Aside.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I cannot see the future. The subject addressed by the Bill just changes. It is a trifling matter. But the Government situation in Barbados is not trifling. It is as if this economy has fallen off a cliff, Sir. We can no longer sit back and allow the House to be engaged with a lot of changes to nomenclatures in tariff headings and a lot of little silly things when a whole economy is going to the dogs. The back of this economy is to the wall. I really believe that a drastic change in the administration of our economic affairs, a drastic change in our policy is required right now.

I want to address this matter very directly because I am beginning to see a lot of studies which I hope the Government is not going to accept. I am beginning to see studies that are saying with flippancy, that we in Barbados can just speak in terms of abolishing agriculture and manufacturing as if the rural society does not matter. I am beginning to see tax reform studies which are based on premises that are so flawed that the conclusions of the studies themselves are as flawed as the premises, Sir. I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that the time has come for serious stock taking and a drastic change in policy. It is now abundantly clear that Barbados cannot be allowed to stand where it is.

3.10 p.m.

There are people in the Central Bank who believe that this country should be brought to a standstill. Barbados cannot afford, Sir, to be brought to a standstill because it is against all the laws of nature for anybody to be in a position of standstill.

The evidence before us, Mr. Speaker, is very clear, that contrary to everything the Central Bank of Barbados has said there is no evidence whatsoever of any improvement of the Barbados economy. We have done, Sir, for the Barbados Labour Party, a review of the Barbados economy for the first quarter of the year, based upon available information. In the last quarter of last year the economy fell by 9 per cent. All of the factors that were at work in the last quarter of last year, Sir, that caused the 9 per cent drop in this economy in the last quarter, are still at work. There is no stimulus in the Barbados economy.

There is no fiscal stimulus as the Members on the other side know, Sir. The only stimulus that was to come was to have been the release of just over \$40 million in the Ministry of Finance Estimates intended to be monies to be spent on the productive sectors. That was to be the fiscal stimulus to bring about growth, but that money has not been released, Sir. There is absolutely no fiscal stimulus in this economy right now. There is no monetary stimulus, no credit stimulus. In fact, Sir, the opposite is true, there is monetary and credit contraction. There is no export

stimulus, Mr. Speaker, all of the export and tradeable sectors in Barbados are in a serious state of decline. There is no investment stimulus, Mr. Speaker. And if there is no fiscal stimulus, no monetary stimulus, no investment stimulus, Mr. Speaker, and no credit stimulus the economy is not only going to come to a standstill, it is going to implode and we **are** beginning, to see unmistakable evidence that Barbados has come to that point.

In the first three months of the financial year, Government's revenue was down by **13** per cent and, Government expenditure up by **16** per cent and, I want to repeat, Government revenue down by **13** percent and Government expenditure up by **16** per cent and for people in charge of Government affairs to be asking for **2** minutes silence to be observed for the Barbados economy is a serious matter, Mr. Speaker. It happened in this country. The Director of Finance and Planning asked for two minutes silence to be **observed** on Friday.

Aside.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: That so grim is the situation in Barbados that the Director of Finance and Planning asked for 2 minutes of silence to be observed. It is a fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, but what has that to do with the stamp duty?

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the stamp duty is part of the revenue, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Silence.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the economic situation in this country, really, Sir, is in too deplorable a condition for this House to **trifle** about this matter any more. The Government has had a large number of studies. They have had, Sir, at least 4 studies on Agriculture, including the Sparks Report, the **Booker** Tate Report, the Landell Mills Report and a World Bank Study. We have had the Langer Report on the Offshore sector. We have had the Maxwell Stamp Report, Sir, on export competitiveness. We now have, Sir, a new **report** prepared by the IADB dealing with export competitiveness. The time has come for drastic decision making to take place within the Ministry of Finance to put Barbados back on a path of growth. The Ministry of Finance has simply to be guided by the philosophy, that in relation to matters like the administration of the stamp duty, unless growth is engendered in the Barbados economy this economy is going to go the way of so many other economies in the Third World but at an accelerated rate, Sir.

I therefore, Sir, have to use this opportunity to underscore our great concern. We just cannot wait for the

debates of the future to let the Government know, and the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs know, that the situation in Barbados is reaching the stage where a social crisis will evolve out of the inactivity that is now the case.

I am of the view, Mr. Speaker, that unemployment in this country has reached levels that have not been known in this country and will threaten the social fabric of Barbados. There is no sector of the Barbados economy today that is doing well. There is absolutely no sector of the Barbados economy that is doing well at all. The important thing is that there is **no** immediate prospect of any improvement in any of those sectors once this economy remains on its present course. I cannot **see** the future of this economy, Sir. None of my colleagues can see the future of this economy. We do not believe it is fair for Barbados for one person in the person of the Minister of Finance and Planning and Economic Affairs to continue to treat the economic affairs of this country with the malaise and indifference with which these matters are being attended.

In relation to stamp duty, Sir, quite obviously, in the near future the Government is under a commitment to amend, not only the indirect taxes, but the direct taxes as well. The Barbados Labour Party has already taken a position on the need for tax reform. I must use this opportunity to deplore the disrespect with which this Opposition has been treated in Government's decision to submit a document on tax reform that obviously, therefore, cannot now be a confidential document or a document covered by secrecy to its so called private sector and the social partners and again treating this House, in my view, with disrespect. I have already made the point, Sir, that every time this Government of Barbados has a document that it wants to circulate to the private sector it should put that document in a brown bag and send it to each Member of this House. You must not, therefore, be surprised if people in the private sector **believe** from time to time that they are better than Members of this House because they can see documents that we cannot see. It grates me, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of this Parliament. It grates that you can have situations where documents that are fundamental are being circulated to the private sector and Members of Parliament, but more specifically, Members of the Opposition, are not allowed to see them. We have already taken a position on tax reforms, citing the need for it. But I want to make this point, Sir, today. I am calling upon the Government of Barbados not to seek to implement the Report that is before it dealing with tax reform **because** if the report is based – I will go into details when the time comes, Sir – on faulty premises the conclusions can only, Sir, be equally faulty.

My position, Sir, has been very clear, that one of the most urgent things....

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I wish to draw to the Honourable Member's attention that the point he is making, Sir, is one which Your Honour and I would have learnt when we were in first form, that if the premise is wrong the conclusion must be wrong.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, again the attempt to trifle with very serious matters. I believe, Sir, that the Government of Barbados must have an overall strategy for fiscal reform of which the reform of the direct taxation system must be an organic part, and the reform of the indirect taxation must be an organic part. But it must have an overall strategy for tax reform. The reason why this is so important, Sir, is that, when you look at the evolution of our taxation system, one of the problems is that there is now an imbalance in our system so that we have come to depend so heavily upon indirect taxes on trade that it creates its own problems, as is now the case that the Minister of Finance is now in the invidious position of having to institute measures to protect the balance of payments requiring a reduction in our imports while, on the other hand, his fiscal system is one that requires him to rely on imports for revenue. So that part and parcel of the reform must be to correct the existing imbalances. Sir, when I see a report that says that you do not recommend that direct tax reform be held hostage to indirect tax reform and we should not bother to bring the 2 into line but just do one and thereafter do the next, in the same way that housing policy should not be dependent upon the reform of the health policy, the premise is wrong. The correct analogy should be that, if you are going to have a housing policy, you cannot only have a housing policy dealing with housing starts but it must embrace also a mortgage policy. But to equate the reform of indirect and direct tax reform with the reform of health policy and housing policy is a false analogy. Therefore, I am saying that any set of direct taxation measures that comes in advance of Government evolving an overall strategy for tax reform of which the direct and indirect are going to be alternate parts working hand in hand is a piece of folly. This document which has been circulated is a document which I want to say in the strongest possible terms, I hope Government does not rush towards implementing, Mr. Speaker, not only because of the weaknesses in the macro-thinking behind it but because of the social consequences that can ensue from the implementation of this strategy that will likely be considerable in this society. 3.20 p.m.

We have said in this House from this side that we will be supporting tax reform. This Barbados economy needs tax reform. When you reach a stage where successive increases in the rate of taxes give rise to a decline in Government's revenue, it must be clear that something is wrong with the taxation system and it has to be fixed. The strongest argument, Sir, in support of tax reform is that the rate of taxation has increased on the

indirect side, including stamp duty. The strongest argument in support of tax reform is that, despite the fact that the rates have increasingly been raised, the revenue has just not been performing. When you reach that stage, you must take a look at the situation and change what you are working with.

Mr. Speaker, I want in this debate to highlight the fact that the time for trifling with this economy has passed. Barbados is facing the most considerable crisis it has ever faced in its history. All of the productive sectors in this economy are under stress and there are some sectors that are on the point of becoming endangered species. We are worried about some of the recommendations that we see cropping up in studies. The Barbados Labour Party will not support a structural adjustment programme that says that, in order to save tourism, you have to destroy agriculture and manufacturing. We cannot by any stretch of the imagination be part of that. I want to say that up front, Mr. Speaker, because the time for saying these things is now. In fact, it may be better for Barbados to step back from too intimate a relationship with these institutions that want to do these things and seek to evolve for ourselves an independent path to structural adjustment. We know what is wrong with this economy. We know how to put it back in good shape. Barbados must not be sold for a pittance, Sir. So far, Barbados has not received a cent from these international institutions. If the price that we have to pay for the structural reform of this economy is to wipe out 2 main sectors of this economy, it is not worth it. That is the position from this side, Sir. The studies that we have seen about structural reform of this economy that will commit Barbados to the same kind of economic prospects that Jamaica has, 15 years in the clutches of the international institutions with no hope of coming out. We do not want for Barbados with people just pulling formats off shelves and plug in numbers and say this is the Barbados solution. We want people who will come here and look at our circumstances and develop structural adjustment policies that are in keeping with our circumstances. We do not want people telling us in Barbados that we must have a structural reform programme that does not hurt international welfare. That is the philosophy upon which a lot of this structural reform is based, that no country should do anything in the process of helping itself that can harm somebody else. That is what it means, Sir.

Barbados had a right at this time to take defensive actions in pursuit of its own economic advancement without regard as to how it will affect international welfare. I am thoroughly appalled by conclusions I see appearing in documents, particularly bearing in mind that the documents say that the persons who wrote the report had constructive meetings with the Minister of Finance. It seems clear to me that that Minister of Finance is not impressing upon those persons how very strongly we feel about the foolishness

they press down the throats of the people of this country. That is why I say that I am **sorry** he is not here today to hear how we feel on this side. We support the structural reform of the Barbados economy but we are not prepared to put Barbados on the same unsustainable destructive path that has become the plight of the Third World which finds itself in the hands of these institutions.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the time might have come when in the way the trade unions are meeting with these institutions Parliament might have to meet with them. It may have to come to that, Sir. I have lost confidence in the ability of the Minister of Finance of this country to articulate my concerns on economic matters in meetings with these international institutions. I have absolutely no confidence that he is saying what he should be saying. I have absolutely no confidence that he is saying what the facts should be telling him. I want to repeat again, Mr. Speaker, that he is also listening to some advice that cannot stand scrutiny. Let this House be mindful of the fact that a few months ago leading members of the Central Bank of this country were assuring the people of Barbados that the economy is on the rebound and there will be growth.

Mr. Speaker, the Government will be very soon publishing information to the effect that the economy has declined by 4 per cent so far for this year. Even if we accept the 4 per cent, the fact is that the economy will have to grow by 6 per cent for the rest of the year to cancel the 4 per cent decline for the first half and have any growth, Mr. Speaker. I ask this House: Does anybody in this House truly believe, in the absence of any fiscal stimulus, monetary stimulus, export stimulus or any investment stimulus that there can be any 6 per cent growth in this economy? In the best of times, this economy has grown by 3 per cent or 4 per cent decline. But yet we are going to have the Central Bank of Barbados try to convince us that, by some miracle, Barbados is now going to grow by some 6 per cent for the rest of the year to cancel out the 4 per cent. That is what it amounts to, Mr. Speaker. We have to impress this upon those persons who, I again want to insist, are drawing money under false pretence from the Central Bank of Barbados. I want to say again that they are loitering at the Central Bank of Barbados and the time has come for them to get their act in order. It is a severe indictment on the persons who have to put forward economic information in this country for heads of institutions like the CDB to be saying that the Barbadian people have not been made to understand their economic plight. It is a serious indictment, Sir. The people are not understanding in part because those persons who have a responsibility to explain to them from an official position are giving them a misrepresentation of the facts.

The Barbadian people were led to believe that things were going to get easier in the course of the second half of this year and it is not because of a Minister of the Crown

saying so, Sir. The people in the Central Bank told them that and it is a dangerous situation which has to be stopped now.

I want to see stronger economic management in this country. The Central Bank should be put in a position where it not only executes its monetary affairs with efficiency but where its role in helping to chart the future course of Barbados is one we can be proud of. The Central Bank of Barbados is no longer performing that role. It is a drain. It is a bottle neck. It is a distortion in addition to the other inefficient things it is doing. I am saying that, in addition to **tax** reform, which we will support provided it is based on correct premises, institutional change at the level of the role of the Central Bank is now becoming critical to Barbados' survival.
3.30 p.m.

I also feel that the Ministry of Finance must do at least one thing to show that they have some confidence in the performance of this economy, because the management of the economy requires that the people in charge of it should send signals representing the fact that they have confidence in the state of affairs. If there is one action I would urge the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to undertake to reflect that it wants to see this economy come back quickly is to change the interest rate policy. Interest rates internationally are at a record low level. When we were in office they were telling us to link interest rates in Barbados to interest rates abroad. We did that when they were high. They are low now, Sir, but the Government has carried interest rates to historically high levels.

Businesses in Barbados are already depressed by reason of the lack of demand ensuing from Government's credit policies. It is really driving businesses to the wall to have them pay the kinds of rates of interest presently obtaining in this country. I am therefore not expecting a miracle solution from Government overnight, but the Government has a responsibility now to do at least one thing that would start rekindling confidence in this economy and change the interest rates. It would affect a wide cross-section of businesses, because a lot of businesses are going to the wall purely because of punitive interest charges. A large number of Barbadians cannot save because the increase in their mortgages is what they would have been saving ordinarily, and that is now going to the mortgage institutions. Our export sector cannot compete at all if they must include high interest rates as a cost to compete against people abroad who have access to cheaper money.

Without stretching out myself on this particular matter, Sir, the time has now come for a drastic change in Government's policy. It must be clear to Government that the IMF programme is not working. They passed the IMF reserves test twice, in December by bringing in money

through the sale of assets and having the sugar industry prepaid, but the essential point is that the economy did not earn the foreign exchange to pass the test, which is the essence of passing the test.

In March, Mr. Speaker, the banking system brought in money. The Central Bank then purchased the funds from the banking system in a way did not create other liabilities at the Bank and you passed again. You also had access to IMF inflows. The truth of the matter is that this Barbados economy is not earning foreign exchange. To be able to pass those tests you have sold assets, you have been prepaid for sugar and all those kinds of expedients, but you are running out of expedients.

Hitherto, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the fiscal situation was no major problem in relation to the IMF programme, but as the Government must know now, Sir, the Government is facing a considerable fiscal problem. Revenue is down by 13% and expenditure is up by 16%. The question is, what is there left for the Government to cut? The point is that the Government of Barbados is now going to have tremendous difficulty meeting the fiscal targets involved in the IMF programme, **as** well as the targets set out for the net domestic assets of the Central Bank of Barbados. Therefore, it behoves the Government to sit down seriously and ask itself where it is taking the economy and is the Barbados economy going to be assured that, after all the sacrifice that has been made, at the end of the day there is something in it for the Barbadian people?

I am going to reserve some of what I have to say until when the Minister is here, but this House must in a way nationalise the Minister of Finance. He wants nationalising, Sir, bringing under national control. We cannot any longer be satisfied with a situation where this country's economic affairs are put adrift; that the policies we are following are not working and he knows they are not working. I have under the Rules of the House not to speak disparagingly about another Member and that is the only sense in which therefore I am advancing the view that he knows the policies are not working. The fact of the matter is that we cannot any longer sit back and let this absurd theatre work itself out, because this whole thing has become absurd. The Minister has surrendered economic sovereignty and I **truly** believe that, left to himself, he would just do what is put before him, try to invoke a false consensus by letting some people meet with him at the last minute to give them only glancing impressions as to what the documents contain, and thereafter proceed to commit us to a certain disaster. It happened before, Sir, and we cannot allow it to happen again.

