

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 - 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 15, 1993

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

PRESENT

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

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDDFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.),
J.P., (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic
Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)

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

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

Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime
Minister, 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.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Miss B. A. MILLER

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR

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

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, June 1, 1993.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I understand
that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, June 1,
1993 have been circulated and 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, let
these Minutes stand confirmed.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give
notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 36
asked by the Honourable Member for St. Peter is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the Order of the Day. Order No. 3.

RESOLUTION TO NOTE THE AGREEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ASSEMBLY OF CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARIANS AND APPROVE STEPS IN PROGRESS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF . THE ASSEMBLY

Order No. 3 was called - To move for further consideration of a Resolution to note the Agreement for an Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians and to approve steps which are in progress for the establishment of the assembly.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: A couple of months ago, Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to debate in this House the West Indian Commission Report and though there were some strong reservations expressed on both sides of this Chamber about the content of the Report, I was unaware myself, Mr. Speaker, until the Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke, followed by some other Honourable Members, that there were such strong reservations about the proposed institution of Caribbean Assembly of Parliamentarians. I must say that I was struck by the sharpness of the criticism. I was also struck by the issues that arose in the course of the debate particularly emanating from the Honourable Member for the City. I thought we had come, when we debated the West Indian Commission Report, to some consensus on how we felt about the Barbados position in relation to that Report. The fact that that is not so is not a big issue because I think that since we have said, that by and large, matters of this sort should be influenced by individual's perspectives on how they think Caribbean unity should proceed that it is quite reasonable for people to take unique positions which do not necessarily accord with the positions they may have taken on behalf of their Party.

But we did express reservations on the West Indian Commission Report. One of the principal concerns that this House expressed - it was expressed on both sides of the Chamber - was that you cannot have a serious

integration movement unless the issue of sovereignty is addressed. We also made the point in the course of that debate that we need to determine as people in the Caribbean what areas of our domestic arrangements we are going to surrender to some other entity which has a regional composition for the purpose of making decisions for us. We have not yet done this and even since the West Indian Commission Report was considered I do not think the Heads of Government have come to any definitive conclusion on that and I doubt very much if, during my lifetime, we will make significant progress on this issue of sovereignty unless there is some kind of intervention from the bottom.

But if we expect the intervention on the issue of sovereignty to emanate from the institutions themselves, which essentially start at the apex with the Heads of Government and move outwards, we will find that each Head of Government is going to be in the very difficult position of having to put the national position on issues, a position which has to be coloured by sometimes very strong nationalistic feelings on regional concerns and is not going to be able to come to any firm agreement on what issues he is willing to surrender on behalf of his people to the regional integration movement.

That brings us on to the second point that we said in that debate and it was made very clear by I think most of the speakers in the debate, that if you want to have the kind of regional integration movement that we say we want in the Caribbean, and it is quite unique in the sense that it wants to trespass over all areas of national life, culture, health, nearly all areas of what are now national preserves and the role of national governments exclusively, that if we want that the decision-making has to come from the bottom and go to the top. You cannot have a development model that is exclusively top down. That brings us clearly to the question of the Caribbean Assembly of Parliamentarians. 12.30 p.m.

The real issue is whether the Heads of Governments will continue to be the apex of the regional integration movement or whether we are going to look for these other Institutions in the movement to come forward to replace decision making that all of us have said is deficient as it exists. Therefore one can only assume that one of the best ways to achieve this is to add some kinds of decision making paraphernalia which encourage a wider cross section of views to the regional integration movement.

Now, it is true that the Caribbean Assembly of Parliamentarians begins with a very limited mandate, but I would assume that in starting there that it is not intended that the Parliament would remain merely an exercise in discussing regional issues without being able to make any serious decisions in relation to the future of the

Caribbean as a whole. It would have to be that this Parliament will eventually have to have the kind of role which other Honourable Members have spoken of where it can exercise real decision making in relation to the region. But I do not think that we are ready to start like that, Mr. Speaker, and therefore any criticism of the Caribbean Parliament as really being a talk shop without teeth and power does not make sense to me unless the persons who make that criticism can prove to me that in the region there is sufficient consensus to establish a Parliament which is going to make sovereign decisions in the place of national parliaments. So it is a useless criticism to say that because a Parliament is not exercising power or executive authority from the outset that it is not a useful institution. We have to start somewhere and this is the point that we made in this debate on the West Indian Commission that any improvement or progress that we make in relation to regional integration is going to be incremental and there is nobody in this Chamber who has doubted that that is the process by which full integration will come about. We are not ready for a Parliament that is going to make decisions in the place of the Barbados Parliament at a regional level. But we will get there. As I said, it may not come in my life time but any initiative that moves towards that is something that I have said I will support. Perhaps those Parliamentarians who form or constitute part of this regional Parliament will be sufficiently sensitive to the kinds of important initiatives that they have to proceed on to achieve this ultimate goal of a regional Parliament. So, I do support, Mr. Speaker, another tier of decision making on Caribbean issues. I want to say up front that there is going to be a cost to having that tier and that each territory of the Caribbean has to bear its fair share of that cost in having that other tier in the decision making.

The second point which is more important is that you have people in this Chamber criticising the lack of involvement of ordinary Parliamentarians who are not Members of the Executive, in other words, non-Cabinet Members. There are people in here who say that the other Parliamentarians are almost irrelevant, that the system does not cater to them. Here you have a recommendation which essentially seeks to bring persons from the Back Bench or one would hope, from the Opposition at some point, into the process to make them more involved in decision making, in sensitising people to important regional issues *• and that is pooh poohed as an unnecessary expense in some very harsh language about the role of Parliament.

Back Bench involvement is vital to bridging this information and participation gap between the people and the regional integration movement. Although there is a gap between the Heads of Governments in a sense and everybody else in the system, there is even a greater need for the involvement of ordinary Members of Parliament in their respective countries, in the process of the regional integration movement. But that is not all, because the involvement of Back Bench Parliamentarians is as

compelling as the need for people in the religious field, people who are dealing with issues relating to women, issues relating to youths, issues relating to culture and the arts, all of them too have at some point in time to be brought into the process of decision making in the region. If we do not necessarily have a system in our respective territories, our national structures of Government which accommodates them, but hopefully we can devise a regional system which would accommodate them.

The other point that I want to make is that this Parliament recognise during the debate on the West Indian Commission Report that National Parliaments seldom discuss issues relating to Caribbean integration.

Now, Members were not particularly enthused by a recommendation that I had made that the CARICOM Secretariat should be able to access national Parliaments directly because they felt it would be difficult and almost unworkable, and I have not thought it through myself, but since it is not the intention to devolve any regional decision making to National Parliaments other than in relation to those decisions which require domestic legislation, or domestic action, it seems to me that the best solution for having a tier of Parliamentary debate on regional issues would be to have a CARICOM Parliament

Let us not fool ourselves, Mr. Speaker, that it has anything to do exclusively with Government's agenda because I do not know of any Opposition Resolution on CARICOM that has been moved in this House since I was a Member of this Parliament either and that may have been the case a long time before, so all of the Parliamentary revolutionaries, all of those who are hitting at the system of Government that we profess are themselves contributing to its decline by failing to put issues on the agenda which they have power to do by way of Private Members Resolution to discuss these important matters which they say our Parliaments never get a chance to discuss. So it is not Government exclusively. In fact nearly every Resolution that has come on Caribbean issues in this Parliament has emanated from the Government side and that point has to be made very clearly because one would almost get the impression from some of the criticisms that were levelled that it is exclusively Government's responsibility to set the entire parliamentary agenda.

Those who disagree with the composition of this Parliament take the position that it should not be appointed from the National Parliament or the wider public but that the members should be elected by the people.

Once again I say we do not have in place a mechanism for the election of these Parliamentarians by the citizens of the respective countries. It would be good if we did but if we find it difficult to manage some very small areas of regional integration I would hardly think that in Barbados we could effectively manage the election

of regional parliamentarians at this stage in our political development. So that as an alternative I see nothing wrong with beginning the process of establishing the Caribbean Parliament on the basis of some methodology which involves selection of its members for the time being but give the Parliament itself the mandate to work out a formula for the election of Parliamentarians by the people in the future.

As I said, all of these developments are going to be incremental and are not going to take place by any flash in the pan action that is proposed by anybody' and this resolution and the accompanying agreement obviously reflect an accommodation of interests rather than any decisive position taken by any one Caribbean leader or the other. So that where there is an accommodation of interest, the solution is going to be an imperfect one. There are some important points that we need to make. First of all, in the Caribbean Parliament, the role of the Opposition parties in the National Parliament, assuming that you are using a selection process, should be guaranteed. I do not know what the thinking is on that. I do not know what the formula for selection of the parliamentarians so far is. But I would think that based on our domestic experience where Members of the Opposition from Barbados by and large have been able to represent this country's interest internationally and regionally with such plume and diplomacy that we would not have the same difficulties that other territories in the region have on matters such as this. We could easily support any composition which includes Members of the Opposition. I would, in fact, say that it would be desirable to ensure that Opposition Parties in the respective territories wherever possible are entitled to be represented in the Assembly. 12.40 p.m.

The criticisms, Mr. Speaker, have been highlighted in the newspapers and not enough of the meat and substance of the Parliament itself. This is tragic but it is traditional and one cannot complain about that. If we return to the issue of Parliament wielding power or exercising executive functions, that is one of the comments which was made by an Honourable Member on the other side. I do not wish anybody to be cynical. But I wish to say that a careful analysis of the Westminster Parliamentary System may reveal to those persons who feel that Parliament exercises this great amount of power that, in fact, Parliaments in this system exercise a lot less power than we imagine. So that to say about Parliament that you are only giving support to a Parliament if it wields power does not square. It may square with the theoretical approach to what a Westminster Parliamentary System does, but it does not square with the reality.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to diminish the role of Parliament. But I think you, too, well know as a member of the CPA the importance sometimes that National Parliaments have in relation to the exercise of power in

their own country. There are countries under this Westminster System where the representatives of the monarchs have been able to intervene time and again in the parliamentary process and intervene in the dismissal of Prime Ministers. There are many examples of that. You could look at that yourself. Think about it. I say that a careful analysis will reveal that Parliament is not as powerful as the Honourable Member who suggested that, unless a Parliament wields power, it is not relevant, as may reveal. That criticism does not necessarily mean anything to those who are looking for a solution for providing greater democracy and opportunities for expression within the regional political system.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central dealt with the issue of the Parliament being a talk shop and I think that he dealt with it very effectively. For those who think that Parliament is a lot more than the talk shop and that there is something wrong in talking about issues that affect us, or that in talking about issues that affect us we are simply wasting time, then that criticism, too, must fall to the ground. I would assume that the Barbadian electorate elects people who possess two kinds of personal skills, apart from integrity and so on, and one is the ability to talk. It would not make sense to elect persons to Parliament who are not going to represent a viewpoint. Therefore, in that sense, Parliament has a very important role in simply discussing issues that affect people in the region.

The issue of competence to deal with domestic or national matters is something that has to be dealt with by way of addressing sovereignty and what matters domestic Parliaments would see to other entities to make decisions on their behalf. It is not deficient, therefore, for an arrangement to be in place which does not permit the Parliament to make legislation for a sovereign nation. All it means is that we are not ready yet for a Caribbean Parliament to make decisions in relation to national affairs of countries.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But we cannot make a decision in Barbados for Jamaica. That does not make us any less of a Parliament having responsibility for the country over which we have control. Maybe one day a Caribbean Parliament will be able to make legislation for all of the territories of the Caribbean. That is the ideal to which we want to move incrementally and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

The last point that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is the Honourable Member for the City made the strident criticism that, if you cannot reform domestic Parliaments, how can you have a regional Parliament? Now I must say that this issue of constitutional reform or domestic

reform is not something that the people of Barbados are going to leave to the Barbados Labour Party. You can bet your bottom dollar on that, Mr. Speaker. The Barbados Labour Party had the Cox Commission Report and has had a whole series of high flown intellectual exercises, the last of which took place a couple of weeks ago. They have brought all kinds of legislation for reform to this Parliament and are still exercising their rights to pretend to be the champions of freedom of speech, freedom of association and all of these other lofty ideas. But I cannot think of one area that the Honourable Member for the City or any other Honourable Member on that side can point to of major constitutional reform that has taken place in Barbados or reform of this Parliamentary system when younger people of greater talent, although they were the same people, had the opportunity to make those changes. Nobody in Barbados needs to be fooled by any sudden "flash in the pan" arguments over there about constitutional reform and the stamping of feet about the abolition of the Senate and all kinds of things.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The people who want to abolish the Senate have no right taking appointments in the Senate. From the time that I was at school, I said that it was a useless institution and, when the opportunity arose, I declined. The Honourable Member for the City served in the Senate for three years - not a word in that entire time and drawing money every month. Well, I have not said anything yet. 12.50 p.m.

Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, that was meant to draw me out. I sat in the Senate for 3 years. I did not draw the money. You get a small allowance from the Senate that does not even pay for gasoline, as he well knows, which is why he did not want it. I have made the point consistently since 1981 that the Senate does not serve the function which it was designed to do in this country and it is time either to redefine it or get the rid of it. I am consistent en that.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City would not be the first Senator in Barbados who has said that the Senate should be abolished. There are many Senators who are of that view. The same person that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said got precedence over me was on the same programme I was on and took the view it should be abolished. I remember distinctly, and he knows that too. That was way back in 1978, 4 young people.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The person who he said got precedence over me, so he alleges. That person argued

more vehemently than me that it was a nonsense institution full of political rejects, that it was an attempt to disenfranchise the black masses of Barbados by putting a lot of middle class - I cannot even remember the kind of hyperbole that was used, but you see I only went to Combermere so I could not match anybody with that kind of language, but I could match them on the principle or carry the principle further.

I am saying that the Honourable Member for the City cannot point, right now, or within the course of today, to any occasion when she was a member of the Senate that she argued that it should be abolished. That is the point.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have not quoted you yet. I can only misquote you if I quote you. I am asking you now to quote yourself.

Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I insist upon this. It is not correct to say that while I sat in the Senate I did not criticise it as an institution. That is totally incorrect.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, that is the point. She may have criticised the President of the Senate, she may have criticised the other Members in the Senate. I read all of her debates. You can get on your hind legs and call anybody you want a liar, but stand up and do it. The point is that all of the sudden interest in parliamentary reform and constitutional reform is not something that one can take seriously, and certainly not coming from the Barbados Labour Party, because they rejected the recommendations that their own Commission made about constitutional reform;

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is now deliberately misleading this House. He would have had access to the Cabinet documents by now. I assume he has and he would have seen that the Cabinet of Barbados agreed with the Cox Commission's recommendations. If he has not, Sir, I would suggest that he goes and reads. The position is that the Democratic Labour Party refused to co-operate, refused to sit on the Cox Commission, refused afterwards to co-operate, otherwise we would have implemented it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to remind the Honourable Member that...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Each Member has 30 minutes speaking time. The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am interested in the implementation of ideas, not fancy talk, and I started by saying that all you will get from that side on constitutional reform is fancy talk. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has proved that to me. All he did was talk and there has been absolutely no recommendation of any forward looking recommendation for reform, and the young people of Barbados are not looking to you to reform anything in Barbados. That is all I have to say on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this Chamber is a very important Resolution and it needs to be debated. I think that the time has passed when we should be sitting in here or elsewhere in Barbados debating whether or not steps should be taken towards uniting the Caribbean countries. The Barbados Labour Party has a history which is well known, well recorded, of trying to bring together the peoples of the Caribbean.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members are complaining of their inability to hear clearly. Will the Clerk check to find out if something can be done to increase the volume?

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: The Barbados Labour Party was in the forefront of trying to bring the peoples of the Caribbean together and we had the formation of the West Indies Federation in 1958. I believe that that initiative was a good one and something has got to be done in order to bring the Caribbean peoples together.

A lot of things have happened and changes have been made. We have seen a number of problems in the entire world. The Eastern Block in Europe and very recently the United States, Canada and Mexico have seen the wisdom in coming together, not in a political federation, but in a so-called economic arrangement so that benefits could be derived. We have seen in Latin America the establishment of SELA, the Latin American Economic System, where groups within the Latin American area have come together to form that bloc in order to promote and develop its people.

We in the Caribbean are expected to find something concrete whereby Caribbean unity can be brought about. Whether we want to accept this or not, Mr. Speaker, people who live abroad are expecting us - meaning the politicians - in the Caribbean to take the initiative, guide us and bring about this sort of arrangement. I am sometimes surprised when I hear people criticise initiatives by people trying to bring about Caribbean unity. I would think that the purpose of the Resolution is to see how best we could arrive at political unity, as well as economic unity, so that the peoples of the Caribbean could benefit. Barbados would benefit by that arrangement.

While I might disagree with the methodology, I want to say that the objective is laudable. It disturbs me that every time some individual thinks in terms of finding what we call a revolutionary idea to effect a particular purpose, there is some cold water being thrown on it. I do not have at my disposal the steps that are in progress. Therefore I will find it difficult to speak with that sort of conviction on a Resolution of this nature. I would think that those steps should be made available so that in this sort of Resolution we can make a more meaningful contribution to see whether or not it is a good idea to have a Caribbean Parliament or not. 1.00 p.m.

We must not forget that a West Indian Commission was established with the main purpose of seeing how best we could bring the Caribbean people together. We have agreed on some of the recommendations but we all accept the fact that some initiative has to be taken in order to bring it about. We all agree on that. What I am saying is that the time has come when we as politicians from both sides and from parliaments within the Caribbean must recognise that we have to sit down and be more serious about what we are talking about because the younger generation is expecting us to bring about this Caribbean unity.

They cannot do it and it should not be left for them to do. We have to recognise that there are a number of things that are in place and we need to build on them. We must not feel that because the West Indies Federation failed, because some form of political unity failed and because an attempt at forming the Little Eight failed that we must stop there. It is a big mistake. We must as Barbadians take the initiative - and I would support any such steps - in trying to bring the Caribbean region closer together.