I seek, therefore, to implore this House that we must all join in this matter. Barbados' future is at risk in a way that it has never been at risk before. Fundamental to that is the kind of role being played by the Minister of Finance

and it behoves us to bring him under control for the future of this **country**.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I entered **this** Honourable House of Assembly in 1981 as a member of the Democratic Labour Party to help to **see** after the welfare of the people in this country, and as long as I am a Member of this House my job will be to look after and to speak on behalf of the people in this country and their welfare. If in my address at any time in this Honourable Chamber it appears to anyone that I am getting at any one person or anybody else, I am **sorry** for those persons, because if I believe that that one person is solely responsible for any suffering by the masses out there, I will continue to speak until I am stopped.

Mr. Speaker, today we are dealing with the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill. I am not going to go into other fields that were covered by the Honourable Member just peripherally, but I would just like to say one thing. The Honourable Member for St. Peter mentioned the tax reform recommendations. The only comment I have to make on those recommendations, from a peripheral scanning of those recommendations, is that if they are accepted they will completely wipe out the middle class sector in this country.

The late **Errol** Barrow and the late Tom Adams toiled manfully to create a middle class in this country and Barbados was noted throughout this world **as** a country that had a fast developing middle class. There are certain conditions, there are certain things that are peculiar to Barbados and these recommendations are calculated to destroy all of them. I will give you one example. The Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party throughout the years saw that it was a good thing to encourage people to take out insurance policies. What those **2 parties** did when they were the Government was to encourage people to take out insurance so that at least they might claim some of the payments on their income tax returns. That is now being recommended to be abolished.
3.40 p.m.

Mortgages. Encouragement was being given for people to buy their own homes and those respective Governments, in order to encourage home ownership, gave relief saying you could claim interest for 5 to 7 years on the new houses that you build. There is another recommendation that that should go through the window **as** well.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going through that this evening because I have to study those proposals. I have only looked at some of them and I have seen that if these proposals are accepted the middle class in Barbados which is being wiped out now will be totally wiped out.

Let's get to the stamp duty, Mr. Speaker. This stamp duty amendment that has been proposed this afternoon is a trifling matter, but I think that when one discusses stamp duty amendments one has to look at what has happened within the past couple of months when it comes to stamp duty, import duty and such like on the manufacturing and private sector in Barbados.

Sometime last year, the Minister of Finance was the only elected Member of this Honourable House who sat on those negotiations with the IMF and stamp duty and import duty was imposed on the private sector in Barbados – the manufacturers, the agriculturalists. Mr. Speaker, you would never believe that the proposal to impose import duty and stamp duty on the manufacturers, hoteliers and agriculturalists was proposed by Barbados.

Let me go further, in the Budget earlier this year, I said that the Government had about 6 or 8 meetings with the private sector. The Honourable Minister of Finance in his summing up said that it was not 6, it was 12. He went on to say that he would have been stupid to tell the private sector what he was going to do. He gave an example of a British Chancellor of the Exchequer who did it and lost his job. Mr. Speaker, the one comment I want to make on that is that the British Chancellor of the Exchequer would have done it in a normal budgetary presentation or just before the budget. This was an IMF programme by which you are asking people to sacrifice beyond the call of duty and you are saying that you have no confidence in them to tell them what you are proposing to do. Let me explain what that has done to Barbados.

After that proposal was made to the IMF and the private sector discovered it, the private sector said that it would **destroy** $\frac{1}{4}$ of them. The Barbados delegation, led by the only Minister of Finance and the only Member of this House who sat at those negotiations, then decided to find out from the IMF if they could change the proposal because it was pointed out to them by the private sector that, if they had talked to them, by increasing the corporation **tax** by a slight amount they would have got not just \$16 million but \$24 million. So they decided to check to see if it could be changed but the IMF said, "No changing." It held them to their folly and told them, "The only way you are going to change it is if you get back the money from taxes on trade." They knew that there is no way that \$16 million could be raised on **trade** because if you carry up taxes on the imports from CARICOM, the members will retaliate. What I am trying to say is if in the 12 or 13 discussions which the Minister said he had with the private sector he had discussed with the private sector up front, the proposal put to the IMF would have been "We can get \$16 million by increasing this or that." Having put up that they are going to get the \$16 million by the imposition of duties the IMF said, "You can't move it, but the only way you can is if you get it by trade." That is why we are now in a full Nelson and why the manufacturing is

disappearing, agriculture is disappearing and everything is disappearing.

I want to know how many **other** countries in the Caribbean are paying import duties on their inputs. What the Minister of Finance has to understand is that if you put import duty on the manufacturing or private sector it does not allow them to take advantage on the export side. If you impose the duties up front they have to import less inputs and, therefore, if there is a favourable climate on the export side they do not have any inputs to use in order to export. Things like these are not being understood by the persons who are doing the negotiations on behalf of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that, about 2 months ago – I am on the stamp duty – the Governor of the Central Bank said that the private sector should be employing people, meaning that the private sector should be taking up the slack. Now, Mr. Speaker, when I read that, and I have alluded to it in this Honourable Chamber already, I was amused because all of us know that if the Government is laying off people, the people who should be taking up the slack would be the private sector but you do not impose duties on them and expect them to take up the slack. What you should be doing is easing the duty off them.

Our delegation decided to put import duties up front on the private sector when they were barely existing and then part of the delegation came back later on and said the private sector should be employing people. You have high interest rates, you have import duties, stamp duties on people who were barely existing. You have credit restrictions but you tell them they should be employing the people. Now, Mr. Speaker, this question of stamp duty and any duty cannot be discussed except you look at investment as well because no one is going to invest in a **country** if you are putting added burdens on them, if the interest rates are high and if you have credit restrictions on them. For any person to go to the Cayman Islands, I do not matter who it is, and ask people to invest in Barbados could only be throwing water in the sea. The climate in Barbados is not a climate fit for anybody to invest in. You have to change the system that exists at the moment. You need a radical change in policy.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if we find it impossible to get \$150 000, to get an industry that is bringing about \$50 million into Barbados moving until the money dropped down from the sky or something, tell me where are you going to find all of this money from to get the productive sectors moving? I have heard recently that the World Bank has said they are not coming up with any money until BADC and BMC amalgamate. That is one of the conditions. They have

about 15 conditions. The last one now is you have to amalgamate the BMC and **BADC**. The report coming through is that those 2 Corporations cannot be amalgamated until next year so if the World Bank is not coming up with the piece of change until those 2 are amalgamated, you will have to wait until next year to get the piece of money. You understand?

What is happening today, Mr. Speaker, is we have not got a single cent from the World Bank yet but all the conditions, all the serious decisions that are being made in Barbados are being made by them and we have not got a cent yet. People do not understand what needs to be done. You have to understand, Mr. Speaker, that we would not have been in this situation if persons would take advice, if persons would listen, if **persons** would give out ideas and take in ideas. No one man on this **earth** is Christ and even Christ did not believe that he **knew** everything. You have to understand it. I have nothing for any person. I like every single person on this God's **earth** but if I see any one man, regardless of who he is, destroying this country and the Democratic Labour Party that I spent my entire life – I went all over Barbados cursing people for the Democratic Labour Party – and I **see** one man who refuses to take advice, who has people on the front benches who are knowledgeable people, people who spot things early and he did not take any advice, did not check with any of them, this is the situation we are in now.

Mr. Speaker, I will have a lot to say in this House of Assembly because I have discovered that with Barbados at the moment going through convulsions, this Chamber in here is meeting once every 2 weeks, once every 3 weeks and once every 4 weeks. I believe that at a time like this we should be meeting often and exchanging ideas in here. **That** is my belief. This once every 4 weeks and when you come in here you sitting down and debating the amendment to the Larceny Act, the amendment to the Arrestable Offences Act and the economy going through convulsions and nothing is being said about it, that has to stop.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this. I have nothing against any person but, as I have said before, I like my country. I have come up and seen where the late Mr. **Errol** Barrow made us proud to be Barbadians. Tom **Adams** was not a favourite of mine, but we were proud to have Tom **Adams** as a Prime Minister. Barbadians were proud of those. I have seen a situation in Barbados today that I do not like. We need at this junction, Mr. Speaker, a Minister of Finance and Prime Minister who can generate feelings in people, who can make people want to do things, who can make people say: "I am not going to do that because that would embarrass my Prime Minister; I am not going to do that because I **like** my Prime Minister too bad". We do not want any **perso** now for whom the only feeling that can be generated is sympathy. We do not want that. We hear: "give the man a chance".

Mr. SPEAKER: We are dealing with the Bill.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I know that. I am coming back to the stamp duty now, Mr. Speaker. I never really left the stamp duty because the stamp duty has a lot to do with investing. It has a lot to do with the inputs to the manufacturing sector, the agricultural sector and the tourism sector. Everybody is complaining.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, there are a lot of areas that I have to cover each Tuesday in this Honourable House. Today was the day to cover the stamp duty, the manufacturing sector and the tourism sector. I am saying that Barbados has found itself in this position because of a lack of consultation, an idea that you do not have to get any ideas from anyone, or you do not have to discuss anything with anyone. What that does is when you go to those lending agencies **and** you do not have **your** blue print, they will put theirs on you. If you go with yours they will look at it and say: "Okay, we will try yours". But if you go without yours, they will say "Well, fellow, you have to use this."

A lot of things are happening in Barbados today because we did not put forward what "we" should have put forward. "We" did not argue our position because it appeared there was no one to argue the position for us. I am strengthened in that view because, as I stated in the Budgetary Debate in here, there were about 3 or 4 items in that Letter of Intent which we got changed and the Honourable Minister of Finance was in Zimbabwe. The rest of us decided...

Mr. SPEAKER: I am cautioning the Honourable Member. I think the Honourable Member should pay attention to what I am saying. What I am saying to the Honourable Member is there is room for discussion but there **are** times when you have to make sure that you fall within the context of what you **are** discussing. I can only advise the Honourable Member. That is my role to keep the debate within the context of the motion before us.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: I accept your view, Mr. Speaker. I was just alluding to a comment I made before when the Honourable Member was in here. I am not saying anything that the Honourable Member did not hear.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not what I am saying. I am saying I still have to bear in my mind that we are dealing with the stamp duty. Any reference to any subject that appears to me outside the motion before the House, I will caution you. I will not stop you.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: The stamp duty forms part of the general system of taxation. I believe when one is dealing with the **stamp** duty, the import duty, consumption tax or direct taxes, one needs, and it is necessary, to

look at the whole system of taxation. I am going to do that this evening, Mr. Speaker, as I have said that the reference....

Mr. SPEAKER: This is the point I want to make that you could not deal with it in its entirety. You have to deal with those that are relevant to this situation. That is all I am saying.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: We will deal with it when the time comes. I just want to put on record the point that the imposition of stamp duty and import duty on the manufacturing sector in Barbados was a fundamental error because what the manufacturing sector, the tourism sector and the agricultural sector need is encouragement. The Honourable Minister of Finance has to understand that you are not going to create any employment or more employees in Barbados unless you create employers. The Government is laying off people. The only way you are going to create employment is if you create employers. And you are not going to create employers by making things more difficult for them by putting stamp duties on them. That is the point one has to understand. These people who have to take the slack when the Government is laying off people..I just want to say one thing and it has to do with this direct tax reform matter. I am going to finish now.
4.00 p.m.

When these people were sitting and discussing this tax reform recommendation I would believe that the situation in Barbados, as far as employment was concerned, would have been different. Every day now you hear 100 people let go, another 100, another 100, a 37, a 50. If you work out your figures when the people who were employed at a certain number those figures are completely wrong because the people who are employed now are a lot less. This is why, as was alluded to by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, if you start with the wrong premise because you could not have – as well they should have – they could not have anticipated how many people would have been let go, they should have got some idea that if you put import duties on the manufacturing sector a lot of them would go by the wayside. If they did not understand that, well then something is wrong again.

The point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, – and I would say this for the last time – is that I think, I believe and I know, because it has been proven, that the imposition of those duties on the manufacturing sector, on the tourism sector, on the agricultural sector was a flawed policy, it was an error and it cannot help to stimulate any investment in Barbados at all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that we are in grave danger as parliamentarians of being treated

extremely harshly, with justification, in the future by all who comment on the present day situation in Barbados, if we do not, on every occasion that we have, make full use of the opportunity to do what precisely the Honourable Member for St. Peter and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has done, and that is to demonstrate in no uncertain terms our complete concern and fear about the economic leadership that is being provided for Barbados by the present Minister of Finance.

The Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill is a very important Bill. Stamp duties play an essential part in the indirect tax regime in Barbados. Stamp duties also are important because as members of the Caribbean Economic Community there is no harmonization with respect to the rate of stamp duties, as opposed to the rate of import duties. It is exceedingly important that it is understood in this country of the mechanisms of protection against imports from outside the Caribbean Economic Community, as well as, from within the Caribbean Economic Community, that stamp duty is that mechanism.

I do not believe, Sir, that it is well understood that Barbados in the Caribbean Economic Community together with the OECS countries is in the unique position of being countries who have, since the 1980s, had currencies which have not been devalued. It is important to understand that the competitive position in Barbados in relation to the rest of the Caribbean has been eroded by the fact that other Caribbean countries have reduced the value of their dollar in relation to Barbados.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance plays an important role in the Caribbean Economic Community. It is my understanding that at the last Heads of Government Conference certain Prime Ministers were designated as being responsible for certain areas of the Caribbean economic activities to ensure that decisions taken by the Heads of Government are implemented. The implementation of the decisions with respect to a single market within the context of the aspirations of the Caribbean Economic Community objectives was designated to the Barbados Prime Minister.

We ought today to be in a position to be told, from the Government, what progress has been made towards the implementation of a single, unified Caribbean Economic Community, what steps are being taken to ensure that, insofar as the Caribbean Economic Community is concerned, we will have a unified approach to the World Bank, to the International Monetary Fund, to the Inter-American Development Bank and to the Caribbean Development Bank. After all, Sir, and this is a point that we must stress, Barbados is not the only country in the Caribbean Economic Community that has programmes with the World Bank, with the International Monetary Fund or with the Inter-American Development Bank. Therefore

the question which constantly brought to the fore whenever any discussion takes place is: "Why is it that Barbados has to pursue a policy allegedly to satisfy the dictates of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank which is different from Trinidad and Tobago, from Guyana and from Jamaica?" That is a question that must be before us. In none of those countries was **stamp** duty imposed on manufacturing inputs. Only the Minister of Finance in Barbados has imposed stamp duties on inputs to manufacturing and agriculture. That question must constantly be **before** our eyes. Why is it that we are so different? Why is it that we are so foolish, so asinine, so uncaring to our manufacturers and our agriculturalists as to impose duties on their inputs when in the other countries who have the same programmes they do not do it? This dilemma came out, Sir, during the course of the Estimates and at that time I pointed this out. I repeat today, Sir, that the Government owes the public of Barbados an explanation as to why it is that Caricom exporters have the advantage in Barbados' markets of having inputs in their products which they export to Barbados which are not taxed and we, in Barbados, have our manufacturers supplying the same market having to pay **tax**.

4.10 p.m.

The Government had promised, the Minister of Finance had promised that he would have introduced an equalisation tax to take care of that and to this day, the economic lunacy that pervades this society is such that, up to today, no such tax has been introduced. So that we must put on record, for posterity, that we regard this as shameful, that we regard that conduct as conduct conducive to the destruction of important sectors of this economy and we are not going to mince words.

We owe a duty to the public of Barbados, as Parliamentarians, not to mince words. The whole economy of this **country**, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter has said, has imploded. There is a collapse in every sector that produces in Barbados and are we to stay here and stay quiet and say nothing while the whole country is on a path of destruction? We are not going to be part of that.

The Government of Barbados owes the public an explanation as to why it has taken so long for the Government to do what it promised, to introduce the measures by way of additional stamp duties. Let there be no doubt about it, the only mechanism that the Government can use to ensure that the Barbados manufacturers are not being unfairly disadvantaged in this **area** is by introducing a special stamp duty rate because they cannot change the common external tariff. They cannot change import duties. They can't change consumption tax. It is only with stamp duties that you can do it. Well, I can tell you why they can't do it, because it would be a flagrant violation of the Caricom Treaty. And we have been in this House, at least

those Honourable Members who don't think about these things, misled into believing that it is an easy exercise to equate Barbados' position in this area and to alleviate the disadvantage. It is a very serious matter, Sir, an exceedingly serious matter.

Now, Sir, I want to endorse the remarks of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I think it is really a shame that a responsible political party like the Barbados Labour Party and its representatives is treated with the contempt that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance treats it. It is a matter I regard as an insult to the dignity of this House. I want to make it very clear. The Labour Party, and I am sure my colleagues agree, will not be accommodating the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in any measures that he brings down here to bring in taxation to implement any of these studies until we have had a full opportunity to study the implications of them.

So there won't be any special appeals. If we want the private sector to come in here and have legislative power, let them pass the laws in the Chamber of Commerce. Let them pass them in Washington. Let them pass them at the Inter-American Development Bank. But if you have to bring laws to the legislature of Barbados, the legislators of Barbados have to be **treated** with the respect that they deserve, having regard to the fact that we have been endorsed by the people of Barbados.

This is not any partisan matter. This is a matter that goes to the root of parliamentary authority in Barbados. This is what it goes to.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Well I hope that when you come to be counted that you will be man enough to be counted. I only hope so. This is what we are doing. We are in a very, very serious position. We cannot allow this to continue, Sir. There is a study on tax reform by the International **Monetary** Fund. There is a study called Competitiveness of Structural Adjustment in Barbados, a final report submitted to the Inter-American Development Bank on the 29th April, 1992.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am not making that a document of the House. I promised you a copy already and I am going to give it to you.

I regard this as a national matter. I do not believe, Sir, that if the Honourable Members had access to this information they would still sit down where they are sitting down. They will not sit down here because this calls for a revolt in the national interest. This calls for a revolt. You cannot sit down here and give endorsement to a

series of policies which you know will bring about destruction, policies which you know place Barbados and its productive sector, in a position different from all the rest of Caricom who have the same programmes with the IMF, with the World Bank and with the rest of them. Why are we to be separate? And that is one of the things that I hope the Minister of State in replying will deal with. How are we dealing with the question of the economic integration movement? They come in here and they say we wish to harmonise the language and the numbers used in order to implement an agreement reached at Caricom level. That is what we are here for. We are trying to bring our laws in tune with our agreements. I want to know, therefore, when did Caricom agree that a country, as part of its incentive programme, is to impose taxes on their inputs? I know that it is directly contrary to every agreement that they have in Caricom that you should frustrate the Fiscal Incentives Act which is the result of a harmonisation.

Now, Sir, there is one last point I am going to make. I want Honourable Members to study this very carefully. Barbados is part of the international trade regime. It is a fact of life. Now the cold war has receded there is a movement on to have larger and larger trading blocks. There is a movement on for free international trade but I want Honourable Members to understand that in that movement there is a fair amount of hypocrisy also. The European Economic Community and the United States of America have the largest protectionist regime in relation to agriculture. None of them have been able to see at the GATT, in the earlier round of negotiations, sufficient concessions to allow the world to say there will be a genuine free trade in those areas. We will not bother with them because we say that the Japanese are not part of the free international trade issue. That is accepted. But the basic position is this. When you tell me that the imposition of stamp duty on butter, potatoes or any of the products that come from Europe or the United States of America and that you have the stamp duty at a certain level with too much protectionism, I say to myself that I will accept that it is so when the price of the products that are exported is the same as the domestic producers and consumers in those countries pay. The milk industry, chicken industry and the whole livestock industry in Barbados will collapse if you continue to accept these things. That is a very, very serious thing.

4.20 p.m.

Sir, sometimes in giving thought to this, I become so worried. I am not going to go mad over it, Sir, but I want to tell you this. I feel that this House has a unique opportunity to challenge all of the traditional methods of operation. This House should seriously consider whether it does not owe its duty to Barbados of its present generation and the future if it does not create some kind of machinery to ensure that all of the material upon which decision

making is taken is brought before this House before any decisions are made. That is a very important point, Sir. There have been a large amount of studies. There is a report on Labour and Social Security Safety-Net. There is a Dorsie Boyce Study on the Barbados Private Sector – Legal and Regulatory Framework. We are going to get them, Sir. There are so many of these reports. There is a Spark Report on Agriculture. All of these have been done since 1990.

Sir, I think that this House owes a duty to demand as a pre-condition involving the legislative process, I say that this House should demand before it deals with any of these measures, that we see copies of this report. I do not see how it can be secret anymore. I fail to see how it can be secret anymore because some of these documents are in wide circulation in other parts of the world. The private sector has them all about. Why should Honourable Members of this House in their capacity as elected representatives of the people be denied the opportunity of reading this document before they exercise their important legislative function of endorsing the legislation that is being recommended? Tell me that. It is a very important point, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I know that I have discharged my responsibility to this country on this occasion as I did in 1986. I know, Sir, that I am man enough to get in here and give my views and to vote exactly how I feel is in the national interest. I hope all of you over there will be men and women enough....

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member has a duty to this House, Sir. The Honourable Member cannot make those statements and leave them. He has a duty. He is misleading the House, Sir.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I want to give the Honourable Member the assurance that he is no longer in that category.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must be fair to the records of the House. I am sure that was a slip of the tongue. I will take that as a slip of the tongue. But for the records of the House, we do not have any females on the Government side. I think the Honourable Member will agree with that. I am sure he has no difficulty with that.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am wondering whether we should not have a special committee comprising Members of both sides of the House to deal with this question of the economy of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether in our duty to posterity this House does not regard the position as being so serious as to be deserving

of the appointment of a special committee to study the implications of these far-reaching measures and to try and influence a workable programme. After all, I find it difficult to understand how the benefit of the advice of this side cannot possibly be taken into account when, of all the countries that have had programmes with the International Monetary Fund in this hemisphere we, the Barbados Labour Party, have managed one and come through with flying colours. Is that going to be taken for nothing? Are you going to regard it as nothing?

Sir, this is a matter of great seriousness and we say that the information coming to us is so disturbing that we should be on the alert as Barbadians. We want to say this, Sir, that our information is that this economy is going back in the first quarter of this year, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter said, well above 4 per cent. This is a very serious thing, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, if I may set the context for what I have to say, I will begin by adopting without actually repeating what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has said about the importance of stamp duties in the whole economy of Barbados. Sir, I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has made one of the most important contributions to the national life of Barbados that I have ever heard in my 15 years in Parliament. I trust that Members on the Government side will treat what he has said seriously. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South, as a patriot and as a former Prime Minister, has suggested to this House for its mature consideration that henceforth, in relation to the structural adjustment programmes that have to be entered into by Barbados, in the light of all that has been said in this House and experienced, that now is the time for us to set up a kind of all party committee drawn from members of both sides to look critically at the information such as the reports we have and make recommendations for the assistance and guidance of the person or persons who ultimately will negotiate on behalf of Barbados. This is very crucial. It says a lot and I want to examine and unravel it.

4.30 p.m.

Like all of us in here, I am saddened at the state of Barbados in June 1992. I am particularly saddened because, if you ask anyone of us what is the future we see for Barbados under the leadership of the present Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, there is nothing that can be seen. The young people out there in the society have no hope. What they have is a lot of frustration, a sense of despair and hopelessness and, to a large extent, the 28 of us in here will have to bear some responsibility for their condition.

I want it clearly understood that I am not carrying any can for any foolishness that has been done by the Minister

of Finance. I am not accepting the blame for the folly of one person. They say we have a national responsibility but, where foolishness could have been avoided, in future I am going to make my position very clear in relation to the conduct of the Minister of Finance in the management of the economy.

The Minister of Finance has a certain structural problem himself. He needs structural adjustment himself and I am going to begin with his attitude to consultation. His concept of consultation is to write you a letter and say that "I propose to do so and so". That is one method. Another method of consultation is to behave as he behaved to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and the Member for St. George South last summer when most of us were out of the Island. He called them in and read a prepared statement to them and said, "Thank you very much for attending." He got not one idea back from them. No feedback. No cross-fertilisation of ideas at all. That is what he calls consultation. That is what he has done with the private sector in numerous meetings. All the people in here on the Front Bench who know that must let it be known. It has to hang out because Barbados is being destroyed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think I drew to the attention of the House a Rule today which deals with the conduct of Members under which I presume that we debate more the statements and things of that sort. If the Honourable Member is calling for a motion on the conduct of the Prime Minister, he is well within that Rule. I think I will have to pay more attention to Members using that broad Rule to deal with the problem and to the way Members are doing so. I think you should study that Rule more and see if you would not recognise that to deal with the conduct of any person in this Chamber certainly must come as a motion. I think the Opposition recognises that because there is a motion before this House in a similar vein. I am asking Members, even though I give some room to discuss the matter, to bear in mind the interpretation of that particular Rule.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you sat there during the budgetary presentation this year and you heard the Deputy Prime Minister saying that he might have concerns about the style of his own Prime Minister. That is all I am saying. I have concerns about his style and management as Minister of Finance and Prime Minister of this country. I do not want to use the word "conduct", Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The detail itself tends to suggest that it is an infringement of that Rule. To make a statement without details is reasonable.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I cannot make a statement in a general way without supporting it by example.

Mr. SPEAKER: I said if you go into detail then it suggests to me that there is a breach of that Rule that refers to the conduct of a Member.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am coming to the third aspect of the style that we find offensive on this side. I endorse what other Members have said before. It cannot be right that the private sector can get from the Minister of Finance the IMF recommendations for tax reform and be asked to reply to him by the 15th of this month while Backbenchers in his own Party and every one of the Opposition Members over here including...

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: ... the Frontbenchers don't care. They are political eunuchs. I am not dealing with them.

I have a little more faith in the Backbenchers. It is disgusting! What you will find is that in July, a week before a debate, you get a Bill amending the Income Tax Act and you are expected to come in here and make sensible contributions. These things are too fundamental and it is offensive to us as parliamentarians that the private sector should get these documents and be able to study them to make informed opinion to help guide the Minister of Finance and the parliamentarians cannot.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It does not matter if we can get these things off the back of a truck or surreptitiously, Sir. There is a principle involved. In matters of this gravity which bear on the adjustment of the various sectors of the economy, if there are studies on which Government is seeking other opinions, certainly the opinion of the Opposition and the Backbenchers is to be sought. It is presumed that Cabinet sees them so I am not speaking for Cabinet. They should see them, and if not, at the next Cabinet meeting ask him why he does not bring them there first.

4.40 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am trying to make a serious point of principle and the Honourable Minister of Health is interrupting me with garbage.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has made another important contribution.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, my school colleague, both pupils of "burnt boy" Alleyne and we both have the capacity to see clearly the wood for the trees.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I would never have said anything ill of him.

Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has said that causes us concern is that for about 5 years now we on this side, when we were 3 and now we are 10, have been saying that it was clear to us that the Minister of Finance does not understand and does not have the capacity up here to understand how the economy works. He is out of his depth. I am not saying he is incompetent, Sir. If anybody says that, it is a matter for them. I am saying he does not have the ability to understand how the economy works.

Mr. Speaker, that is a serious thing. We are saying that the person who is negotiating with the IMF, the World Bank and the IADB ought to be a person who is adept, skilful and knowledgeable of the matters that are being negotiated. In this case it is clear that our belief for 5 years has been proven to be a fact from the Honourable Member for St. Philip South who has sat with him for several years and confirmed today that the Right Honourable gentleman does not really understand what he is doing. He has made decisions against the interest of Barbados, the manufacturers and people in respect of stamp duties.

We have a decision to make then as a Parliament. How much longer can we afford the luxury of a Minister of Finance who does not know that he does not know? That really is the question. We have to make that judgement quickly. He waited before he went off to Brazil for his Deputy to come back. Some serious decisions have to be made. These are times when, as an Opposition, we are being put under the greatest pressure to be less than responsible, to be disruptive. The future of Barbados, indeed, the immediate future of Barbados and I mean within the next 6 months, can be compromised to such an extent that the repair job will take Barbados a time...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: How much? A decade? I would say 15 years. The Honourable Member for St. Peter thinks 10 years but the disaster that can befall us within the next 6 months will be of such a magnitude unless we do something serious that a decade will be lost with the consequential social and economic disaster. We are being put under pressure, as I say, to be less than responsible, to be disruptive in these difficult times. I am appealing to Honourable Members on the other side.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You want me to be more specific? I am not going to give you the specifics. You cannot put me under pressure to tell you the specifics, yes, not to co-operate with Government to let you go and mash it all up. We cannot do that. This is Barbados that belongs to us. All of us have children to come behind. We have to secure the future for Barbadians.

We want the Honourable Members on the other side to know that we are serious on this side about our national responsibilities. When we submit to the other side that we think there should be an approach to certain matters based on a bipartisan approach, we are asking Members to take us seriously because we all have to come together in an effort to save Barbados otherwise it will be gone beyond recall.

What the Director of Finance and Planning did on Friday, that is no sense of humour. When he lost his cool and carried on at the Prime Minister and shouted at him week before last, that was his sense of humour too? Do not let us talk. He knows that too. That is no gossip. Civil servants are cracking up. Things are so bad that some Ministries do not even have paper to do photocopying of documents. That is a fact. I know it is a fact.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not talking about Health, Sir, if he feels better. Out there there is a lot of concern whether public officers are going to get their salaries this month. Other Honourable Members are talking about the people in the Drug Service not getting paid and so on. We know that, for the first time in its history, Barbados has defaulted in its contributions to the University. Lecturers at Cave Hill are going to lose their jobs.

Aside

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not share anybody's joy in that. I am not in that. I cannot laugh if somebody is going to lose a job. I do not care who he is. This is a serious thing. People are going to lose jobs at Cave Hill. We owe over \$30 million.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You should be crying because you helped to send them home. You sat down in a Cabinet and helped make the decision that 4 000 should go. Do not joke. This is serious. We should feel something in here. I am not hitting anybody's constituency. I am hitting the person who should be sitting there today instead of flying off to Brazil. "Millie gone to Brazil?" All of us know what is happening by the number of people who

come to us now without jobs who want assistance and we have to fall in line as best we can.

Mr. Speaker, what I heard 2 Honourable Members on this side and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South say, has disturbed me, that the Central Bank of Barbados, an institution on whose publications we could rely hitherto, a Central Bank could say that things will improve in the second half of the year and that the economy was on the rebound. This disturbs me because they are talking about a 4% decline in growth and to make it up you have to make 6% in the second half, all of that. I am not into that.

When I saw that statement and it was published on television, Sir, I asked myself one question because I am not into percentages. I said it cannot improve for me until I see all those who are going home coming back to work. That is my test. If things are improving I will know when people start getting back jobs. The rate of unemployment is over 27%. They can do all kinds of juggling across the street. It is over 27%. I have some primary documents that endorse that as the current rate of unemployment at the end of....

4.50 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. You all were saying 40% at one time. Nothing can improve in this country – and do not talk about any economy improving – until some people who have been out of work start getting back jobs to be able to feed their families, otherwise it is a myth. We are living in a joke world. It is as simple as that. Sir, I saw also, when there was a meeting of various Governors or ex Governors of the Central Bank a few weeks ago, a warning from the most recent Governor, Dr. Blackman, to the effect that if we continue to print money we are going to collapse Barbados shortly and that devaluation would be inevitable. I hear that it is above the overdraft limit by \$80 million. For the last 2½ years we have seen this problem all the time. It will not go away. It will not stop.

I want to say publicly that I am trying to encourage the Leader of the Opposition in his capacity as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of Barbados to bring an action under the Administrative Justice Act against the Central Bank to have it declared as acting contrary to law in doing what it has been doing for the last 3 years.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I say as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Do not tell me about *locus standi*. He would have it in that capacity.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. He can get a declaration. Something has to be done to **arrest** the situation, to bring it home to those people who are constantly breaking the law and setting bad examples and encouraging the Minister of Finance in believing that he is doing good. It has to be brought home to their attention, **Sir**, that enough is enough.