We have the economic arrangements in place. But I must say just as Barbados is fighting and this Parliament is asked to consider in all seriousness this sort of Resolution, I would hope that other Caribbean countries are just as serious as we are in this country because it always seems that Barbados is taking the initiative in a number of these issues to bring about Caribbean unity, economic and political but some of the other countries just pay lip service. There is a cost involved here and I have some reservations about the cost because I am fully aware that some Caribbean countries have agreed to LIAT (1974) Ltd. fly aircraft across the Caribbean region but some of them have defaulted and not paid one red cent towards the running of that airline which would have gone a long way towards helping to link the Caribbean region together.

We have seen instances such as WISCO, the West Indian Shipping Association, where some countries have agreed but decided not to play their role of supporting it financially. What I am saying is that I therefore h'iw

doubts as to whether these other countries which are participants will pay their money in order to have such an arrangement realised. Past history does not say much. I would hope that the other countries would recognise that we know it is not only those 2 areas. We have it at the University of the West Indies. They make commitments but do not pay one red cent.

I am hoping that any initiative taken by the Barbados Government will call upon the Governments to honour up front the cost (if it is a positive one) is met and that we do not have the experience of what we have seen in the past with these countries reneging on their commitments. That is why we have this fear, but I am sure that Members on this side will agree that we would want to see Caribbean unit}.

I do not want to throw cold water on the initiative taken by the Prime Minister. I don't want to do that because it would be unfair. What I am going to say is that somebody has to start something and I would recommend to the Prime Minister that he give it serious in-depth thought. I do not know how much it has got but I would like to see serious thought being placed on this. We must welcome any initiative because everybody is an expert as to how things can be done and we always criticise what can or cannot be done and we do not give it a try. I am an integrationist. I believe in that. I am aware that there are going to be some shortcomings and we have to make sure that we put in place certain mechanisms that can take care of these shortcomings.

Let us face it, the young generation - and I will say this without contradiction - is looking forward to our bringing about Caribbean unity. They are calling for it. Recently I was in London and I was surprised to hear children of Barbadians calling on the Government and supporting initiatives to bring about Caribbean unity. The time has come. They attacked me as a politician and other politicians and said we are paying too much lip service and we must stop talking. That was the advice coming from them to us. I pay heed to that. I listened to them. They are the generation* of tomorrow and they say stop the talking, stop the squabbling, stop looking back to see whether it is possible or not and find some ways and means of starting and building on that start. That is a message I would like to leave with this Honourable Chamber.

I want the Government to understand this time and time again because this comes home to me every time we get into a debate that we should move from the narrow partisan level. We hear someone talking about "Bs" and "D". This is not a debate for that. We should not have that kind of divide. I do not want to hear a Member from that side referring to Members on this side as to whether they are for it or not. This is not the type of debate that would require that sort of attitude and approach and I condemn it. We ask ourselves time and time again in debate why there

is not the interest in politics by the young generation. It is because sometimes we do not conduct our debates at a high level. We do not appeal to the public. We should be setting examples rather than allowing this sort of debate to degenerate to that level.

I support any initiative taken by 3 or* 4 countries within the CARICOM region to start something going because I accept the fact it is going to be very difficult for 10 or 11 of these countries within the Caribbean region to start any one thing at the same time. We need someone to start the ball rolling. As I said, whether or not it is done this way or another way it is a matter of working it out. We have recognised that it has to be done and it is just a matter of methodology. How do we do it?

What I am saying is that I have seen something in this whole debate. We find ways and means of knocking down something that could be fruitful. It does not matter whether it is the BLP or the DLP who do it. Once it is in the general interest of my country, I am satisfied. Let me get this quite clear. I think that we share that view on either side here. I want to make this clear. What I am saying is that we have to decide in our minds where we will have the headquarters. The jealousy within the Caribbean region is still there. We have as a country been looked up to in this Caribbean region and beyond to take the initiative in something. 1.10 p.m.

I will say this, Mr. Speaker. I am not quite clear whether this is the priority. I know there are other institutions that need to be developed and I would want to know how you are going to relate them to this new parliamentary body. The reservation was expressed some time ago as to what kind of clout this Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians would have. I suppose we can ask ourselves too. Go in Europe and ask what kind of clout the European Parliament has. We have to look and see whether our situation is similar to that in Europe and whether the arrangement we are looking at, as expressed in this Resolution, is the right one.

As I said, we must not think that there is anything political to gain. There are some things I have learned, Mr. Speaker. You are a Bee today and a Dem tomorrow, a Dem yesterday and a Bee today and I want to cross that divide because I know when we must do things. I think we must understand this. If the Opposition has its reservations it does not mean that the Opposition is against Caribbean unity because the Barbados Labour Party as an Opposition is on record as supporting any moves towards Caribbean unity so I do not think I have to stand up and defend that. Everybody knows that is part of history. What is relevant is that we find ways and means and that we understand our position.

Time and time again reports have revealed that the Caribbean bargaining power is limited because we have come with a united front. We are marketing tourism now together. We have seen the disaster in trying to promote country by country tourism. We have seen it even recently in the Banana Agreement in Europe and what they are saying is that the countries of the Caribbean should get together on this very issue. The reports say that the reason why they were successful in those negotiations is because for the first time the Caribbean countries involved have gotten together.

We must go to Europe on sugar with a united front. We have gone across the economic borders and we are sensing some merit in that, and a political one. I know that there are lots of reservations, not within this Parliament only, but even on the other side they will have reservations. It is not an easy Resolution to support I do not think that the Prime Minister, all due respect to him, will feel in any way that someone is throwing cold water on a resolution in which he played some major part in forming. I would commend him for trying to put something to the Heads of Governments because we need to start somewhere. But, as I said, we must sit down and find ways and means of dealing with the problems that are likely to arise.

The Opposition has some reservation about the cost. You know why? At this time Barbados is going through an economic crisis. I do not think that anyone could be annoyed with someone expressing concern over the fact that any arrangement would mean an additional cost to the taxpayers of Barbados. That is a justifiable reason. We have to be concerned. What is the cost? I do not know the cost. How am I going to fully support a Resolution when I do not know what is the cost and whether the countries that are supposed to meet the cost will, in fact, honour their obligation. When those facts are known then I would be in a better position to make my own judgment.

There is another question. Where is the headquarters going to be? Where are you going to meet? I have not heard. Are you going to meet in Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica or Barbados?

Aside.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I was not here. If you are going to meet in Barbados - I have not seen this. It is all right to say that but we know that jealousy is one of those things. They always say that the headquarters is always in Barbados and this has been one of the problems why most of these regional institutions do not get off the ground because I know people were critical of the CARICOM arrangement because the headquarters was in Guyana. I know some of them criticised when the headquarters was in Trinidad and they criticised it when it was in Barbados.

Those are areas I am asking the Honourable Prime Minister to look at and to be satisfied that this hurdle is now being dealt with so that we can have a plain sailing approach to it. It is all right to say the headquarters is here. What does that mean that because the headquarters is here in Barbados that people are going to feel happy coming here? We have to look and see whether people who are a part of it will have transportation. I suppose that might be one of the considerations why they would have the headquarters here. Even that we have seen evoked some sort of criticism and jealousy, hence it led to the destruction of the West Indies Federation. That is why I am calling on the Government to look at this arrangement and make more information available on this matter. It is not a matter of just supporting it when we do not know the steps.

I do not know the cost. I do not know what sort of a secretariat you are going to have or the composition of it. All of these are things I would want to know. I do not want to say "yes" and then we now start to work out the mechanics of it. All of this should be done. I feel the time has come when we should look seriously at finfling some sort of political arrangement

I would hope, Sir, that if my queries are met that I will be able to say I fully support an initiative of this sort. As I said, we must realise that it is not a Resolution which can be supported fully just by bringing it in here. There are other reservations and I think that all and sundry, from both sides, should be given an opportunity to express their individual views. That will augur well for the establishment of any arrangement, political or otherwise, which we deserve in the Caribbean region.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, not for the first time I have heard a speech from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East which has much in it to be congratulated because in the face of some difficulty he has been able to articulate a position that is not unreasonable. On that occasion he said I appreciated what he said and on this occasion I can say it again. The Honourable Member is showing a maturity in this House which I think is in keeping with the growth and development of parliamentarians.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting Resolution which has come before the House. It has been debated over a period of time and in a sense that tends to derogate from the intensity of the debate because one has to remember what other persons said 2 or 3 weeks ago. In that sense there is some disadvantage to be responding to points that may have been made some time ago. A person who is hearing one for the first time might wonder if one is, in fact, concentrating on the debate as it is being articulated today. 1.20 p.m.

Certainly the 2 Honourable Members who have just spoken have left enough in the Chamber that one could get up and support them more or less and that would be sufficient. But it has to be recalled that during the debate of this item that some Honourable Members took the debate into areas which for me were surprising but which, nonetheless, would require some response. I do not myself intend to go into details in response to some of the things that have been said but I would say that I regret it very much that this debate which ought to have concentrated in my view on discussion of the Caribbean region as it exists today, where it was and where it possibly can go, did in fact revert to some adverse criticism of our own institutions in Barbados not the least of which was this Parliament itself. I feel very strongly about this institution called the Parliament. I believe that after some considerable time in it and after having observed performances in Canada, in the United States and in the United Kingdom in some depth that the Barbados Parliament does not have anything of which it should be ashamed.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that when we were discussing the 350th Anniversary celebrations and all of the outpourings which were made then that that was one of the shining moments in the history of this country and people marvelled that we were able to retain the stability that had manifested itself over a period of 350 years. It is my contention that one of the reasons why we were able to maintain that stability and to have this reputation, among the countries around the world, is that such changes as have been made in our parliamentary system have been gradual. They have tended not to be revolutionary. There is substance, merit and credit in a non-revolutionary change in the parliamentary arrangements of a country. Change by accretion for institutions such as Parliament and the Judiciary and those areas of fundamental life in a country are desirable if for no other reason than to give those who are to follow an opportunity to learn the essence and the substance of what puts together the country.

I feel very strongly about this Parliament again, Sir, because I have served in it and I have been able to observe the activities of Members on both sides in different spheres. I have spent some time reading about the performances of those parliamentarians of the past. I do not share the view which is expressed and has been expressed in this present day that people have lost interest in politics. That is simply not true. It might be said that I have my head buried in the sand but people have been given opportunity to behave and participate in politics in a different way from what was necessary 20 years ago. And because they do not now perform or behave in the way they did 20 years ago, it does not mean that they have lost interest.

Twenty years ago we had reporters that when they gave information about the Parliament it was so accurate,

so colourful and so interesting that people looked forward to hearing more. But if one examines the competition which Parliament had in those days, it did not have to contend with the instant nature of information coming from the rest of the world. Anyone who listens to a radio now or watches a television, anyone who is within viewing distance of STV can discover what is happening in the rest of the world instantly. And in that sense: this Parliament like all other Parliaments have to compete with information. There is only so much information which the individual can take or would wish to take in. And hence, what we should get is a more indepth examination of the issues in the country before coming to these conclusions many of which are knee jerk reactions or simply repetition of utterances which others have made elsewhere. We are a matured people in the context of this world.

Barbados is a matured country in the context of this world and for that reason we who have been given the opportunity to be called leaders in this country ought to assist the rest of the community in doing the analysis at a different level, in different ways and in different circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the opportunity presents itself for me to speak at greater length on that particular issue. I believe that I shall have some more to say when we discuss this very interesting resolution concerning broadcasting, Sir.

But I wish to say a little bit about the Caribbean and therefore you would forgive me if I move on to talk about that. The Honourable Member who just sat down raised some legitimate questions about what will be the cost of this exercise. I would say that, to the extent that it would have been feasible to present a budget or a cost framework it would have made acceptance of the proposal perhaps a little easier.

I would suggest to the Honourable Member that what is being put forward here is of such fundamental importance to the community, to the region that whatever the cost may be - and there has to be a framework within which one knows that the cost cannot exceed a certain amount - I think we have to go beyond that very important aspect to see what it is we are seeking to do.

Sir, in the very Agreement for the establishment of an Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians that is attached to the Resolution, it is being suggested that Member States would establish an Assembly of Caribbean Community parliamentarians having the membership, powers and functions hereinafter specified.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am told that Honourable Members may not, in fact, have seen the Agreement

and, to that extent, I think they would have been at a disadvantage. But I am told it was circulated. Because when one examines the Agreement itself - and I say this in the context of, for example, an editorial which I saw recently which I concluded that the editorial was written without any reference to the Agreement itself. Because what the Agreement sets out in its very preambular paragraph is to establish an Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Parliament is a member and, by definition, as soon as one becomes a parliamentarian one has access to membership of something called the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We come to this Parliament every year and we vote a sum of money for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. That Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is made up, as Your Honour knows, of a number of parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth. Barbados is a member and Barbados pays its dues of membership to that foreign institution. It is foreign in the sense that its Headquarters are in London. Its Secretariat is in London. One of the things that must be said is that many of the parliamentarians who have become statesmen in Barbados honed their debating and information skills by attending Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meetings in far off lands.

One of the things that can be said of the late Prime Minister Tom Adams is that he was an inveterate believer in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I remember on one occasion when we raised some questions about why he felt that he should be the only one from the Opposition, as it then was, travelling to these CPA meetings so frequently, we were seeking to put him down, the late Tom Adams. He used to be accompanied by the former Member Reynold Weekes who he said was his mentor. But the point is that the then Tom Adams made the point that he learnt more from attending a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Meeting and having discussions with parliamentarians from around the world than he had learnt in all the years that he spent at Oxford. Now, Sir, I am being urged to import some additional information but I shall not climb down from where I am yet. 1.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I make that point merely to say that the question of cost cannot be the only factor when you are discussing and considering certain matters because if we went on the base of cost alone, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central would not have had the experience of being a member of the executive of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to do work which time does not permit me to specify here, Sir, that has been of importance not only to his own personal growth and development as a Parliamentarian, but to the

country through our Parliament and the region through the relationship which the executive has to Parliamentarians.

The other key factor here is that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association relates primarily to non-executive, that is, Back Bench and Opposition Parliamentarians.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that all of us who are Ministers or have been Ministers get to go to CARICOM meetings and discuss in great detail issues of the day. But it is also a fact, except on the odd occasion, and the Honourable Member, the Prime Minister, has made a point to include a Back Bencher in his delegations whenever feasible, going to CARICOM meetings, but generally speaking it would be unusual for the Government to take a Member of the Opposition to a CARICOM Meeting.

Let us say for 10 years the Honourable Members do not get an opportunity to be members of the Front Bench.

Atide.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: We would not speculate yet. It means, Sir, that those Honourable Members have not had a chance, except in their private capacities to rub shoulders with colleagues or former colleagues to discuss issues of the day concerning this region.

Now, if for no other reason than to provide that opportunity, Sir, I will support the creation of a forum for Parliamentarians of the region to have a meeting, a formal meeting with a formal agenda, to discuss formal issues.

But there is another reason that is equally important, Sir. When the Caribbean Federation broke up all of us went, as countries, in our respective directions, each of us concerned about where we would end up. It was an equally - and forgive the use of the word, Sir, but I have to make the point this way - it was an equally perceived hair-brained scheme by the late Right Honourable Member for St. John, that led to himself and the Premier of Antigua and the Premier of Guyana getting together and daring to say they were going to start a free trade area.

Anyone who has read the literature of that day will remember the utter contempt with which this initial effort was criticised. Honourable Members who are old enough might remember that they were regarded with skepticism, not only by the people on the other sides, whatever those sides were, but within their own political parties they were regarded as some strange beings.

- The fact that Premier Bird had absolute power in Antigua, that Premier Burnham was acquiring absolute power in Guyana and Premier Barrow behaved as if he

had absolute power in Barbados, was useful. But it was still regarded, even by historians, as an effort that was not likely to go any where. Lo and behold, Sir, that after the initial meetings and some bopping and weaving the ideas of those three persons soon became the nucleus of a Free Trade Area for the Caribbean and soon 8 members were coming on board.

Now they did not know, they literally did not know where they were going or how it would end up, but they knew what we had to do. Soon, Sir* and here is where I can speak with knowledge now, Sir. In 1971 the Caribbean Free Trade area had become a viable functional ghouling operation such that by 1973 the Ministers of Trade who constituted the Council of the Caribbean Community could be discussing in all seriousness the creation of a Caribbean Community.

Mr. Speaker, there is no original economic community in the world, not in modern times. If there is one from developing countries, as we have done with everything else we would have copied the European Economic Community's model and that is what we did. We dated in 1973 to start discussing the establishment of a Guibbean Community.

Mr. Speaker, in 1974, we had reached the point where four of the so-called more developed countries, were able in 1974, in a meeting in Trinidad and Tobago to announce that they were going to press ahead with the community. If the others were not ready they could come later. And Mr. Speaker, on July 4, 1974 the Caribbean Community was born. The Caribbean Community did not have a perfect frame. It did not have anything except the treaty itself, the constitution and the history of a lot of hard work by a number of believers.

Mr. Speaker, having participated myself- I was a lot more vigorous and younger then, Sir - in the long hard days and nights of putting together the Caribbean Community, I feel able to say that it was worth my time and for which the benefits to this region have been substantial.

Mr. Speaker, here is what Sonny Ramphal had to say about it, when in 1975, he was leaving the Caribbean Community to go to take up his exalted position when he would become His Excellency Shirdath S. Ramphal, Secretary General of the Commonwealth. But in 1975 I was privileged to be in Jamaica when we had his farewell speech in which he said that he was about to speak, and I quote him:

"Although I have already assumed office as Commonwealth Secretary General it is of course not in that capacity or of that office that I shall speak tonight but in the role in which you have invited me

here as one who over the last 10 years has been associated with you and so many others throughout the region in the normal effort to add a new dimension of functional unity to the West Indian identity which we acknowledge so readily at that social and cultural levels but have found it so hard to reflect in economic and political action".

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Now, Mr. Speaker, clearly one is not going to read that whole document but I am going to read an excerpt from page 5. because I think that it is important that Honourable Members reflect and remember what we had achieved by 1975. In this speech of farewell which he subsequently published is something called "To Care For CARICOM" and at page 5 here is what Sir Ramphal said: 1.40 p.m.