As I said before, we are now playing with not only our own future...Anybody in the practice of law at the private Bar **can** tell you that there is a substantial increase in crime, but there is a reduction in the quantum of work for lawyers. Some legal **firms** are sending home staff.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No. I do not know about the lawyers. They **are** sending home the secretarial and administrative staff because the conveyancing work, the mortgage work, all of that is shutting down. There is nothing happening.

Those on that side will have it on their consciences if they are prepared to sit and support the one who has been allowing this country to go further and further into the depths of disaster. At the appropriate time, **Sir**,...

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not move too far away from the **stamp** duty though. I understand. Keep a little closer.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Has my time gone, **Sir**?

Mr. SPEAKER: No, no.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not know what will happen with the Stamp Duty in the report that we have been discussing from the IMF but I am aware that they are recommending an abolition of property transfer **tax** and a doubling of land **tax**. All these are **indirect** taxes. They are recommending a doubling of land tax and abolition of property transfer **tax**. I do not understand the rationale for that because the property transfer tax used to **bear** most heavily on foreigners. Unless they are hoping to promote foreign investment that way. Do not let us fool ourselves. You are not going to get any foreign investment in Barbados of any substance so long as ... not the present occupant of that chair, **Sir**. I know that he is looking for that all the time. Do you **see** where he sits now downstairs at lunch, **Sir**? On the right hand.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am standing here, **Sir**, because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has kindly allowed me to occupy this for the last few weeks.

That has nothing to do with coming events casting shadows or anything like that.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that things are so bad that it is portended that Barbados is very likely to fail the next IMF test. Very, very likely. I have not said it as a statement of positive fact. I said I have information that we are likely to fail.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Juggle the figures? What they cannot juggle is the appearance of some of the supermarkets in this country in the last 6 weeks. Check out some of them and see how they stay now compared with **2,3** years ago. Look at them. The times are hard.

Mr. Speaker, I was concerned principally to try and encourage Members on the other side to think seriously about the suggestion made by the former Prime Minister on this side who said that there should be an all party approach to certain things. Last **September/October** when the Right Honourable Member was in Zimbabwe certain people in the Democratic Labour Party approached certain of us on this side.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member knows very well that I have cautioned the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South for wandering a little way from the central point. I am a bit consistent in what I **am** saying. I am giving Members enough time to say things, but just still a little bit closer to the....

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All we are saying, **Sir**, is that, we are not compromising the integrity of Cabinet or indeed of any political party. A committee for national reconstruction drawn from the membership of both sides of this House, and there could be others, of course, may assist us, as a country, nationally in overcoming some of the problems that we have and in influencing some of the decisions that have to be made.
5.00 p.m.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members on the other side have been speaking, in the course of this debate, in relation to proposals relating to the structural adjustment programme, as if those proposals have been, in fact, agreed positions of the Government of Barbados.

There have been, Mr. Speaker, proposals from the International Monetary Fund on **tax** reform which have been circulated to certain sections of the public. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, the extent to which those documents have been circulated and to whom they have been sent for comment. I am not in a position to say who have

received copies of those documents. The purpose of circulating those documents, Mr. Speaker, was to get the widest possible consultation on those documents, to get views from as wide a cross-section of the public as possible.

I have said, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose of circulating the documents is to get those documents to as wide a cross-section of the public as possible and I am sure that Members of Parliament, if they have not yet received the documents in relation to the tax reform, will get them. I don't think there will be any intention to conceal documentation from Members of the House. I am sure there is a system which we all have to deal with and in the fulness of time and before long, I am sure, that the documentation will be made available so that the widest possible consultations can take place in relation to all these matters.

Just as there were proposals in the Letter of Intent in relation to tax reform, Mr. Speaker, there are proposals also in relation to administrative reform. Certainly if the economy is to be turned around there will have to be substantial changes in administrative procedures just as there has to be in relation to taxation. Again, in relation to the changes in administrative procedure you will want the widest possible consultation. In relation to issues like wages and incomes policy you will want the widest possible consultation with all the appropriate interest groups so that, in the final analysis, what is eventually agreed will be something which should be acceptable to the widest cross-section of people.

Mr. Speaker, the way how negotiating a structural adjustment programme with the World Bank and with the Inter-American Development Bank goes is that reforms are necessary. There is no secret about this, that reforms in these vital areas of tax reform, in relation to administrative reform, in relation to prices and incomes policy, are vitally necessary before the appropriate injections of capital are made into the economies.

I think one can start with the premise that if no attempt whatsoever is made to reform and to restructure the system which we now have, it is clear that there will be no injection of funds available to the economy of Barbados. So that what we have to do is to look at the proposals which have been circulated and speak on them.

We are all concerned about the economy and how it needs to be driven and we want to ensure that when we are discussing proposals for restructuring we have inputs on as wide a basis as possible.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has made the point that what is necessary is that there should

be a joint committee on the economy. I am not too sure how that proposal is expected to work. Certainly the Government has a responsibility to formulate its plans for the restructuring of the economy so that those plans should be available and would be available for discussion. I am sure that what will be necessary in the final analysis is that if there are substantial adjustments which are to be made in the areas of tax reform and administrative reform in this country and in relation to the whole issue of incomes and wages in this country, that if there are substantial adjustments to be made in these areas, those adjustments can only be made through the legislative process. So there will be no attempt, Mr. Speaker, and there can be no attempt to circumvent discussion and circumvent full discussion on these issues in Parliament.

When the issues come to Parliament if, in discussing Bills in relation to reform measures proposed, it is necessary that committees of Parliament or joint select committees will be put together for the purpose of effective discussion of these issues, I am sure, if that is an option which is seen to be necessary, that one would have no difficulty with that.

One has also to look, Mr. Speaker, at the context in which the structural adjustment programme for Barbados is being considered now, against the background of the IMF stabilisation programme and what has been done in relation to the Barbados IMF Programme. The economic arrangements which have been put in place in Barbados have been put in place without a devaluation of the Barbados currency. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has made the point that in the economic reconstruction of other countries in the Caribbean, certainly in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Jamaica there were no – I think stamp duties was the issue under consideration – there were no stamp duties in place at the comparative level in the same way as they have been put in place in relation to Barbados.

What one has to also say, in the same breath, is that in those countries, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana, there have been, in some cases, relatively substantial devaluations of the dollar, changes in the exchange rates, but that in the comparative position we are not operating on the basis of a change in the exchange rate.

So that as the whole point, Mr. Speaker, is that we are in the process of negotiating a structural adjustment programme, the proposals are there and we have to consider them. We have to put our heads together and look at these issues and look at them rationally and in the final analysis come to a conclusion as to what is the best for Barbados. I am sure there has to be discussion with the agencies involved and we have to recognise the only way you are going to make progress on these issues is to have a basis for discussion. We have to recognise that

the only way we are going to make progress on these issues is to have a basis for discussion and proceed to discuss sensibly the issues which are before us. Now you can criticize us and certainly indict us if, in the final analysis, we agree to something that is not in the best interest of Barbados. If that position is reached, then we will stand to accept any criticism which you can heap on our shoulders in relation to any programme on which we agree that may not be in the interest of Barbados. Well, it is all right to express a view on what you perceive to be the position which is being articulated by the international agencies. But do not articulate those positions and criticize them and by implication condemn the Government in saying that the Government has agreed to something which, in fact, it has not yet agreed to.

5.10 p.m.

Sir, I am saying that in discussing this whole issue we have to be rational in our approach. It is the Opposition's duty clearly to warn of what they perceive to be the difficulties in the way of agreeing to any programme and to caution up front, I have no difficulty whatsoever with that; to caution up front on what they perceive to be dangerous areas of agreement, I accept that. What we have to do in the course of this debate is to look at what is before us. I do not believe that on the basis of the legislation before us there is any objection to that legislation as it is. There is the objection, as I understand it, to the overall long-term prospects which these proposals by the international lending agencies have created.

I rose only to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that we have to look at the proposals and the comments which have been made in the context only in which they can be addressed. But if we are looking at the substance of the legislation before us, I suggest there is nothing objectionable about that legislation and we can agree on that legislation without any further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just spoke spent quite a bit of time dealing with the actual concerns of the Members from this side. I want to put things in their proper perspective. The Honourable Members on that side must not be allowed to miss the fact or the point that is made. We contend on this side that there is a principle involved and we have got to address that principle if we are to behave like a respectable Parliament governing a country that expects the very highest morals and principles set by us. No amount of objection coming from the other side will suffice in this particular debate. The point is that we are aware that documents have got to be circulated and we are also aware and are satisfied that the social partners should be consulted. It is something that the Barbados Labour Party believes in. We are also saying and we believe that each parliamentarian in this Honourable Chamber should have

adequate time to study any proposals that are so fundamental and so far-reaching. I **am** calling on the Government to understand what I **am** saying.

Mr. Speaker, I want us to look seriously at what is happening. You are soliciting comments from people outside. Let us say the private sector or the trade unions. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is asking for these comments to come to him alone. We are saying at this point in time that there is a crisis which looms over Barbados. In other words, we are operating in it. We are saying that those comments will be made available to the Prime Minister. But what about this Honourable House that should have the full comments to be able to study them? We will want to know why they were not sent to the Leader of the Opposition and Honourable Members so that we, too, could seek and solicit comments from people to be informed when we come into this august Chamber and we could discuss them with some degree of authority and knowledge. That is the point. I am fed up with this sort of approach. We are seeing time and time again Government coming with proposed measures and Members on this side having very little time to study them.

Sir, I am only asking Government to clean up its act. As Members of the Opposition of this Parliament, we all understand now.

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I can talk about anticipating better than the other Member. When I said a year ago that the Transport Board would be sold out, the Honourable Member kept his mouth closed. Today, we are seeing it as a reality. We can read you.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition certainly should not be misrepresented for we feel that Parliament is being circumvented. It is not that. We want to be able to bring back this country to some sort of sanity and the exemption **tax** that we are asked today to debate calls for some understanding as to where we are going, whether the legislation is going to be necessary, and what impact it has had and will continue to have on the country. For instance, I have been looking through this stamp duty. It deals with among other things plywood, veneer sheets, wash basins, sinks and galvanize sheets. Do you understand what it deals with? As you talk about construction, you are talking about the economy, employment, investment, housing...

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW:...Real estate agents and failing lawyers. Mr. Speaker, this is indeed serious because, as we look at this measure, I reflect on the state of the construction industry where as I drive around the country I **am** seeing unfinished buildings. I am beginning to

wonder whether the stamp duty is going to have an impact on the eventual price on completion of these houses. I am beginning to wonder if the stamp duty is not so high as to cause or to deter the contractors from finishing their houses. At Edge Hill, St. Thomas, there are over 100 or so unfinished houses belonging to the Government. I want to know what is going on. The Government has not told me how the stamp duty impacts upon construction in this country. Certainly it must have some impact. I want to see people back to work. The Honourable Prime Minister expressed the view that he would like to see a restarting of Sherbourne but I don't see that because nobody is working there. Nothing has started up there. I have heard that we would see the restarting of construction of Sherbourne and the eventual completion, but I pass there often and I see not one thing going on. You cannot hear a hammer or a saw.

5.20 p.m.

What I am saying is that I heard the Minister of Finance say on the Floor of this Chamber that it is going to start back and jobs will start. I am asking if the stamp duty is one of the reasons why it cannot start. Stamp duty goes on galvanise and sinks and I want to know what is the effect of the stamp duty.

When people at Housing have to go home, I am sure the Minister does not want to see them go but they have to and he, too, is asking the question how is it affecting his Ministry. This is causing even the Unions to be worried because they are faced with a situation almost every day of the week that people are going home. So how can we sit down and think that this measure is a simple measure calling for approval? You must have debate and the Honourable Attorney General must understand that this Opposition is not prepared to come in here and approve and vote for any measure, whether it appears simple or not. It calls for debate and that is the very reason why measures of this nature are brought before this Honourable Chamber. They are brought here in order to encourage debate and to exchange ideas so that the Government will be able to analyse the comments and inputs and come to a proper and workable decision.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that things are very critical. There is a lot of strain and stress out there resulting from the economic situation. I know that people would have had the experience of seeing people who were once in jobs or who were almost independent now being dependent, looking for jobs, money, not able to pay their debts. All we are asking from this side is that the Government understand that we, on this side, are prepared to sit down with them in any meaningful committee with a view to studying the far-reaching implications of the measures or the proposals as put out by the IMF.

We are not going to be fooled and put off by statements that those proposals are not serious and that Government is not looking at them very seriously. Anytime a Government submits proposals to the social partners for comments it must be serious and it must be seriously looking at ways and means of implementing some of them. It is just a matter of how to approach it. They are seeking the views of the social partners so that they can reach a compromise but in the end some of those proposals, even if they are not taken lock, stock and barrel will be implemented. The substance of these proposals is for real. The Government must not think that we are not aware of what this really means.

Barbados will be going through a new period. A new epoch will be written. The political and economic landscape will be different. Even debates and our approach to national matters must change. Sometimes I get the impression that people think we are living in normal times. We are living 3 years back, if Members of this Honourable Assembly do not understand that the public out there are judging us and making comments on this Honourable Chamber and the membership of it. All of us are indicted. They are asking where is the leadership. They are looking for a change of leadership and that is why I say we have to be big enough to tell individuals where to get off in order to save this country and bring back some economic tranquility to this country.

I support the views of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. We have to express our views, whether people like it or not. As I always say, "My pot don't put on at anybody else". Therefore I am free to express my views as far as the economy and future of this country are concerned. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and you are with our future generation. What does the future hold for our generation? Are we addressing these issues seriously enough to make the necessary changes so that our grandchildren and future generations can say that we made fundamental changes to rewrite the history of Barbados in the right direction?

Time and time again, I have heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South making invaluable contributions and the Member for St. Peter with his economic skills and knowledge putting it at the disposal of the Government, and the Government is beating this with scant respect. The time has come when we have to forget narrow, partisan conduct and approach these matters in a more serious light. This is no time for hanky-panky and talking politics and Members trying to score points and trying to see if they can outmanoeuvre and outtalk the Opposition. The public is judging and has already judged most of them because they are saying that some parliamentarians are too weak. I will speak up in here. I do not want to be categorised as a weak person or weak parliamentarian. We have to be men and get up

and speak our minds because these are not normal times and I don't want Honourable Members on that side to be lured into any false security. If documents that are so important **are** not given to you for your comments and you do not see them the time has come when you no longer should sit down but speak up and say to the Minister of Finance or whoever is responsible, "I want to have a look and share in what is going on, in sharing the information." That is what is damaging this country. Of all the problems we have in this country when they are traced back, people are saying there is a lack of consultations. As I listen to debates in here, even on the stamp duties, Mr. Speaker.... 5.30 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Which I am waiting to hear much on.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Yes, Sir. You are hearing a lot on it. Do not **worry**, Mr. Speaker. I am getting into my **stride**. With the stamp duty, Mr. Speaker, you have heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip South say that we need to have more input from people. These measures will come here and we approve them, a bit of legislation. The novice would think that this is just a matter of approving, maybe, an ordinary measure to regularise something. What we **are** saying is there is something fundamentally wrong with the whole concept of approaching these matters. When we start wrong we end up wrong because people are looking to see whether the stamp duty is essential and to see whether other duties and levies that contribute to the raising of revenue are radical and whether we are going in the right direction. That is why we cannot look at stamp duty in isolation. We have to look at the wider aspect of revenue-raising. It is very important. I would hope the Government understands that, as this is a revenue-raising measure, all is not well.

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members must understand that I can understand what is going on here. This is a revenue-raising measure in which, as I said, there have been changes. What is stamp duty? It is a revenue-raising measure. That is a funny thing about some people who do not really understand what is going on. They must not miss or under-estimate the ability of this Honourable Member. Let them understand that. I have licked up doctors and lawyers in elections, not by any accident but by well constructed plans. It was also my knowledge of economics that helped me too.