"The reality is that the decade between 1965 and 1975 has been a decade of progress in West Indian regionalism unmatched in the entire history of the Caribbean. Have we not out of our own circumstance and resources built brick by brick an integration movement that is generally hailed as the most successful of its kind in the developing world? From its tentative, perhaps adventurous beginnings with the agreement of Dickenson Bay, have we not evolved from a notional Free Trade Area of 3 to a full fledged functioning Economic Community of 12? Have we not founded our regional development bank and established the Secretariat of our Community? Have we not multiplied twenty-fold our areas of cooperation and of coordination? Have we not, indeed, transposed the question of regionalism from one of concept to one of function - from "if to "how"? Let us not in our arguments about the mechanics of "how" put into issue of "if; and let us not in our pre-occupation with those mechanics lose sight of the grandeur and the significance of what we have constructed."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I repeated that because the night in Jamaica, when one sat and listened to this son who was going on to be the Head of the Commonwealth by being Secretary General, one felt a sense of accomplishment. At that time, there was no energy crisis and we felt invincible. We felt that the Caribbean was going to go on to continue to be the greatest integration movement of small countries anywhere in the world. Sir, the history sense then is well known. When we are battling in the political trenches, we make disparaging remarks. When we are seriously reflecting on how far we have come, we are able to know that the history since 1975 has been one of struggle. But even so, Sir, we have been able to achieve levels of success in areas of health and education that are far superior to any comparable group and, indeed, greater

than many groups that can compare better than ours with all things being equal.

Mr. Speaker, the Caribbean generally and Barbados in particular have the best health system pound for pound, dollar for dollar and corpuscle for corpuscle of any country anywhere. Let me explain that before somebody rushes off and say that I said the wrong thing. There is not a single person in Barbados who does not have access to health care. They may have to wait long. They may have to quarrel. They may have to get involved. It is not true that you have to wait any longer in Barbados than anywhere else. Let us agree that among us people can say that, but at the end of the day they have access to a quality health care that is superior to many most places.

In the United States, there are 37 million people who have no access to health care at all, none whatsoever, people who lie on the street like dogs. There are children born in the United States who are destined never to see the light of day in the context of an 11 Plus Exam. In Barbados, every child that is born here who does not have an impediment has an opportunity to go to a school. For those who believe that only the top echelon can go to top echelon schools, they need only to examine first of all this Honourable House to see what constitutes this House in 1993 and compare it with what constituted the House in 1973 and in 1943. They will know, Sir, that we have made significant strides. But the children today have access to services.

When someone calls in on the call-in programme on a telephone to complain about the STV that people want people to pay for the Calypso Show, it means that they have a telephone and they have a television. You cannot call in without (a telephone and you cannot quarrel about the STV if you do not have it. Although I must say in passing, Sir, that during the bi-election in St. Philip many years ago which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas won, there was a fellow who gave us the most trouble about the impending land tax which he said was put on by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. He fought us tooth and nail, Sir, and it was only after the election that we discovered that he did not have a single solitary square inch of land. So my argument is open to that criticism. It was a fellow from Church Village.

Sir, the truth is that generally speaking things are tight and the problems of the country are susceptible to the criticisms and discussions which are going on. I am not discussing that now, Sir. I am discussing what opportunity exists for a young person who is going to be born in Barbados, who is going to have maternal and child health care at a certain level, who is going to be born in a country where there is over 80 per cent immunization against all of the diseases and where the primary diseases have been

eliminated and where we now have the same diseases as those in the developed countries. All of that, Sir, is symptomatic of what is happening in the Caribbean. Much of that has happened because three men dared to dream about what was possible. They were not the first dreamers, Sir. Let it not be said that I am seeking to give all the credit of what has happened in the Caribbean to any three men because those who went before had dared to dream. But it is of such that in this Assembly these things grow and I agree with the Honourable Member for St. John who said that the answer may in fact come sometime down the road. The Chinese say that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Let this be a first step, Sir.

The European Parliament itself did not have the power which it has assumed even though it is an elected Parliament. When one reads its Constitution, it was not a Parliament that had anywhere near the power that it has now. The British did not at first believe that they would see the day when a House of Lords decision could be overturned anywhere in the world. How could they possibly have thought that a House of Lords decision could be overturned and there not be a riot. Yet, Sir, we have seen over a period of 25 years...

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying *sotto voce* and I accept that. I am not suggesting that. The Honourable Member knows that we can have a long debate as to what people believed even though the Treaty said it and what they did not believe. I am not seeking to make that point. I am merely saying that growth happens in institutions. In any event, the European Parliament has now taken on powers that it never had and for which there is no written document anywhere. But over time because those parliamentarians who went from the various countries to the European Parliament had certain discussions and came to certain conclusions and put their information into the marketplace, people suddenly realized that that is what ought to happen and it began to happen. 1.50 p.m.

• Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I have ranged into Europe and North America and I have gone back in history, if I have demonstrated that I know corpuscular concepts, if I have done all of that, Sir, it is because I do not wish merely to support a Resolution because I am a member of the Front Bench. I want to think of this Resolution beyond the stage of us versus them.

I do not support everything in the Resolution, because it is impossible most times, to support everything in a Resolution as an individual, but what I know is that even if I were not a member of the Front Bench and this Resolution had come to this Chamber and I were a

member of the Chamber I would support it, because it is that common ground. Sir, do you remember when we were at elementary school we had the Highest Common Factor and the Lowest Common Denominator? There are some people now who do not know how to do HCF and LCM. That is foreign language. I believe that if all of us now had to go and do an LCM for lunch, one or two of us might not eat. The point is, Sir, we understood that sometimes you cannot get the ideal and you have to settle for that critical path, that area of agreement that can be reached. This may in fact be the real nucleus of what had been missing when the West Indian Commission reported. What they sought to do is precisely what the British had sought to do.

There is no way you can impose a Federation or an Agreement on the people of the Caribbean. It is going to have to come bottom up. The best management styles have been those that include the people. Anyone who says to me that the people are not being represented because they are going from Parliament is someone who does not understand the parliamentary system that we have. I dare anyone to tell me that I do not represent the 5 129 people who vote in St. Michael West as of today. I represent those people until they tell me otherwise, and therefore if I am chosen by this Parliament and 3 other Members from here are chosen by the 27 or 28 - 27, Sir, because Your Honour would not get to choose, you would just preside over what we choose - but we, Sir, would have represented all the people. In the same way we select people to go to Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which is not a sovereign body, so why do we send them? Why do Honourable Members from that side and from behind this side, and every now and again from the front of this side, go to Commonwealth Parliamentary Association? They go because we believe that they represent Barbados, and when Your Honour sat as the presiding officer of the small members' conference in Barbados for the 350th anniversary I did not hear the Honourable Member for the City or anybody else saying that you represent a place in Black Rock. I did not hear the Honourable Member saying that you are the Speaker from a hill in Cave Hill. What we heard is that you were the Speaker of "Barbados.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: That is a private matter.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: There you go, Sir. The Honourable Member has a private matter which he wishes to discuss with Your Honour, Sir. The point is being acted out that when Your Honour sat as the Speaker and Chairman, you represented Barbados and all of us, and all of the school children and all of the workers, the nurses,

the policemen, all of them were proud because Your Honour was representing Barbados, and you had not been elected to the CPA. You had been sent to the CPA in exactly the same way we are suggesting we have a Caribbean Parliamentary Association.

Honourable Members on that side may have taken a position based on political lines. One understands, if Honourable Members do not vote for this, that that is the party line. If the whip is on, Sir, the whip is on, but I would like to believe that what I have been able to say here today would have convinced reasonable Honourable Members on that side that the arguments against this which have been adumbrated so far have not been sufficiently strong to persuade anybody that this is a matter which should have, in the words of the editorial, a collective no. It is my view, Sir, that we should say yes and I intend, Mr. Speaker, to say yes.

I am grateful to Your Honour.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Sitting be suspended until 3.00 p.m.

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

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

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I have given serious consideration to this Resolution and I regret very much that I am unable to give it support. I am by nature and conviction a strong believer in the view that the future of these Islands lies in an association in which the total government is shared by individual islands with an entity which will be so ordered that the people in this area will feel that they are part of a larger entity. It is important that we recognise in anything we do at this stage that there is a feeling outside among the people that all our efforts so far in creating this structure have been unsuccessful.

There is a tremendous amount of loss of faith in the efforts of politicians to create a successor entity to the federal system that we have had. If I thought that this effort would make a significant contribution or indeed any contribution at all to future success in the arrangements necessary to satisfy what I regard as this genuine need on the part of people in the Eastern Caribbean in particular for this entity, I would unhesitatingly give it my support.

I have had occasion to do some comparative work on efforts of countries to fashion instruments to create entities to harmonise for themselves a scheme of government which will on the one hand recognise the need for individual island or individual territory initiative and on the other hand recognise the necessity in certain areas of operation for there to be a contra! body. So far I have only come across 2 types of institutions, a federation or a treaty arrangement such as we have in the Caribbean Economic Community and such as we have in the European Economic Community.

What I am convinced about is that for any entity to be successful there must be an understanding on the part of its constituent members that there must be a measure of delegation of authority and of sovereignty in respect of restricted areas of operation. If I were to judge therefore this new entity that is being created against that firm belief that I have, I must inevitably come to the conclusion, from what has been said or what I have read, that this entity falls short of that. So I must ask myself the question, what will be the purpose of this entity and I can see, Sir, no purpose other than one that is advanced, that is, that it would provide a forum, an opportunity for members of parliament to express their views on matters which periodically it is thought fit for them to express their views on.

I really cannot support the idea that we must create a new entity for that purpose when already we have frustrated the aims and the aspirations of our people for a meaningful entity. Support for this, in my opinion, will only create greater frustration. We had a good opportunity recently when the Commission was appointed for us to make a meaningful change in our existing structures to improve them to the point where the people of the Caribbean would have felt some comfort in the knowledge that all of the defects that we have now in our institutional arrangement were being looked at. As I said during the course of the debate on the Report of the West Indian Commission, a major opportunity was missed to build on our existing instruments with a view to creating an improved structure.

There is no doubt in my mind that more and more people are going to become more and more convinced about the necessity to share activity in the form of the need to reduce the cost of government. This is going to force us to share more and more part of that cost. We have reached the stage now where the fiscal deficit in all of the countries that are members of the Caribbean Economic Community is of such a nature that each and every government must take measures to reduce the cost of government. It is a pity that we have started from the wrong end, in my opinion. It is a pity that we have started from the bottom and not from the top.

It is a matter of great concern to me, Sir, that we still have the situation in which each of these island governments believes that it is in the best interest of their people to have overseas embassies operating from the basements of houses rather than from proper chanceries, that each individual government still thinks that it is in the best interests of these countries in the Caribbean to have 7 or 8 people speaking the same language, making the same point in the international arena.

I had hoped that the West Indian Commission would have looked at its mandate in a very broad fashion and would have advised the governments that it should improve the existing machinery by the creation of a worthwhile body to operate with powers which would be meaningful and which would have the authority which could impact upon the particular spheres of operation. I mention the idea of external representation, foreign affairs.

Obviously, activities in security area and when I say the security area I mean in a very broad sense because it seems to me that in this area the evidence is becoming overwhelming that unless there is a central body to look after such important areas as the surveillance of these territories against the operations of drug dealers that all of us will be doomed. It is said that we have lost part of this generation, if we are not able to contain the activities of these enemies to humanity we may well lose many more generations. 3.15 p.m.

There is another area, Sir, I would mention. In the field of transportation, particularly air and sea transportation, there is a crying need for somebody with authority to regulate that area. I do not want to go through in an individual way the various areas which I believe would be more efficiently administered at what I would call a central level. The point is, it is remarkable that if you analyse the activities of the Caribbean Economic Community and you look at the areas of functional cooperation, and analyse them against the background of activities on the part of Government which are Federations, or parts of instruments of cooperation such as the European Economic Community, you will find that in the Caribbean we are floundering around looking for instruments to do the things which, in other countries, are done by central bodies. An Assembly of Parliamentarians must be judged therefore, in my opinion, by its capacity to contribute to a solution to that problem. There is nothing at all that I have seen in the Resolution, or in the Agreement, which helps me in that direction. That is my criticism of it. I want to make it abundantly clear that I am a firm believer in the point of view that our existing instruments are defective, that there is a need for remedial action to be taken to improve our existing instruments but I do not see it in this action.

The real problem we have to face, and all of us are failing to face it, is that the Eastern Caribbean is totally and radically different from Jamaica. Put it in your pipe and smoke it. You will never, in the foreseeable period, get the Jamaican Government, of whatever complexion, to appreciate the fact that there must be a large measure of delegation of authority to a central body for it to function effectively, whether that body is a federation or an integration movement.

I want to say this, Sir, and I am not criticising anybody but I want to make it clear that those who are in control of the Governments of Jamaica, whether now or previously, have that same point of view. They are entitled to that point of view. It is their right to have that point of view but it is our right to say what our views are.

Now, when I read the debate on the West Indian Commission in Jamaica, one could not fail to appreciate that there was a change of mind in Jamaica on the Report of the West Indian Commission. I had the opportunity to read it. The original Resolution was changed. Check it and you will see that. The original Resolution was in favour, as I understand it, of a strong Commission with executive powers to initiate. That was changed. I am not saying that the Commission in its Report, if it came across this resistance in its interviews with people, should not reflect it. But what I am saying is that, as far as we are concerned, we should not be part and parcel of an exercise which we know in all honesty is not going to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of what we down here need for our people, and that is our problem.

We have to say to ourselves that what we should be looking at, in my view and this is my personal view, is a much closer association down here in the Eastern Caribbean without prejudice, of course, to our efforts to continue our collaboration with the rest of the Caribbean, including the non English-speaking Caribbean, in an arrangement of a free trade area or an economic association. But we have to get closer. I am not going to be part of this exercise because it is not going to take us any further than where we are. We used to regard ourselves as being able to live in splendid isolation from the rest of the problems that occurred in some parts of the Caribbean, particularly over the last 10 years. The Prime Minister and the Democratic Labour Party have seen to it that we are no longer in a position to regard ourselves as being exempt. We are not exempt anymore. The world trading situation has changed drastically. 3.25 p.m.

We are now being lumped together particularly with Latin America in the sphere of economic trading conditions to the point where measures which were introduced to reform countries' economic conditions brought about by

military dictatorships and absolute governments are being foisted upon us. Measures that have been introduced in Latin America by the multi-national institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank and the IMF, were a cure for the excesses of the military dictators and their incursions into the economic sphere. They are now saying that we are part of Latin America and what measures were good in Chile, what measures are good in Argentina, what measures are good in the rest must also be good in the democratic countries in the Eastern Caribbean.

I am convinced that we have to enlist the support of all of the other countries in the Eastern Caribbean. We have to have some instrument through which our voice can be sounded in these fora as one rather than as individual countries. And we must deal with it. There are other areas too, Sir, in which it needs to be dealt with. But how can I be called upon to support an instrument, such as the one which is being suggested here when I know that an analysis of the instrument that is being advocated indicates quite clearly that it cannot make any contribution at all to the solution of any of the problems that we know that we have.

So I say, let us go back to the drawing board. Let us make it abundantly clear to all and sundry that we in Barbados are fully supportive of any genuine effort which is being advanced to ensure that, the defects in our existing machinery for regional co-operation are removed. We believe that at the present time it is unrealistic to expect that our existing instruments will be improved so long as we have the unanimity rule in existence and we cannot go forward unless all are agreed.

But let us make it clear to our people, let us encourage the development of the viewpoint that it is possible for us to go forward, in a different manner, but without prejudice and consistent with the retention of our existing instruments of co-operation, if you like; include others. That is my viewpoint. Any time the Government or anybody is bringing forward a proposal to strengthen, to improve, to expand within the Eastern Caribbean the effort at greater collaboration, I am for it. But I am not going to be for something which, in effect, will only further excite our people into the belief that we are moving forward when, in truth and in fact, we know we are not moving forward. The frustration that is already in existence with our existing effort will only become greater. I do not want to be part of that.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is common knowledge that leaders and particularly political leaders like to build up monuments for themselves aimed at posterity. Some of these monuments are physical monuments, others are concepts or programmes. This is something that

has been evidenced throughout history. Those of us who studied the Classics are aware of the practice of building of monuments to persons that are more lasting than bronze and marble. We know, Sir, - if we can give some examples - that was the case of President Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana who had a massive statue of himself set up in the capital Accra, and/on it was inscribed "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things should be added."

In this case the Prime Minister is not putting up a physical monument but it is obvious to me, Sir, that the Prime Minister is also setting up a monument with his eye on posterity and that some time in the future the Prime Minister will be remembered as the man who initiated and started an Assembly of Parliamentarians. I am not even quarrelling with that.

The question at this time is whether we, in Barbados, can afford the luxury of monuments of any kind that do not rate highly in our scale of importance. There is nothing at all that I have heard so far that suggests to me that an Assembly of Parliamentarians is a matter of priority in this country. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I see it as nothing more than a distraction. In fact it is not only a distraction, it is also a kind of facade. But it is intended to distract people's attention from the really substantial problems confronting this country. It is a classic example of *panis et circensis*. You would not have that because I must speak English. But it is a bread and circus situation. Take the people's minds off the problems by the bread and circus tactic. That was the old Roman practice. But we had it years ago, when I was a boy, when they used to give you a rock cake and a sweet drink to take your mind off the problems of the times. It is nothing more than that, Sir. An Assembly of Parliamentarians is peripheral to the problems confronting Barbados at this time.

If one looks at the Report of the West Indian Commissioners, one would see that they dealt with the matter in a very suave, very diplomatic way because the Commissioners, obviously, would not want to offend the sensitivities of any regional leader. If you read it, Sir, they skirted around it. They say yes, but. And they themselves propose a different kind of Assembly. They launched what I consider an attack on political assemblies, Parliaments. They blame Parliaments in CARICOM for not sufficiently reporting to the people the decisions taken in the manifold CARICOM Committees and Councils, and not debating on an on-going basis, CARICOM matters. They opined, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps if parliaments in CARICOM would put on the Order Paper of the various assemblies more matters in relation to CARICOM, both the Members Parliaments themselves and the public at large would be made more aware of what was happening in CARICOM, the decisions that were taken and how they impact on individual lives in our community. 3.35 p.m.