Mr. Speaker, seriously speaking, I think the time has come when we as a Parliament must pay some close attention to what is being said out there. There is a school of thought out there where people are feeling that enough is not being done by Parliament. Now, they say Parliament, it is not only Government and that is what has me concerned because people are not saying: "the

Government". They think that the Opposition is in collusion with the Government whenever mistakes are made. Now, that is a funny thing. Therefore I have to express my concern.

I would like to pull the Government out of this situation in which it finds itself. It is part of my responsibility as a citizen and a concerned citizen who has a vested interest in this **country**, and for my children and the other generations to come. It is no sense sitting down to score cheap, political points. We have gone through all the politics. I think the time will come when we have to be on the political battlefield again. At this particular time, though we will play our politics, we must not let that be the prime and foremost thing. We have other serious things to do. Nobody out there is talking in terms of whether you have a change of Government or this or that. They want to have leadership, I want you to understand that is the message I am getting. I am not fooling myself. I want people to understand that. People are saying they want leadership, not a matter of change of Government here or there. It might be the wish of members of the Opposition or even of other political parties but what I am saying is it is the leadership that is brought into question. People are saying "We are into a structural adjustment programme. We want to know whether our educational system, our economic approach or our policies are all targeted to lift us out of this. How are we going to achieve this? How soon are we going to revert to the normal way of living where Barbadians could feel less pressure? That is what concerns me.

Mr. SPEAKER: One minute.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I am hoping that the Government will understand that this is a very serious debate and Members from this side today have spoken from a degree of concern. They have spoken in the national interest in their contributions. I can say to the other Honourable Members that they are not only paying lip service. I know that they share, like me, grave and serious concerns how we could bring back some measure of respect and stability to this **country**.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, I believe the report has attracted a lot of discussion primarily because it anticipates other concerns and matters I believe will shortly be coming before this august Chamber. I believe that, as anticipated some time earlier, there may be another budget debate before the financial year is over. I think that is what the Honourable Member for St. Peter anticipated some time ago.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Legislation in furtherance of budgetary matters, I believe, is being anticipated

and that is why people are going fairly far afield in what is really a very simple measure before us. Nonetheless, I think the anticipation is real and it exposes a concern, I believe, about the general economy particularly the areas of revenue-gathering and, in fact, the whole functioning of the economy at this time.

The question of stamp duties has been addressed along the lines of how it affects our manufacturing. There is a general impression being given that the fact that manufacturing is not growing in the way we would want it to grow and it is not playing the role in our economy that we would wish, is being caused by the taxation policy. To me that is fallacious. I think it is a most contentious argument. It is really missing the opportunity for sensible debate on the whole question of manufacturing.

I do not think that anybody would venture to say that the state of the manufacturing sector at this point in time has been caused solely or even mainly by any budgetary measures introduced by this administration, even within the context of structural adjustment. Let us be very clear on this. Whether or not the measures that were introduced about manufacturing originated with this administration and were taken to the IMF and put into that particular document, or whether it came the other way around, do not let anybody fool you.

In Barbados the debate on manufacturing is very open. If you want anybody who is against manufacturing in Barbados, talk with the private sector. If you want any pressure group that would destroy manufacturing, talk to the private sector. It has nothing to do with this administration. You talk to the people who are in the services sector and the financial sector and see what consensus they would have about manufacturing in this country. They are the ones who want to destroy it.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: I am not talking about people who do not understand what they are talking about. The Honourable Member for St. Peter knows that better than most people. Are they the financial sector? The people who would seek to destroy manufacturing are the people sitting down in their offices in places like Bay Street and so on, the gurus in the financial sector. The ones who will list for you, each year, the 18 most profitable companies in Barbados and so on. Those are the ones who would tell you that manufacturing, **as** we know it....
5.40 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: You know that **as** a fact. Those are the ones who would argue for the disappearance of

manufacturing tomorrow and they will tell you directly that the future for Barbados is not in those kind of petty fogging manufacturing activities that we have. That is what they will tell you.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: That the future is not in import substitution manufacturing which is what we have largely and that it is best to destroy that particular sector we have now and move forward, move out all the biases that seem to favour import substitution manufacturing and move to a new regime of **export-oriented** manufacturing. That is the argument that has been used by the private sector in this **country** against manufacturing. It is not the Democratic Labour Party policy position. Those who would want to give the impression that the private sector is out there crying tears about any measures introduced about manufacturing are not sitting closely to the truth. I want to be very clear about that. At any rate, Sir, our manufacturing regime in Barbados has to change. It is not just a matter of stamp duties keeping back manufacturing. Manufacturing needs a very vigorous **relook**.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, I have just had a short stay in Europe ...

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: ... too short, in Brussels. You go into any shop in Brussels and you look at say clothing design and you see colours that are Caribbean colours and you see designs that would suit the Caribbean but they are done by Europeans. You go into any shop in Barbados, look for any kind of design, any kind of packaging done by Barbadian manufacturers that would make you want to buy. You would wait for a very long time. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, not you. **Our** manufacturers are not designing.

All this talk about stamp duty and so on, putting the cart before the horse. We are not designing. We are not packaging. We **are** not coming up with any basic concepts of moving our manufacturing forward. The **high-tech** marketing skills that we need among our manufacturers are not there. Our better manufacturers like **Oran** and those people are still doing business. They are still **surviving** out there and fighting. Do not think that we can get here and mollycoddle businessmen and leave it strictly to financial measures to give them help, every time they ask for some son of subsidy, every time they ask for some sort of support whether it is moving taxation or putting up taxation against somebody **else**, that that is the way forward. We have to force them. We get a lot of fun from criticizing the political directorate. That is our business, attacking ourselves. But **as** **soon** as we start criticising,

not necessarily attacking, the productive sector, the private sector, then all of us are blasting this body and somebody else. Because that is the language that is being used. You can say blasting manufacturers if you want to. But the **truth** is that the manufacturing sector will only move forward against a background where there is money going into research, development and design.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Listen to me. You all have some concept in your mind that you politicians have to be helping everybody all the time. There is a certain conceit in your mind that the manufacturers out there should be waiting on some leadership so-called politicians who do not have the same experience as the manufacturers in their own area. It is when you get around to understanding that in countries like Belgium and so on the designers design, manufacturers manufacture and so on and people know what their roles are and not anybody sitting down waiting on any politician. There is a concept in the Caribbean that because you get elected to some House of Parliament or something like that all of a sudden you become the ones who will decide the future of everybody else. That is a certain kind of conceit that is out of place. It gives you the position then to start attacking one another and blaming failure on each other, not on anybody else. Blaming each other and not putting the blame where it should be. In those countries that are moving forward they understand the role of politicians but they understand their own roles too. We are going to move forward when our manufacturing sector looks out there for the competitive advantage we have and try to move forward.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, we have to look at where our markets are. We have to have serious discussions in this country about the cane industry, rum.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: We are going to talk the same language I know that. I believe there is going to be a market opening up in Europe after December 1992 for rum products **moreso** than for sugar. I believe that is why Remy Martin, for instance, would come and buy into Barbados, into Mount Gay, to put themselves poised to start selling good Barbadian liquor into those markets. When you think about how long it took before we started moving away from our old time rum into rum now that can stand competition with any kind of brandy, because I think some of our best rums now can stand competition with good liquors.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: How do I know what, that our rums can stand competition? From what you tell me, Sir. From what the Honourable Member for St. Peter tells me, Sir, he is a connoisseur of the liquors. Connoisseur does not mean drinking a lot, it means drinking with discriminating taste. That is all. When he and I drink, Sir, we are able to appreciate a good Barbados rum against a brandy or anything else.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point **or** order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this House. The Honourable Member is not known to be any drinker, Sir.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, the acknowledged leader in the drinking of brandy stands before me, Sir, but he does not drink rum. I was speaking about rum, Mr. Speaker. He can make the comparisons there. But the truth is I believe that it **takes** a long time for Barbadians to change, a very long time for them to bring their attitudes into line. In manufacturing I think this is one of our problems. We have not tried to package, we have not tried really to make ourselves competitive and that is where we have to go. It has nothing to do with stamp duties and those things, only to a certain extent. But basically, we have now to create a manufacturing product that we can make saleable all over the world. That is the challenge before us. It has nothing to do with any criticisms of politicians and manufacturers.

We have as a country to decide if we will have a niche in manufacturing and how we can **get** into that niche. We have to look at the areas where we can get a competitive advantage and move forward there. Of course outside they will be saying, "That is only politicians talking." Politicians are not supposed to talk about these things, only the manufacturers who are hands on should talk about them, if somebody has to give them some advice of how we see **things moving**, because as we move through the world we see what we are talking about in operation. We see people doing things that I believe Barbadians can do too and maybe even better. But at least you **are** making an effort to do the things, simple things like clothing designs, simple things like toy designs. When you go to those places you want to bring back something because it is so attractive. Simple things like making chocolates, whatever. It does not take any particular raw materials that are specialized to make chocolates. But in Belgium or in Switzerland they make 150 varieties. **You** want to bring back something.

But what we have here, the natural resources, the sugar for instance, we have never tried to do much with sugar. We have not tried to do much with sugar, cane sugar or any of those products. I believe we have now to look at these things.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Of course. All you are doing is packaging it. We can sell our sugar by putting it in a beautiful packaged design. We have not **tried** to do these things but we let other people do it to us all the time. All the time we allow people to use these high-tech skills to sell us things that sometimes we do not even need. We do not then reciprocate by selling them the products that we have. I do not know how we are going to get our people to understand this. How are we going to **permeate** the thinking of the children out there that manufacturing is an **area** that we can have a position in for the future? It can't be the same old time manufacturing and the same old time ideas without moving into the future where we have to.

5.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we talked a lot today about consultations and so on. I believe there **are three** levels of discussion that are vital in moving our country forward against the background of democracy. Consultation, yes. Dialogue, the second stage. Negotiations, the third stage. I want to say that to me these things are extremely varied and different one from the other.

Mr. Speaker, I have had a better hearing at a shop corner in Lodge Road than in this particular Parliament, at this point in time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I quite share your view that sometimes we forget we are in here.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Thank you very much. The question of consultation: As I understand it, these **tax** proposals – I don't know why people are getting so excited about **tax** proposals. My understanding is that some people from the IMF wrote up a set of proposals about taxation reform. The entire **country** called for taxation reform, including the Barbados Labour Party. That is now in the country in the form of a Report and recommendations or suggestions.

The Maxwell Stamp Report, Sir: I have never heard them quarrelling about whether they got it or did not get it, or the Landell Mills Report, Sir, all the reports in the various sectors, manufacturing, tourism, agriculture. This one that is on tax reform apparently has them more excited, for one reason or another, which we could explore.

The point is, you are talking about 4 reports that address the restructuring of the country in the most significant areas. As far as I am concerned each one is seminal. Each one is fundamental. Each one of those Reports should attract the kind of discussion, the kind of dialogue and probably trying to reach a national agreement on where we are going. I don't want to **treat** this one

differently from the others. It seems to me that what I am hearing is that there is a need for more structured discussion and for a national consensus, **as far as** possible, on some of these areas. Now, I support that, Sir.

It seems to me that if you are going to be moving your country forward, if you reach a certain plateau and you need to go forward, that movement forward cannot be by executive fiat or anything like that. I think there is a need for more discussion within the country.

In the European Community there is now, and has been for some time in operation **the** Economic and Social Committee. The Economic and Social Committee within the European Community brings together the **NGO's** and the trade union sectors – a variety of groups – and they have what is called social dialogue on any particular issue and they end up giving opinions. These opinions are then brought to the European Parliament to put legislation into being, if that is thought important, and then, of course the European Council will then decide whether that will become European policy.

It seems to me that there is some need in our country to have that kind of social dialogue on matters of vital importance. The form that the discussion takes at present is nothing more than consultation. To me that should only be the start of a process. In other words, what will happen is, this particular document comes and the Director of Finance will send it to the so-called social partners. We got a copy. One will come normally to the coalition, to the Barbados Workers' Union and one will go to the private sector group, *et cetera, et cetera*. But I share your concerns. I share the concern addressed by other Members of this Parliament that they have not got copies because I believe that, in our individual right, each Member of Parliament should get a copy. I also believe that is going to happen in time. A call was made for us to respond by the 15th June – too short a time – to give our opinions. Then there are supposed to be meetings with the social partners. Hopefully this will not just be consultation, because if it is consultation it is a waste of time. If it is a consultation that says you have got the document, what are your views, just come and talk to us and then we will take executive decisions about where to go, that is a waste of time. I am saying that the next stage is the stage of social dialogue, where once you have these reports and they have suggestions and you sit down and you talk with the social partners then you are taking about dialogue that will lead to trying to get some understanding of where you would want to go. Then you would have to come to Parliament, because it is only when that Report is translated into legislative action that Parliament will come into play.

I understand there is a call now for a joint parliamentary Committee of some kind, again to try to get consensus. I am not sure how that particular

mechanism will work, but if there is an effort to get parliamentary consensus it can't be party consensus because there is another party out there that you have to be talking about that is not represented in here or anywhere, but it depends on what you want. Do you want party consensus on the issue, or do you want parliamentary consensus on the issue? It is a completely different thing.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: That is another party again. If there is one thing you are sure about it is that you would not get consensus anyhow. Once you widen the net in **terms** of all the parties, you are not going to get consensus. In fact, there is a strong possibility that, even if you bring these two parties together, you might not get consensus but action will still have to be taken. My concern, quite frankly, is, yes it would be nice to get party consensus. My concern is more getting a national consensus out there. The big thing is that you need to go out there to the widest cross-section of the people and get their views on these matters that, to me, are fundamental and go to the root of our economy, the root of our society and the root of our polity. This is one approach. Taxation measures are one. Agricultural reform is another. Manufacturing reform is another and then tourism reform. These 4 important **sectoral** changes where we now have reports should not, to my way of thinking, be relegated to any discussion by a few elite groups and then brought to Parliament. These are things that, to me, have to go out there to the wider community and be canvassed among the constituents of this our **country**. I believe strongly that matters as fundamental as these should be treated in that way.

I would be very unhappy if, after very small discussions, very restricted discussions, all of a sudden we come face to face with legislative measures, draft legislation moving through here to a final conclusion.

I fear that the action plan is already in place, that in fact we are just going to see things rolling through. I fear that the decisions have been made elsewhere. In the fulness of time we will reflect on all these things and in the fulness of time we will know. I am saying that one of the things very necessary for surviving in the environment in which we now operate is the widening of democracy in terms of providing vital information to those people who will be the subject of the measures that we take and the decisions that we take.

A lot of Members fool themselves that when they come in here on Tuesdays and talk, subject to what is being filtered out by the press, they are discharging some duty, in terms of democracy, to the wider masses out there. I think they are fooling themselves that when they get up here and enjoy themselves talking, perhaps for 30 minutes, all of a sudden they have carried out some massive

democratic function. You are talking to each other in here and you are lucky if the press carries out some inkling of what is happening. This is no substitute. Coming to this Chamber and talking is no substitute whatsoever for going out in the wider community and discussing these issues of major importance. I am not talking about any little Bill that comes into Parliament and so on that you are discussing. Do you want me now to say that the Prime Minister or any Member of Parliament should do it, or any member of the Cabinet, or discuss the style of who does it or who does not? I am saying that, as far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, a *modus operandi* for a government in circumstances like this is to have more and wider ventilation of matters of primary concern. I am saying that issues like sugar, tourism, taxation policy, *et cetera* need wide ventilation and discussion. I am not talking about Guttaperk or anything like that. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about commissions going and talking to the people of the country about these relatively major structural changes that have to be implemented. I am talking about a time-table that is comfortable enough for people to express their views before legislation is brought into this Chamber for their representatives to then have to say "yea, nay or neither". I believe that is an operational model that will save us a lot of pain in this country if we got out there and talked more and discussed more. Whoever is responsible for that kind of operation, that is my advice to that person or persons of a method of operation for times like this, times of stress, and times of significant change. Sometimes we have to call for different ways of behaviour. This is what the Barbados Labour Party should have done in the 1980's when instead they acted, ran away, and hid and expected that nobody would find out. That is what happened in 1982 with the late Tom Adams. I am not talking about the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

6.00 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: The Honourable Member had a slightly different approach.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. We were giving 30 per cent wage increases in the public sector and still people were marching against us. We did not cut up people's salary like this.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, they might have been marching against the cost of living because the only reason that we could have been going for those increases is that the cost of living must have been much higher than it is at this time.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, what one notices is an in-built difficulty in our community sometimes to deal rationally with matters facing them, particularly matters which are of grave concern or matters of negative impact. Perhaps we have lived so much in good times that when the hard times come we are not sure how to negotiate those hard times. I find that is a **particular** concern at this point in time. Yes, we are going through some stressful times, but I believe these are times that should really test us because the biggest challenge is getting out as soon as possible. That is really the biggest challenge. The biggest challenge is **getting** out of the circumstances that we are in as soon as is humanly possible. If we think that is going to be done by nit-picking and fault finding, I fear that we are sadly mistaken. We have to work ourselves out of **this** crisis and anybody looking for an easy **handover** or handout will be operating in the wrong environment.