The Commissibners made that kind of criticism and went on to say that while they support an assembly, it should be an assembly that does not only involve elected politicians but also should involve other sectoral interests in the Caribbean Community, for example, business, agriculture, youth.

I say this only to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the idea of an Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians did not receive the unqualified support of the commissioners and there was no minority report in relation to that. All of them were agreed that it did not merit the kind of importance that was being mooted by those who came up with the idea.

I am not one, Mr. Speaker, to dismiss any idea just because another group of people do not agree. I have views of my own. In this particular debate it is clear that the two sides of the House are agreed on the fact that there should be greater Caribbean integration. This is desirable for a lot of reasons. There is no quarrel between the two sides as to the fact that there must be a more solid basis of integration and there should be more work done in terms of functional cooperation than is currently the case. There is no quarrel about that.

The quarrel if there is one, Sir, rates only in terms of how to go about it now. I feel strongly, Sir, that there are many areas that we can safely and without division, either, in Barbados, between two sides politically, or in the region at large, work on.

I remember back in 1978 and I will give this as an example. Back in 1978 there were discussions between the Government of Barbados and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and at the time they were signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the two Governments as to how best the two could cooperate and collaborate in a number of areas. When that Memorandum of Understanding was signed, areas such as energy, insurance, banking, investment, transportation, these were issues that were discussed on a bilateral basis between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Barbados.

At that time genuine progress was made in that area. I recall, Sir, at the time the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was re-structuring its higher education system and it set up what was called a National Institute of higher education, research, science and technology. An amazing thing happened at that time, Sir. The Government of Trinidad invited the Government of Barbados to nominate a Barbadian to be a member of a statutory board in Trinidad and Tobago. They were at the time working on the establishment of the Mount Hope Medical Complex

in Trinidad and Tobago and they invited Barbados. I was the Minister of Education at the time, Sir. They invited us to nominate someone to work on the task force for the setting of a medical school and a hospital at Mount Hope. I put a name to the Cabinet which was approved and a Barbadian used to commute to Trinidad and Tobago to work with the officers of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on a project of that nature.

Now, these are the kinds of initiatives that we have to talk about nowadays. This thing is a distraction - an Assembly of Parliamentarians. We have to look at areas where we can cooperate and work on them. I can give an example, Sir, and I would like to see the Government really spend some of its energies dealing with matters of this ilk.

Take the Regional Security System. In the early 1980s a number of problems were emerging in the region. I am going to deal with the whole question as to why the atmosphere is ripe for more functional cooperation, because in those days we had problems of what was then termed ideological pluralism. I want to get back to RSS but in those days you had Grenada that professedly was a marxist country. You had Guyana that was flirting with something leftist: that did not carry a name. And you had at one point elements in the Government in St. Lucia that were of like mind and you had a problem in Jamaica at one point where the Government of Jamaica was in close embrace with the Government in Havana. There were problems in the Caribbean, in CARICOM, as to how they could work out a common policy to deal with external matters.

Fortunately today, Sir, this problem of ideological pluralism is now passe, that is, gone because all the territories that are part of CARICOM are now more or less pointed in roughly the same direction in terms of its foreign policy and its entire relations in relation to other states. All this comes at a time when there has been a disintegration of the Soviet Empire. All of Eastern Europe must now link hands with Western Europe and the cold war is at an end because there is no longer this conflict between the East and the West, between the Communist States and the rest of the world. So there is a completely different atmosphere and we are at an excellent point now, Sir, with all of those things behind us, to look at areas where; we can really work together, quietly in committees, in discussions back and forth, in groups involving all sectors of the community, Government, private sector, everybody, to make important advances in this region.

I am going to get back to the Regional Security System but I am going to follow this a little further, Sir. The collapse of the Soviet Empire and the new realities of North American integration, the new attitude of China which is becoming the economic behemoth in Asia, put us

in a position now, Sir, where Europe is working together in a way it has never worked since before the last war. We have the Pacific Rim countries working together and now all the indications are that it perhaps will be the most powerful economic bloc on earth with the evolution of a market economy in China with a population of 1.2 billion people and with a growth rate of 12% per annum and all kinds of massive investment going into the country from all over the world.

In this region, the United States, Mexico and Canada have got together in the North-American Free Trade Area and as is being said over and over again, the result is that the Islands of the Caribbean, CARICOM states are being marginalised and now more than ever it is important that they get their act together and work together in a number of areas if they are to stay afloat. No Assembly of Parliamentarians is going to do that. This is another layer of political dialogue with no powers to make any decisions. But I was talking about the Regional Security System, Sir. I remember the Democratic Labour Party in Opposition opposed the formation of the Regional Security System because maybe for partisan reasons or short-sightedness or criticism just for the sake of criticizing. They saw all kinds of hidden dangers in the Regional Security System. The Regional Security System was not set up as a military unit, but it was set up to deal with questions of drug interdiction, Customs collaboration, oil spills and those kinds of things. It attracted the criticism of the Democratic Labour Party Opposition. 3.45 p.m.

Now I see that in recent times the Prime Minister, as Minister of Defence, is a convert to the utility of the usefulness of the Regional Security System. That Regional Security System is an important area of functional cooperation in the Eastern Caribbean that is working to the benefit of all of these islands in the Eastern Caribbean in a way that was unimaginable 10 years ago. These are the kinds of things that we have to look at. The energies of an Assembly of Parliamentarians might best be directed if the Prime Minister could set up in his Ministry of Foreign Affairs or in his own Ministry, if he wants to, a special unit looking at the Law of the Sea. Here in the Caribbean our richest and most fruitful asset is the resources of the ocean. Back in 1981 or 1982 there was a U.N. Law of the Sea Agreement and many of the islands in CARICOM have not yet ratified that Agreement. The reports will tell you that the resources of the ocean are there for the taking. I feel a great deal of despair, Sir, when CARICOM cannot even get its act together in things like the delimitation of boundaries. This is more important than any Assembly of Parliamentarians. We are here in this region seeing the Japan and the South Koreans coming through with their factory ships and raking off all of the best of our fish life and cordoning them off. The Caribbean cannot get

together and work out a common position on fisheries and we are being distracted by an Assembly of Parliamentarians.

We have a situation where for more than a decade the Government of Barbados >vas talking with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to have a fishing agreement. I am informed that nothing is happening and that the discussions with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is now in obeyance. They do not talk anymore. In the meantime, the Barbadian fishermen are undergoing a great deal of pressure as the result of the failure of the Government of Barbados to come to an agreement with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. That is an area to deal with. We have to talk to them and we have to come to an agreement. We are having a problem with the OECS in relation to our fisheries. These things are what we have to deal with and not just talk about an Assembly of Parliamentarians. We will go to an Assembly of Parliamentarians and we will talk. We will say the same things that we have been saying over and over again. We will deal with the same issues, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that are contained in the massive report of the West Indian Commissioners. As I said when we dealt with the Resolution on that report, Sir, a number of recommendations in that report relate to decisions that were taken by the Heads of Government as long as 13 years ago. Sir, our problem is not one of not talking die issues enough. Our problem is one of implementation of decisions taken by the various committees and councils of CARICOM. We have to work on that area.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister will know that you cannot run the Government from the House of Assembly. You can talk in the House of Assembly and pass Resolutions and legislation and so on. But unless you have a strong and effective executive and administration, all the talk is empty air because you have to have that kind of backup to translate the talk and the decisions into effective action. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, there has been an awful lot of talk in the Caribbean on a multitude of issues confronting the Caribbean on many Ministries such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Trade, Education, Health and Foreign Affairs. All of those Ministries can pull out stacks and stacks of reports on CARICOM on studies and also on the decisions of the various committees and councils in CARICOM. What we need is implementation of these important decisions. On the scale, this Assembly of Parliamentarians has a very, very low rating. On the Richter Scale, they are knocking around one or two while there are things that are rated 8, 9 and 10 that are not being dealt with, Sir.

Now I want very quickly, Sir, to mention one other aspect of an area that we can look at. This is an area of strengthening of certain sectoral linkages.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South dealt with the question of representation in foreign missions overseas. That is one which we have talked about for a long time. It is even more possible now for the member, states of CARICOM to work on common representation overseas for the reasons that I stated earlier.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Well, the Honourable Member says that they are all broke. They do not have any money so they have got to work together. But there is another more compelling reason, Sir. That is they are now agreed on common positions that they never agreed on for the whole time these territories were independent. We do not have anymore, as I have said earlier, the question of this ideological differences that prevent us from having a common foreign policy. Even in those days where there were those ideological differences, there was a high measure of collaboration between individual CARICOM States. I well remember, Sir, something that is* perhaps unique in international relations which used to happen here in the Caribbean where a Prime Minister of one territory would telephone Barbados and say, "Is Barbados being represented at a particular international meeting?" We would answer, "Yes, we are". They would say, "Well, I want to give you plenty potential powers to speak and vote for my country because nobody is attending this meeting."