Aside.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: What happened with you? Did you get a job? I believe so. The last time I heard him he was willing to give up this shadow Ministry and so on and send up the last days of his political career. Now he has all the life over there and he will not let me speak in peace. What happened to you? Did you have a rest or what? Give him some advice sometimes. Do not let me be the beneficiary of the advice. When he is interfering with me, talk to him, please.

Mr. Speaker, those who want to get on like Jack-In-The-Box in jumping up quickly and without study, I am not part of that. I am no Rip Van Winkle either. I am not going to sleep anywhere. But I will not be part of these exercises.

Aside.

You tell **me** that you are not **drinking**. What are you doing now? Go back to drinking and let me talk. The Honourable Member for St. Peter should allow me to talk instead of **interrupting** my address.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think this is a very serious accusation if a Member says he is not allowed to **talk**. I understand the Honourable Member to say that he cannot be heard in silence and I think that is what he should be doing.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At any rate, Sir, I believe that we have anticipated a debate that most likely will be coming here sometime. I always wonder when you have relatively light matters why Parliamentarians seek the opportunity to treat them with so much weight. But it seems to me that the opportunity will come where all of the measures relating to the changes in taxation policy will be before us. I really do not want to

hear the same people get up and make the same **speech** again on the policy. Let us deal with them in substance when they come here. Do not get this Jack-In-The-Box thing where you have not even seen the things properly yet and you have a small measure before us and people are hyper-ventilating on them. The opportunity will come for these tax measures to be seriously debated in this Parliament. I do not want to be first to say that I spoke on them and so on. Let us give them the kind of serious attention that they deserve. Taxation reform has been called for by both Houses in this Parliament and by some people outside of Parliament. We may not agree with the report put forward by some person, but we did not commission any report. The point is that it is only when that **report** is translated for any action to be brought here that we will deal with who printed it. We are wasting time debating a report that has not yet been translated into Government action or anything like that. That is what I consider to be of concern. We have to wait and see what the Government will do and then we will speak to the Government. That is the position I take on this matter, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question....

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the discussion that has taken place on this very simple although not trifling amendment is a peculiar one and I can only respond to this particular debate by responding to the statements that have been made, hoping to shed some light in the very dark recesses of the suspicious minds of Members of the **Opposition** who have spoken in this debate. The Honourable Member for St. Peter would know as well as I do that the management of change is a very difficult exercise. **Michael** Manley, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, began his career as a writer with a book called "The Politics Of Change" and spent the rest of his career explaining why the management of that change became impossible. The Honourable Member began his assertion with respect to the concern that he had about the Barbados economy by saying that there are people in Barbados who say we can abolish agriculture and manufacturing. I wrote down what he said.
6.10 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Anyway, there are studies that say we can abolish agriculture and manufacturing. The point about it is this. The Government has gone through a stabilisation programme and has met the objectives of that programme reasonably successfully so far. That is not in dispute as a fact in Barbados. We accepted that it has caused pain. We have accepted the difficulties that the stabilisation programme has produced and we are about to embark upon structural adjustment of the Barbadian economy. The Minister of Finance

indicated in his Budget what the features of that structural adjustment are.

I remember the Honourable Member for St. Peter making "laughing sport" about reform of the family – the expression used was something to do with the tax structure for the family – the family income. He said that he did not understand what that meant, that it sounded like fairy tale language. Now that he is presented, although not officially as I understand it, with information which sets out the terms of the adjustment based on suggestions made by the International Monetary Fund, the Barbados Labour Party is saying that they do not want those reforms, they want some other kind of reforms. They have not said what these reforms should be. At one point in the political debate in Barbados we heard that land tax would be abolished if the Barbados Labour Party were in office, but that is the only tax reform that, in the 6 years that I have been a Member of this House, the Barbados Labour Party with all of the wisdom that it possesses can suggest in relation to reform of the direct or indirect tax system.

The proposals have been made. If it is bad to say that a conclusion has to be bad if it is based on a false premise then it would be equally bad to say that you are going to make assertions predicated on documents that you have not seen. That is what the argument of the Opposition has been. They are criticising assertions made in documents that they have not seen. I cannot understand, and I found this whole debate amusing to that extent. I believe it could be erased from the economic history of Barbados and the people of Barbados will be no worse off if it were to be erased.

The transition period in the sugar industry is a difficult period. The Government has come to the position where it obviously has to get some consensus from the owners of the indebted plantations. We seem to have come to some solution regarding the restructuring of the production and marketing elements of sugar but we are now in the difficult process of trying to build consensus with the public sector in relation to either leasing or surrendering or some kind of arrangement to release their lands into a company that would be involved in the management of the land resources for the sugar industry.

That transition takes very careful management. It takes very knowledgeable persons in Government to manage the transition but it takes equally knowledgeable persons in the private sector. Some of the failure which the Honourable Member for St. Peter suggests must be laid at the feet of the Government in the process of structural reform has to be laid at the feet of the private sector as well.

There has been a lot of talk about the stamp duties on inputs in the manufacturing process. The Government

waives these stamp duties where those inputs are used for the purposes of producing **goods** for **export**. That is the first point I want to make. So there is an incentive in relation to those manufacturers who are involved in export of manufactured goods. They do not pay duties.

We have been encouraging manufacturers, wherever possible for ease of the situation, to **see** if they can form separate export companies and if they can, perhaps, to find some means of dividing their production process to make the **export** element of it more transparent. This is just one of the suggestions we have made. You might have seen his but we have had others. This would cause the manufacturers to focus exclusively, if possible, on manufacturing.

The whole object of the structural reform is to get the manufacturing sector in Barbados to focus on exports. What is happening is that in our economic discussions in Barbados we seem to be focussing on competition in relation to the domestic market only and whenever the manufacturers have difficulties they centre almost exclusively on their ability to compete in the domestic market.

We have talked about the question of **countervailing** duties. As I understand it, the principal hold-up in respect to **countervailing** duties, apart from the regional impact of it, which at one point was felt to be managed, was that the manufacturers themselves were sent **circulars** requesting information which would assist the Government in setting the rate of countervailing duties and to this day, only 5 manufacturers in Barbados have been able to respond. Now, we discovered that they were having difficulty in answering some of the questions. Some of the things that the circular requested from them they did not happen to have. Let's be frank, a lot of these manufacturers are not economic or manufacturing **gurus**. They are very inefficient and some of them are not businessmen.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The present Minister of Trade has mobilised the Ministry of Trade to **seek** to provide that information to assist the manufacturers. In addition to that, BIMAP has been commissioned to carry out a survey to assist the Ministry of Finance in getting this information. From the way members of the Opposition speak, one would think that it is possible in Barbados to shut down these sectors for a night, put the reform in place and tomorrow morning everybody begins to play on an even playing field. That is not how it works. Each of the sectors in Barbados, the sugar industry, the agricultural sector, the manufacturing and the tourism sectors, has developed an array of intricate – I don't want to call it interlocking – arrangements that have developed

over time which make it very difficult to have a transparent view of their operations.

One of the interesting discussions we had the other day is that, in a meeting of one of the entities in which Government discusses these things with the private sector, a gentleman in the tourism sector whose antecedents were involved in the sugar industry – somewhat like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who had a history of family involvement in sugar – and moved over into tourism, when we suggested to other members of the private sector that they have a duty as well to be involved in reforming the minds of people in the sugar industry about change, he said that he knew nothing about sugar. He knows about race horses. If there is one thing that the people in the sugar industry in Barbados know about it has to be race horses, the point being that there are some intricate arrangements that have developed historically over time. It is not as transparent as people make it out to be.

I believe in the holistic approach and the Honourable Member for St. Peter says that, therefore, I avoid numbers and **econometric** analysis. I believe everything is interlinked and it is almost impossible for you to divide the Barbadian economy into these sectors and **carry** out these separate reforms in the productive sectors without some kind of overall management and that overall management is not exclusive to the Government. It means that those persons in the distributive sector have just as much interest in reform of the agricultural sector as those in the tourism sector and the people in the tourism sector should have just as much interest in the reform or improvement of the offshore sector.

Let me go on to say this. I have said already to the Honourable Member for St. Peter and his point about \$40 million being made available to jump start the economy in selective areas. He refers to it as a fiscal or other stimulus. I want to make the position clear as I see it. In the process of structural adjustment it does not seem to make sense to me, until you have **carried** out the reforms that are necessary in respect of the tourist sector, the agricultural sector and in the manufacturing sector, to throw that \$40 million in those sectors....

6.20 p.m.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation. The \$40 million which I am referring to is what is included in the vote for the Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs this year under Capital. It was not an arbitrary \$40 million which I was just saying willy-nilly should be thrown at the sectors. It was money that had been voted by this House under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not suggesting any thing different from what the Honourable Member said,

except that he should not expect that money to find its way into the system before the reforms have taken place. It would not make sense because those same sectors, particularly the sugar industry, have blown enough money, and many of the other sectors through their inefficiency have ridden on the taxpayers of Barbados for a long time. The idea of taking that \$40 million and making it available before the reforms have taken place does not make sense to me.

If the Honourable Member feels that some of it should be asked for in the transition period, I agree with that. For example, we have to find money to assist the sugar industry in getting the 1993 crop going. We have other financing requirements during this fiscal year for which the \$40 million will be used. I am only telling you what my view is. I will state my view regardless of who is in here.

Now let me go on. I have heard a lot of trite remarks that the time has come to put Barbados back on a path of growth. I have heard these remarks inside here. We have all heard it time and time again from the Honourable Members. I wish to God, Mr. Speaker, that with the same tenacity as they preach to us on this side about reform of the Barbadian economy they would take that message out of this Chamber, which is not the only place in Barbados where sensible debate takes place, out to the private sector. Assist people in Barbados to understand what structural adjustment is about, assist them to understand what the features of the **tax** reform are about and assist them to understand what the budgetary process is about. Take it out there. To tell us we have to put Barbados back on a growth path is preaching to the converted.

There is nobody in here that would not like to be able to sign on the dotted line **tomorrow** morning to take Barbados on to a growth path. It is all right to say that. I have heard all of those platitudes. You hear them up at the University. You hear them when you go to functions organised by the economic authorities in Barbados. You hear them wherever you go. But when it comes to implementing and managing the changes that are necessary for that growth path, it seems as though everybody feels they must look at the Minister of Finance only. Well, spend some time out there speaking to those under your care and those who are interested in hearing your message in getting Barbados on the path of reform. That is all I can say.

Perhaps, the members of the Opposition should spend some time with young people, not doing the foolishness that is suggested by that political nuisance about meeting with gangs to find out what their problems are but **getting** the youth going in a business programme. It is not funded by the Barbados Government. It is funded by the Organisation of American States. It is the region's money. We can use people like the Honourable Member

for St. Peter because he can motivate young people of this country to be involved in self-employment and there are **funds** there for that. Go and volunteer your services for that.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, let me make my position clear. I believe that more constructive approaches to this matter really have to be developed. The platitudes are not sitting easy with me today. The talk about malaise, growth path, these things are not sitting pretty in this particular debate.

Now, I want to say to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that I am certain no disrespect was intended with regard to the omission of him, or anybody else, from the direct **tax** proposal reforms. I do not think any disrespect was intended. I must say that if the Honourable Member accepts that in that light, he should understand that we on this side believe that his brain is so quick that, if we gave him those proposals an hour before they were to be implemented, he would be able to respond with his usual alacrity. I do not think he should be unduly upset. Like me, I have to pore over it for 3 weeks or whatever. The Honourable Member has much more sagacity in economic matters than that. He should not complain on behalf of the slower Members on his side. He can take them through the paces. As soon as he gets his copy from his private sector friends he can take them through the paces and we will formalise the process.

In fact, one of the tenets, as I understood it, of a good Opposition politician and his predecessor, the then shadow Minister of Finance, now a political nuisance, used to tell us in this House that one of the greatest assets he possessed as a politician was he knew everything that was happening in Barbados whether in people's living rooms or otherwise. He so carried this mission that it was his desire to corrupt....

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: – I would say this to him because I have found it to exist in the Public Service – to corrupt the process so viciously that every now and again some public servant in Barbados was his mentor in providing him with information. This is one of the reasons why sometimes it is difficult you try to play the game clean and people talk about independence of institutions and integrity of the Public Service. The integrity of the Public Service and the financial institutions in Barbados rests just as much on the ability of those officers not to be demeaned by the processes of politicians who have designs that are not in the national interest.

I am now saying to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that I do not believe he got his information from

anybody who is not entitled to give him. Now that he has it, we will formalise the process and make those reports available to the Honourable Member.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It will be available. I do not feel there is any disrespect intended. It is not any big thing. The Honourable Member has a copy. He predicated his speech on the fact that he has a copy. The fact that he does not speak to you is not an issue for me in this particular debate.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: When the Honourable Member for St. George South resumes speech with the Honourable Member for St. Peter he can ask him for a copy of his **tax** reform proposal and then let the Honourable Member for St. Peter enlighten him on what should be said. I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Peter that there is no attempt to take the position that direct tax reform should not be held hostage to indirect **tax** reform. We would only be going the other way. That is all it would achieve. The Government is fully aware of this and understands that the tax proposals have to be as harmonious as possible. You know that the aim is to have as broad a base as possible. You know that the aim is to increase the enforcement capacity. You know what the objectives of the programme are based on what you have seen before you.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there will be room for adjustment but it rests just as much on a well argued case from the Opposition as it does from the private sector, or the citizenry of Barbados. The case for change has to be made. Whether it is made by me in this House or by members of the Opposition or by members of the private sector, it must be well argued. I just say that for all of the bad things about the so-called reports, some of the points are very well argued.

You should also point out where the arguments are valid. Some of them are very well argued, particularly the question of allocation of income to various kinds of sectors like savings, which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South seems to feel strongly about, and insurance on which another Honourable Member raised concerns and so on. There are some valid points why sometimes these allocations are not the most efficient. But there are also some valid point why we should, perhaps, in the context of Barbados, maintain some of that favouritism in respect of certain areas. We can have the analysis. The Government is analysing the reports. You can now analyse the reports and we can have a decent discussion in the future on this matter.

Now, let me move on to say, Sir, that the Honourable Members on the Opposition are free to bring Private Members' Resolutions in here on any matter. They can call for an economic policy committee. The Honourable Member for St. Peter can bring a Resolution calling on Parliament to meet with the private sector. That is what Parliament is about. All of a sudden the committee system seems to be touted as the solution for everything. I once nearly held that view but a wiser person than I, no less than the person I am speaking to now, convinced me that Parliament itself – I hope I am putting it correctly, Sir, – is the best place for arguments like that and that in a small country like this we do not need to have all of these select committees meeting on various subjects. I thought it was attractive too. But there is always a tendency when you move around in the rarefied atmosphere of the international institutions to think that by adding committees and all kinds of bodies you are really doing something. Let the debate be inside here where it should be.

6.30 p.m.

Let those persons who want the committees raise the issues in here instead of sitting down and talking from their seats. Let them get up and join in the issues as they are being debated instead of trying to hide behind a committee system. A committee system only encourages people who do not feel confident about telling the public their views and do not have the competence to express those views to hide away in Parliament and draw the taxpayers' money every month and not do the work they should be doing. I am interested in having my debate in here where members of my constituency, if they so desire, can come and hear what I have to say.

I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Peter that we need stronger economic management in Barbados. Nobody can deny that. But do not locate that management purely at Government Headquarters. We have had the Caribbean Multilateral Clearing Facility. All of a sudden the Central bank is the worst institution in Barbados, after 1986. But before 1986 things were going on in financial institutions in Barbados that needed some attention. We are saddled with a debt which the Honourable Member...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Are we not saddled with it? I do not know. A credit line. What do you want to describe it as?

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Okay. We are saddled with not being able to realize the proceeds of a credit line to another country because of the inability and/or lack of

strong management in financial institutions. So do not pretend that it has begun now or that this administration has been totally oblivious to these problems. I want the Honourable Member for St. Peter to understand that the change and the strength of the management of these institutions is something that has plagued us for a long time. In the process of structural adjustment those financial institutions are not going to remain unchanged. You know that. None of them. Those in Government, those like the Central Bank, are all going to have to go through a process of change and be accountable to the public of Barbados in the same way as I am accountable in this Chamber.

I did not think that in 1992 one would still be hearing these arguments about the surrendering of economic sovereignty. If that argument were made when I was at university, I would feel that I had made an interesting point that as a university student one should make.

The financial institutions are there. There are choices that Governments which are independent make, either to go and solicit funds from those international institutions or not solicit funds. The financial institutions make policies and in gathering those funds from those institutions there are sometimes requirements, some of which are onerous, that they place on the country.

Let me tell you one of the ludicrous things about this debate. It is a feature of the debating style of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. He answers his questions and then debates the issue. Listen to it for me. I am going to set it out to you. He said it is not well understood that Barbados and OECS countries are in the unique position that their currencies have not been devalued. He begins there and I made a note of that because I thought it was something that I did not understand so I said, let me write it down to make sure that I understand it, learning at the seat of wisdom.

He then goes on to make an argument that he cannot understand why it is that Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago did not have to do some of the things that we in Barbados have to do. He starts by answering the question. The fact is that for the Barbados dollar – you may laugh at that – there is a price that you pay. It may be a very hard price on the fiscal side as the economists call it, for not devaluing your dollar. That is the price that Barbados whether regrettably for some or fortuitously for others has to pay. So let us not walk around feeling that there is any general argument that is going to solve the problem. If you argue that Barbados' terms and conditions for financing from the international institutions are different from other countries, it rests principally, in most cases, on the fact that Barbados has to defend or is defending its exchange rate. Therefore there are going to be some onerous features of the programme. I understand

the concerns that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South raises, particularly those relating to the manufacturing sector. But I want him to focus, as he did previously, on the question of exports. Focus on exports. Do not let the manufacturing sector in Barbados cause us to focus on the wrong things. Let us focus, as much as we can, on the question of exports.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have heard that argument. But it is a question as to whether we want that to be so or not.

The question that one has to ask, Mr. Speaker, is whether we need to subsidize their manufactured goods on the domestic market. That is a simple question. The Government has to make a policy decision whether it is going to seek as much as possible to promote almost exclusively the production of goods for export or to subsidize the production of goods for export and let duties be applicable on the goods sold on the domestic market or some other configuration. There is no need for us to get into any big argument about this. It makes it a lot easier if we can get the manufacturers to focus on the **export** sector.

Anyway, I am saying that the argument therefore can be answered that Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago devalued their dollar. Therefore the options that are available to Barbados if it is not going to devalue the dollar are going to be much harsher and much more difficult on the fiscal side and perhaps more prolonged. That is something that we have to watch carefully.

I am concerned that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South should answer the question and then seek to challenge the Government to answer...

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the Honourable Member would give way, the point I was making was that by imposing duties on the inputs on manufacturers in Barbados we were put at an additional disadvantage because we started off with a disadvantage that our dollar was higher than the others. By putting duties which they themselves have not put on you worsen our position. That is all I was saying.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am only seeking to explain that he answered the question and that all he needs to do, Sir, is to argue the issue first and then apply the answer that he gave himself and he would have solved the dilemma very, very easily.
6.40 p.m.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South also asked questions about the regional common market. As

I understand, a report will be made to the Heads of Government. I can't really say what progress has been made on that because, strictly speaking, it is not a Ministry of Finance matter. It is something that is dealt with out of the Prime Minister's office.

Of course, one is concerned that there is going to be, particularly in the next **couple** of months, a **flurry** of pressure and debate on questions relating to **the** North American Free Trade **Area** and one has to realise that at this time the old common market process is probably going to be convoluted and in uproar as **the** pressures or the competition involved in the various trading blocks become more intense.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That might be the answer but I am telling you **that the** kind of political pressures we are geuing externally in the region in relation to the question of **NAFTA** as distinct from EEC, as if the two were options, is considerable. It seems as though many of the Eastern Caribbean Countries seem to think that there is some prospect of them aligning themselves to the EEC. The Honourable Member must be aware of some of the arguments that are advanced by some of the countries in the region on matters such as this. They can't stand the test of scrutiny and sometimes it is because of this that we can **make** no further advance in relation to mauers of the Common Market. I am not going to deal with that. It is not within the context of my responsibility.

We are not asking for any concessions in regard to the debate on tax reforms. The Opposition must do its duty. If it wishes to revolt, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has said, if he wishes to call for a revolt and if Honourable Members wish to march, they are entitled to do that. This is a democracy and they must use the lawful means at their disposal to get their point across. We are not asking for concessions. We are asking for useful debate on the issues that arise in the economy.

I have a final point which relates to exceeding the overdraft limit which I think is something the Honourable Member for St. Thomas could have explained to him by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. It is not difficult to determine why the overdraft limit gets exceeded. Let's be frank. We have had a lot of posturing in the House about the statutory prohibitions and this kind of thing. Government is going to have to find a way to finance the bulk of that overdraft, I suppose, in some way over the next few months. because it impacts on ...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, to validate it would not **make** a difference because the figures are not

going to come back right, particularly in relation to the formulation of the net domestic assets. It would not come back right, so validating it would not achieve anything. There will have to be another way of extracting that overhang or whatever you wish to call it, and deal with it in the best way possible. I don't know how you want to describe it. Those are options which the Government is going to have to consider over the next few months and, in due **course**, Members of the Opposition will be aware of these.

I want to wrap up, Sir, by saying the debate, I thought, was an interesting one from the point of view of some of the issues that were raised and would place the Government in readiness to respond to some of the puerile criticisms and to accept some of the better criticisms. I would hope that when we do come to discuss the **tax reform** measures each Member would see it as his duty not to feel that he has discharged all of his parliamentary obligations but at least to discharge the obligation of contributing to a debate on a matter that is going to be of grave significance.

The fact that these reforms are being made available to the public and are being considered by the **Government** is an indication that the Government takes issues relating to the future of Barbados seriously. The Honourable Member for St. Peter could not imagine that I would be part of any design in any Government with any young men like the Honourable Member for St. **Michael** West and St. George North which would not take into consideration the question of the future of Barbados. They have children and they have concerns and nobody is seeking to make economic decisions in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, without reference to the future of Barbados. That is what this whole debate, over the next few months, is going to be about. So let us not come with this attitude that we are fearful for the future. If you want to say the decisions that we are taking are going to cause problems in the future, that is one thing. If you are going to say that the decisions that we are going to take now may not propel us as fast into the future as we wish, that is another thing. But to say that you are fearful for the future because you have, as you perceive them, imminent economic difficulties does not make sense. If that is so, you may as well decide to end your parliamentary career now, because we have to grapple with the problem anyway. I could not solve them by getting up every morning and saying I am fearful of the future. None of us in here should be in here if we are fearful for the future. If so we should abandon our political careers and let young people who are competent, more ambitious, more courageous and creative, replace us as Members of this House to make a positive effort to advance this country.

I believe I have dealt with all of the important issues and even some of the issues that are not important. With that, Sir, I beg to 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 without division.

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. 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. M. A. KING, seconded by Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 1992.
6.50 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: The Honourable Member is not cerebrating. Those Orders have been suspended for today's sitting and subject not to the back benchers who used up that time but to some different time. This is the different time. He has been away from this House for so long that he does not remember what is going on in this place.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 8.

ORDER NO. 8 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE TO DIVE SHOP LIMITED OF THE PARCEL OF LAND AT AQUATIC GAP, ST. MICHAEL

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am **sorry** to be standing in this position to do this Resolution. It is just because when I came back to the House my seat was taken up so that I find myself in this position speaking from here. Basically, Sir, this is a very short matter. This is a renewal of a lease and the conditions are set out in the Schedule attached to this Resolution. What we are seeking to do is to renew the lease relating to a certain piece of land in Aquatic Gap in the parish of St. Michael which contains 425.7 square metres or thereabouts abutting and bounding on the sea wall on a public bath on a sidewalk 1.6 metre wide and on the property of the Government of Barbados.

The conditions of the lease are set out here and the person to whom the land is being leased is a

Mr. Deiga and, as I said, it is for the renewal of the lease of the Dive Shop Limited. The purpose is for a dive shop.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass. As I said, the information is in the conditions set out here in the Addendum.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that...

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, leasing of Government property at this particular time is an important matter. In this particular area, this is a lease for a piece of Government property which is relatively small and we would hope that, just as this justifies a resolution and our parliamentary time, Sir, that the lease for the **Hilton Hotel**, which is next door to this area of land, will be brought in here for parliamentary scrutiny and approval. The Opposition has absolutely no problem with the terms and conditions of this lease. As a matter of fact, I recall when this matter first came to the House – and it was not brought originally by the Labour Party Opposition; it was brought originally by the Government – at that time we gave it our support because we were in favour of the concept that the ancillary tourism activities in Barbados should be preserved if possible by Barbadians first and foremost irrespective of their colour, class, creed or religious belief. We gave encouragement at that time to the development of water sports activities being run by Barbadians. Many people forget that when we first had tourism in Barbados these activities were carried on but not by Barbadians at all. They were carried on by people who used to come in. It is a matter of sadness that, instead of progressing in this area, we seem to have gone backwards. I still see a large number of water sports activities, particularly some that are not desirable in my opinion, namely jet skiing which is notorious around the beaches in Barbados, and are owned by foreign people.

Sir, I am very glad to see that this renewal has taken place. I know that this renewal is compatible with our ideas of the use of the land. I look forward to the day when the Government wakes up to the fact that that obsolescent piece of equipment called Mobil Refinery should be removed and a proper convention centre built in that area.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados has one of the greatest assets in the form of the development of the beach between the **Hilton Hotel** and the Deep Water Harbour. Many people have not awakened to the fact that we have within the City of Bridgetown and St. Michael one of the best beaches in the world next to your city. The information is that beach will get larger and larger because Carlisle Bay is silting up not in any way to cause any concern but as a result of the **am** put out at the Deep Water Harbour. I would hate to

see the day when this Government has decided that it is going to sacrifice that area. It needs a master plan. If you are talking about a real tourism asset, you must talk about the potential of that beach starting from the **Hilton**. I am going to tell you now what I did. I made it clear to Mobil in our period of time that from the day their lease expired if we were in Government they would have to go, because that refinery is totally inefficient and it depends for existence upon protection provided by the Government in the form of special surcharges and under the structural adjustment programme you are inconsistent because you have made your manufacturers pay duties on imports. The World Bank and the rest will deal with that. But we also had a definite master plan prepared for the development of Carlisle Bay for **Hilton** and **Brandons Beach**.

We also made the decision that the National Gas Corporation had to move and that we were creating the largest public beach facility in Barbados in that area. The Honourable Members, instead of pursuing that, bought Dr. Trieloff's building which was part of that. Instead of destroying the building and knocking it down which should have happened to create a further vista to the sea, you converted it and gave it to CARICOM for the export development agency. You see that is the problem. You do not understand that that is the beach area. You should have bought the old Ice Company building.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You do not need the Yacht Club. Why would you buy the Yacht Club when you have so much land of your own already. What do you want to give them money for? They have enough money already.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to alert the public to the fact that we have the greatest tourism asset that a country could have. We are fortunate. Do not let us sacrifice it. It is something that should be carefully planned. People do not know how much that beach has grown. It comes all the way down from Bay Street. It comprises all of that warehouse land that was hitherto regarded as being useless. Two things have contributed to the value. One is the question of the beach being created as a result of the movement of the sea. The second thing is that you have a sewage scheme in existence already and any development there can be the most intensive because it would contribute to the better utilisation of the sewage scheme. So those are our assets. I am sorry that I had to tell you. I know already they are planning to sell it so they can pay their debts. I know the Honourable Minister of Housing is saying, "Oh, I see where I am going to get some money from." He is probably thinking of bringing in the surveyors and the Honourable Member for

St. Philip North is there saying, "Uh huh". I want to make it clear that where the Defence Force is we are talking about a real asset. There **are** so many tourism assets in that Carlisle Bay area. I say that it is unique. Many people when they go to the Old **Fort** at the **Hilton** Hotel comment on the beauty of that area. The reclamation of the land between the Careenage and the Baggage Warehouse was all part of this deal. We do not need to take up land for all these tourism projects when we have it there before our eyes. Let us exploit it!
7.00 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: ... The ice house? They had put forward a proposal for ~~some~~ hotel development there. The policy was that you should not allow a development there which was sporadic. You had to have it integrated into a total overall plan. The OAS gave us studies for it. A man called Mr. Tony Abrams did that plan. I remember that. So you have to start with general concepts before you get into the specifics. That is correct.

All I want to say, Sir, is that I hope the Government regards that area as one of great potential and that it has a settled policy in relation to its development. I like the principle of the Government bringing its leases here. I want to see the **Hilton** lease.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker. I rise on this debate because the Honourable Member, ancient as he is in his wisdom, has this way of putting facts on the table and everybody saying, "Gee, how did he remember all of that?" He speaks with such conviction that unless you put the record straight his lack of memory would pass as the actual facts.

First of all, let us deal with the concept of Mobil being inefficient. There is a fallacy in this country that you just simply erase Mobil and then **import** the finished product and Barbados would live happily ever after. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows that is not valid. He knows that the raw material which we extract from the ground and of which the Honourable Member himself was instrumental in expanding the amounts **required** some refining capacity. He knows that, arising out of the last fuel crisis, we recognised that one of the things Barbados should have, if at all possible, is some kind of refining capacity. It was determined by Mobil at one point that the crude which comes out of the ground in Barbados had too much diesoline and therefore was not capable of being refined in Barbados. The Government of the day – and the Honourable Member knows that – told them that they have to refine it and ever since then all of the raw **material** which comes out of the ground in Barbados has been refined right here in Barbados. As a result, Barbados has been able to fulfil a substantial part of

its own requirements with a tremendous saving in foreign exchange. Now, we have to weigh the foreign exchange capacity of that space to build a convention centre and the foreign exchange which will be acquired from our processing of our own raw crude.

I want to say something about the convention centre.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: ... The Honourable Member's capacity as a lawyer to leave certain sentences unsaid as necessary is perfectly reasonable, but the lease for Mobil had a renewal clause which, as I understand it, gives Mobil the right for renewal as part of the terms of the lease. Sir, it is one of the worst leases drawn between a government and any entity. It was drawn in **1962** and it reflects the attitude that was existent at the time in **1962**. It is unfair from the hindsight of 1992 to criticise it. When you read the lease it puts the Government in a position where the Government has almost no way out. Once the people decided that they wanted to renew the lease they could have taken you to Court and you had no way of winning.

The Government of today, no matter who is the Government, has to weigh very carefully how it will take anybody to Court if it starts off knowing that it has a high chance of losing. So let us not talk about how he told the people the lease would not be renewed because he could have told them that. Anybody could say anything, but having told them that, you have to deal with the reality of what happens at that point.

We will be discussing the Resolution. We are discussing the leasing of land to Mobil and why we have to continue the lease to Mobil that was negotiated 30 years ago. Let us not spend any time on that.

The Convention Centre. There is a popular myth that a convention centre is like a tent that you only have to put up 4 walls and a roof and you are in business. When you consider the location of the **Hilton** and the other hotel, if you put a convention centre between the 2, the mass that would accrue in that area would completely interfere with the growth and development of that entire area in terms of the number. You would **have** to introduce all of your convention areas to the **Hilton** and that surrounding area and you will create a bottleneck for traffic in and out of the City so that it has been accepted by those who pay attention to it now that it would be a nightmare. That is why the building at Two Mile Hill, **Sherbourne**, when it is completed, will provide facilities just off the Highway that will allow movement of traffic from all of the **hotels** towards a convention centre and will provide the opportunity for a convention centre to be built in any areas as well. That is another debate which we will need to have.
7.10 p.m.

The **Sherbourne** property is going to turn out to be one of the better investments made by the Government. I have said it before and I will stand by that. We cannot finish it because we do not have the money to finish it. That is no secret. A blind man on a trotting horse in Barbados knows that we are shon of money like the people in Mobile, Alabama, like the people in **Harare**, like the people in London. Like the people everywhere, we are short of money. The world is shon of money except for the Arabs who have oil flowing out of the ground so let us not concentrate on that now.

The Sewerage Scheme and the question of whether we had plans or not. Let me just say that there is a plan for a beautiful development for the cruise ship passengers along Bay Street at the old Ice House. When we became the Government, almost weeks after we became the Government we went into a serious discussion with the owners, the Goddards Group. The plan was approved by Town and Country Planning. Then for reasons which are well known, or may not be so well known, the Goddards Group made other decisions about their portfolios, how they were going to go and in which direction so they shelved the plan.

As a matter of fact, the property a few yards down is owned by somebody who was himself at the Ministry of Tourism at one point as Manager and originally on hearing of the concept which we were going to develop along that stretch of beach, he went and prematurely determined that he would set up a small version of what would happen anticipating that the larger Goddards programme would have brought a surfeit of profit from the number of cruise ship passengers who would have been steered there.

One of the things I discussed with the people at that time was the possibility that for the cruise ship passengers, instead of coming in through the Port and creating a problem coming out of the Port and through Bridgetown, we would have a water taxi system where the taxis would, in fact, be going to the cruise ships and they would be landing in what would now be this cruise ship facility. The Customs and Immigration people would be working back and forth between the ships and the area. It would have provided an opportunity too for some very serious surveillance of the drug movement. All of those plans that were on the table are still there.

I do not want the Honourable Member to leave the impression that the Government of the day did not have any plans for the area. Indeed, we discussed not only developing that area but we discussed developing the entire area coming right down Bay Street to Cowell Street. If the economic situation did not go into a downturn, what we would have seen is an urban development that would have included all of the area down Bay Street on both sides coming around the corner.

We even explored the possibility of developing the coast which, in essence, would be an extension of the Harbour. We started looking at the possibility of getting a loan from an international agency to do a massive development along that **area** that would have taken in the old Harbour Police Station. We would have knocked down all of that. You try to picture it. What we **are** saying is that we have not abandoned the concept of redeveloping that entire area and changing the face of Lower Broad Street in such a way as to make it attractive.

Let me say too, Sir, that in the context of Government buildings, one envisages that in the compound of the old General Hospital which is now where the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education **are**, there would be a 3 tower modern building placed there which would be owned by the Government. That would provide space for the private sector and the offshore sector and all of the other sectors.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Well, not in the next 2 years. People who come from overseas are saying that the Government does not invest now and the Honourable Member is saying Governments do not invest now. **A firm** in Canada has just failed and that failure has created a tremendous problem for the British Government because **Margaret** Thatcher over the 10-year period since 1979 had pumped in excess of \$100 million in a development that was almost exclusively to take account of the investment in the private sector. So when they come from these countries to tell us in Barbados and countries like Barbados that suddenly any investment by the Government is **taboo**, a government still has the responsibility to lead.

If the Government of the day had not invested in the **Hilton** Hotel industry the tourism industry would not have developed to the point it has reached now. It was the Government of the day that had to take the opportunity to show the private sector where one can go if one has imagination and one is willing to take the risk. For a country the size of Barbados, for as long as we live, it will be the responsibility of the Government to make timely and proper investment even if to divest subsequently to the private sector.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It really does not matter who was responsible. What matters is that the persons who are advising and the people who are in the public sector who have the responsibility will bring to their jobs the **same** imagination they carry to jobs when they leave the public sector and go out into the private sector and start to earn money. They bring to those jobs a certain imagination.

I am saying that an imaginative government can still transform any society. **Margaret** Thatcher demonstrated it and even though she is identified as being a private sector Prime Minister, when you examine what she did she made more socialist decisions than many of the socialists Prime Ministers who had gone before her.

If you look at the United States, the US economy is 60% – 70% driven by public sector investment. You have to look at the 5 or 6 tiers of Government there are in the United States and you will see it. They are crumbling and falling because they have the same problem we have. They lack jobs and you can see now that a man who nobody ever heard about has the 2 politicians on the run because the public has the same attitude. In fact, the public of Barbados has a more enlightened attitude than the public in the United States. People in Barbados know more about politics than the people in the United States. They have a better understanding. People in the United States move with the television flow. If Johnny **Carson** tells them to go in a direction they go. They do not get too involved in a lot of serious things.

The only point that needs to be made here, and we will have a debate on that some time, is the concept which I have heard Tom **Adams** in here talking about, the development of that **area**. The Honourable Member was here at the time. They were good concepts about how the place could be transformed. We have seen some of it at the back of the wharf where those of us who remember how the **Pierhead** was when we look at what has happened there now will see some developments. I **am** saying that we have had, in this country, over the last 30 years quite a lot of developments of areas, developments that have come out of the brains of the political directorate and I **am** merely saying that this political directorate has not ceased to have imagination as to how we should go. So lest the record should show that the honourable old gentleman over there, Sir, the senior citizen, he is a pensioner... The Honourable Member does not mind. He does not object.
7.20 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wonder how fair that comment is.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. **TAITT**: That is precisely the point, Sir. I can give him the assurance, as a potential pensioner I am putting it to him, that that is one of the last ones that would be cut. I do not know about anybody else. **But** we are going to join hands together. Whatever report comes in about how we are going to deal with pensions, the pensioners of Barbados can rest assured that the Honourable Member here is going to help, and this Honourable Member, if you look at his face, you will see that he has a vested interest.

Mr. D. A. C. **SIMMONS**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the record should be made to reflect the reality, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West began his contribution to this debate in that way, Sir. The grandfather of this House is the Honourable Minister of Education. He is older than the Member for Christ Church South, Sir.

Hon. B. M. **TAITT**: Sir, I think that is a good point at which I can conclude, just by saying that we in this House as presently constituted are unlikely to take lightly any assaults on the concepts of pension or the benefits of pension. I **am** not going to be party to anything that calls for interference in that, Sir.

Hon. E. E. **GREAVES**: Mr. Speaker just briefly in response to some questions raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. It is a fact that the first lease of the **Hilton** Hotel, and we are talking about leases, was signed about 25 years ago. It was recently renewed. I do not recall, because I do not think I would have been around at that time, that is, actively involved in politics, but I am not sure whether a copy of that lease was made a document of this Chamber.

But I would want to give the Honourable Member the assurance that there is nothing in the lease that we would have to expose to public viewing and I would certainly want to let him know that we would have no objection whatsoever of making the copy of the lease available to Honourable Members. I would further want to give the assurance that I would certainly seek to bring a copy of the lease and make it a document of this Chamber so that Honourable Members would have an opportunity to see what is involved in that particular arrangement. Suffice it to say that the Government is satisfied that persons who negotiated and renegotiated the lease on the Government's behalf, were able to do a good job and indeed in the renegotiation were able to get some new conditions included in that lease, conditions which did not exist before. It was all as a result of their having the foresight to become associated with a group of persons internationally or companies internationally who have been leasing properties to **Hilton**. They were able to benefit from experiences which these companies had with **Hilton International** and as a result of that a number of new things were included in the present lease.

The Honourable Member made reference to the accretion on the beach which has taken place between **Hilton** and, I believe, along Bay Street. This is a matter which I think all Honourable Members who know the area would certainly recognize. Certainly from the point of view of town planning, the Town Planning Department had drawn to the attention of the Ministry this accretion and the kind of problems somewhat of a legal or boundary nature which could arise in respect of the highwater mark, because for those properties which are privately owned the

highwater mark is now on the beach, more or less. Some people **are** seeking to extend their boundaries out to that particular point. It may very well be, as far **as** I understand, that we may have to come for some amendment to that particular legislation to ensure that there is some protection for the beach to be made available for public use. This is a matter which we **are** looking at and it is a question which is occupying the minds of surveyors, the minds of the legal people and certainly one which is of concern to the Town Planning Department and also to the Coastal Conservation Unit in the Ministry of Labour in respect of environment and coastal conservation.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South made the point that one of the concerns of his Government was the need to preserve watersports activities for Barbadians...

Aside.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: ...and similar tourism services. I would certainly want to give this House the assurance that that policy has not changed as far **as** this Administration is concerned.

I recall when I was Minister of Trade and Industry that the problem relating to the jet skis and those motorized boats which operate just offshore arose to such an extent that we had to put in place certain arrangements for the regulation of that kind of activity. There were complaints about the dangers which were posed by the indiscriminate use of these water vehicles and the lawless way in which they were driven causing sometimes injury to people and scaring **people** out of the water. I myself recall once bathing on the West Coast and was literally terrified by one of these irresponsible people who was making all sorts of movements in the water, among people who were bathing there. I think we understand very clearly the kind of problems which were posed by that.

When, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism which became very involved in trying to bring some regulation into this, we discovered that in some instances there were Barbadians who were being **used** as front men for non-Barbadians who, apparently, were buying these watersports vehicles and were using the locals as if owners but in truth and in fact they were not really the owners of these kinds of vehicles, it did cause a problem.

We put in place an arrangement where, and **as** I said I am talking about the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Tourism, a Committee was set up to review all of the applications which were made. The Committee still functions and, as far as I can recall, the Committee is made up of a representative from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce, a representative from the Ministry of Tourism, a representative from the Port Department and

a representative from the Customs Department. All applications have to go before this Committee. The applicant has to establish:

- (1) that he is a Barbadian, and
- (2) that he is the owner of the vessel.

We also indicated that we would not be adding any new jet skis to the existing numbers. If you had a licence to operate one then you could replace it. You could either buy parts or get a new vehicle to have it replaced. So we were able to contain the number of applications and, indeed, the number of jet skis which went into the water. I think that particular arrangement is working but I am sure that efforts are still being made to get around that particular arrangement.

7.30 p.m.

I happen to know that there are some people who operate on the West Coast who have connections and sometimes these connections are male connections and sometimes they are female connections who will buy boats in Miami, New York, London or wheresoever and they will send them here and then they have difficulty in having them cleared. The persons concerned, the local people, sometimes produce all sorts of information to the Committee to try to convince them that they are the owners. But in the way in which the Committee has been functioning, I think they will be able to find out with a fair degree of accuracy whether in truth and in fact they are telling the truth and whether they are the real owners or not.

I think we have been able to arrest that situation which was developing and which could easily have developed into a situation where non-Barbadians could have taken over that kind of activity. That was a problem and I would hope that matter has been put to rest now and we will be able to see this kind of sporting activity, along with other ancillary tourist activities, being reserved for Barbadians. Whatever we do we have to ensure – yes, foreign investment is important, it assists in diversifying opportunities, it brings additional opportunities into the country – but at the same time we have to recognise that there must be certain areas reserved for our local people.

This does not run counter to anything that is happening in other parts of the world because, in other countries, in the United States of America, in England, I am sure you will find areas of activity which non-nationals just cannot get into. The Immigration Regulations exclude or preclude non-nationals from getting into these particular areas. I think Barbados is not out of step when we put in place such kinds of arrangements. I thought I would just make this point to indicate that we have not deviated from the position which the Honourable Member has

been expounding on, namely the situation which existed when he was Prime Minister and his Party was in office.

In truth and in fact, what we have done, is that we have regularised the situation and have put tighter **controls** and arrangements in place to deal with a problem which had become a womsome one. I think one could agree that the complaints which used to be heard about the operations of the jet skis have been reduced considerably. I am not saying that everything is normal. We still have that element in Barbados operating on the water as they do on the roads. The same kind of attitude is carried on the water. I think that is reducing because of the fact that they have to be licensed now. I should have made the point that they have to get a licence now from the Harbour Master to operate. We are hoping that when the police get their patrol boats that will assist them in bringing some kind of regulation to that particular area.

I know there is a view which has been expressed that maybe one of the things which we should do, and I have heard this view expressed recently, is to try to concentrate that kind of activity in a particular area so that if people wanted to come to Barbados and they wanted to get involved in water sports activity they could go to a particular area for that kind of activity. Now that is not my forte. I am sure the Honourable Minister for Tourism and Sports would be able to expound on that and probably look

at the pros and cons of that. I know that is something which some people have been putting forward. All I am saying is that, as far as the Government is concerned, we have not deviated from the position which has been expounded by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

I therefore beg to move, Sir, with those few remarks that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. **GREAVES**: Mr. Speaker, at this point I am moving the adjournment of this House until **Tuesday** June 16, 1992 at 12.00 o'clock noon, Sir.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday June 16, 1992 at 12.00 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
7.40 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of Tuesday,
May 26, 1992..... 2107

Hon. P. M. Greaves, 2107.

PAPERS

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS..... 2107

Annual Report of the Immigration and Passport
Department for the year ended December 31,
1990.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON..... 2107

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 1992.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments
(Exemption) (No. 4) Order, 1992.

Hon. C. V. WALKER 2108

Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of
Barbados Community College for the year
1989-90.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES..... 2108

Resolution to approve the lease to the Dive
Shop Limited of a parcel of land at Aquatic
Gap, St. Michael.

Hon. B. M. TAITT 2108

The Health Services (Amendment) Bill, 1992.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. B. M. TAITT 2108

The Health Services (Amendment) Bill, 1992.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES..... 2108

The Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 1992.

Hon. **M. A. KING** 2108

The Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment)
Bill, 1992.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS 2108

Hon. P. M. Greaves, 2108; Mr. H. deB. Forde, 2108.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE

(AMENDMENT) BILL, 1992 2108

Hon. M. A. **King**, 2108, 2119; Mr. H. deB.
Forde, 2109; Hon. H. B. St. John, 2110, 2111,
2112; Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, **2113**; Hon. N. K.
Simmons, 2114; Hon. B. M. Taitt, 2116, 2117,
2118.

THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT)

BILL, 1992 2119

Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, 2120, 2142, 2143,
2144, 2145, 2146, 2147; Mr. O. S. **Arthur**,
2120, 2121, 2122; Mr. H. A. Blackman, 2124,
2125, 2126, 2127; Hon. H. B. St. John, 2127,
2128, 2129; Mr. D. A. C. **Simmons**, 2130, 2131,
2132, 2133; Hon. M. A. King, 2133; Mr. DeL.
O. Bradshaw, 2135, 2137; Mr. R. L. Moms,
2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE TO DIVE
SHOP LIMITED OF LAND AT AQUATIC GAP,
ST. MICHAEL 2148

Hon. E. E. Greaves, 2148, 2152, 2153; Hon. H.
B. St. John, 2149; Hon. B. M. Taitt, 2150, 2151.

SUSPENSION 2119

Hon. P. M. Greaves, 2119.

ADJOURNMENT 2154

Hon. P. M. Greaves, 2154.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ARTHUR, Mr. O. S. (St. Peter)
BLACKMAN, Mr. H. A. (St. **Philip** South)
BRADSHAW, Mr. **DeL. O.** (St. Michael South East)
CHELTENHAM, Dr. R. L. (St. Joseph)
FORDE, Mr. H. **deB.** (Christ Church West)
GREAVES, Hon. E. E. (St. Lucy)
GREAVES, Hon. P. M. (St. Michael North)
KING, Hon. M. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MORRIS, Mr. R. L. (Christ Church East Central)
SIMMONS, Mr. D. A. C. (St. Thomas)
SIMMONS, Hon. N. K. (St. James South)
St. JOHN, Hon. H. B. (Christ Church South)
TAITT, Hon. B. **XL (St. Michael)** West)
THOMPSON, **Hon. D. J. H.** (St. John)
WALKER, Hon. C. V. (St. George North)