Sir, when they begin to write the history of these things, scholars will marvel at the fact that a sovereign state would give a representative of another sovereign state such wide powers to vote for and speak for them at international meetings. That used to happen, Sir. I understand it does not happen any more. What the Prime Minister can do is to see whether he can work towards bringing back those heady days when we would feel in the Caribbean that we can trust one another and we can trust representatives from one country to vote for and to speak for another one. That kind of achievement, as I said, is a signal achievement in the history of international relations. Wejiave slipped away from that and we have to look at it again. Those are the kinds of things individually we have to work on, because they are far more important. 3.55 p.m.

The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Sir, the Honourable Patrick Manning, started his Initiative of a political union between Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. It is as weighty in its content as the Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians. You can judge, because those of us who have tried to search, to sift and to find out what is in this Manning Initiative cannot find anything. The Prime Minister will not report to us. He wants to have

an Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians so that we must go to Dominica or Belize to hear about the Manning Initiative. We want him to tell us about it in here, because the Prime Minister has not yet vouchsafed to this House what this Manning Initiative is all about and how is Barbados involved.

You see, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning, leaders like monuments. They must have something built to themselves, so that when the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago has long since passed on the history books will have something about the Manning Initiative, even if nobody knows what it is. At least it would get a paragraph or 2 in somebody's article, and the Prime Minister of Barbados will not be outdone, he wants to make sure that when they write they also have the initiative of an Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians by the Prime Minister of Barbados. We cannot make sport at this time, things are too rough.

I want it to be understood, Sir, because there is always the feeling that you take partisan positions on these things and that is the end of it. If there was one redeeming crumb I could hold on to in this Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians, I would give the benefit of the doubt to the Prime Minister, but I do not see anything. I have struggled in my head and my heart to find something and I cannot find anything.

We have this Manning Initiative, Sir, which I understand from all and sundry is still-born, and it is still-born for a lot of reasons. It has been overtaken, for instance, by the fact that there has been a change of Government in Guyana. I do not want to get into the domestic politics of any country, but there are some certain harsh realities. There has always been an ethnic consideration in the politics of Trinidad and Tobago, as there is an ethnic consideration in the politics of Guyana. For better than 2 decades the Government of Guyana was led by the People's National Congress, led by the late Forbes Burnham and then by his successor, Desmond Hoyte, and there is no doubt at all that racial considerations have a lot to do with these things. At the time when Prime Minister Manning made his initiative, the afro leadership of Guyana was running the country, but that has changed. My experience in these things and whatever intellect I have tell me that that new factor in the equation must have done something to this so called Initiative. The Opposition in Trinidad and Tobago, led by Basdeo Pandey, represents the solidly Indian constituencies in Trinidad and Tobago.

There cannot be any doubt at all, Sir, that the new dispensation in Guyana and the situation that is prevailing in Trinidad and Tobago will now make it difficult for initiatives such as this to travel the route that I assume Prime Minister Manning must have intended. These are

things we want to talk about and we do not want any Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians to deal with them. I feel a certain disgust at intelligent members on the other side, one in particular, who has a way of pseudo intellectualising everything, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. There is a point at which you have to move away from this pseudo intellectualising and deal with the harsh, practical realities.

You cannot equate an Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians to the Caribbean Labour Congress. There are times when it would be best for those who would use Parliament to display their superficial learning to be more cognisant of the realities of life in the villages and the hamlets and the streets all around Barbados, where Assemblies of Parliamentarians, even local parliamentarians, Members of this House of Assembly, do not rate very highly in the concerns of Barbadians. Democratic Governments have to be tuned in to the way people are feeling. You cannot get elected and then be above the people and talk down to them and say "What we have to do we will do and you can like it or lump it." You have to be sensitive to the concerns of the people. How do you really expect, Mr. Speaker, that any serious Member of Parliament go out in these difficult and hard times when nobody can get work and people have to write Dear Christine now and ask if they can get a few old pants and old shirts for children to go to school. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, they do not only write Dear Christine letters, they come to us, the representatives, to ask us if they can get a pair of shoes, or if your children have outgrown anything you can give them. That is the situation we are in, Sir, and this is a luxury. A luxury such as this at this time shows a disgusting insensitivity to the feelings of the people of this country.

I cannot support it I regret very much that the Prime Minister had to inflict this on us. 4.05 p.m.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I have listened for a very long time to this debate. I consider it to be an important debate and it is within this context that I would wish to reply to the debate and to address some of the issues which have been raised during the debate.

It appears to me that - although Sir, if I may make a preliminary remark - as I sit from this position and watch the ebb and flow of debate I have become more and more convinced that the innovative thinking and openness to new thought and new ideas cannot come, and is not coming from this side of the Opposition Benches, but it is emerging from the other side of the Opposition Benches. What we have on this side of the Opposition Benches is a certain tiredness of thought, people who seem to be old either by age or by their actions and who are simply

using their own intellect in order to find ways and means for disagreement. Sometimes they speak in husky voices that are heard by other people in other places but those...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, what in fact are we talking about? What are they disagreeing with? 'What is it that they cannot support? Let us look at the agreement and see what this issue is all about. I am going to take it step by step.

The objectives of the Assembly is

- (f) to promote greater understanding among Member States and Associate Members for the purpose of realising and safeguarding the ideals and principles of democratic governments in the [region] and facilitating the economic and social advancement of their peoples."

That is from Article 4 of the Agreement. Let me go over again, Sir.

"The Objectives of the Assembly shall be:

- (a) to involve the people of the Community, through their representatives, in the process of consolidating and strengthening the Community;"

Are they against that? Is this what they are going to vote against? Involving the people of the community through their representatives in a process of consolidating and strengthening the community?

They get up and push their chests out and beat their chests and say they are committed to regional integration, unrepentant, they say, inveterate supporters of integration, and yet when we come with a concrete proposal to involve the people of the community through their representatives in the process of consolidating and strengthening the community, they are opposed to that and they say they cannot vote for that. Now what kind of logic is that? Sir, it is unworthy of Members to speak in those terms and to look around for reasons to oppose something simply for the sake of creating some distance between government and opposition instead of examining a matter on its merits and coming to a conclusion.

This is why I say that they are being led astray or using their intellects in order not to examine critically and sensibly the issues before this Chamber in order to put distance between Government and Opposition. That is exactly what it is, Sir. I have to say it as I see it.

Sir, other reasons being advanced that this is to build monuments more lasting than brass or even marble some cheap demagogic kind of language which...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I can withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think no one asked for a ruling on the matter, but I would say that the Rule that would come closest to that would be difficult to interpret and therefore if the comment is made on the language and the speech and not the person then I am likely to have difficulty in allowing that. The person and the speech are 2 different things.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, my Honourable Friend knows that I would not seek to use any kind of language that would be demeaning to anything he has said. I felt that, is a very good assessment of the quality of the contribution but if there is some offense at it, Sir, he would be the last person that I would offend. I will therefore withdraw the word "cheap" even though his speech was founded on what I would consider the attribution of improper motives to the bringing of this Resolution before Parliament. It is said that it is not brought for any genuine reason but to build monuments more lasting than bronze or marble. That was the whole tenor of this argument. I did not protest. I did not object. I sat and I listened because' they all know my shoulders are broad but somehow or another they get very offended when I have to reply.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see on what logical and what intellectual ground they can say they are opposing this because they are opposing this particular objective. 4.15 p.m.

Another objective, Sir, is "to provide opportunities for involvement in the issues of integration process by "members of Parliament in each Member State in addition to those who now participate." Are they opposed to having an institution concentrating on this Integration Movement which is at the heart of the development process and objectives of the Caribbean peoples in the Caribbean region? Are they objecting to an Assembly that concentrates exclusively and has as its mandate the implementation and elaboration of the Treaty of that very Integration Movement which they say they are so fundamentally committed to? Sir, it strains the imagination to think that could be an argument put forward by right thinking people in this day and age.

Then again, Sir, "to provide a forum for people of the Community to make their views known through their

representatives." CARICOM involves all of us. The Integration Movement involves the people of the Caribbean because it is their mechanism for seeking a better standard of living and to have a hope in this world that is creating more and more regional blocks. Are they opposed to that? Are they in their hearts of hearts going to oppose a measure that will place upon them their responsibility to bring to bear the views of the people of the Caribbean on issues of Caribbean integration?

Then, Sir, "to provide more frequent contact in the monitoring of the policies of the Community." Are they opposed to that, in an age when it is incumbent for transparent democratic Government, good governance, for there to be constant monitoring of the executive which is the role of a deliberative Assembly? You must have mechanisms of control in order to improve upon the democracy. Is that what they are going to vote against?

Sir, I find it exceedingly difficult to find any intellectual basis on which disagreement can come for the establishment of an Assembly of Parliamentarians. Those veiy members, as the Member for St. Michael West reminded, are all members of the Caribbean Parliamentary Association, a more amorphous body, let me put it this way, with less precise objectives than the proposed Assembly of Parliamentarians which is dealing with a specific issue. Now, I am a firm believer in the CPA. I believe it is a most useful organisation and I have benefitted from membership of the CPA. It has broadened my own outlook and I believe that it is a most useful institution. Equally so I believe that the Assembly of 'Parliamentarians with a remit of concentration and a mandate to deal with the issues of Caribbean integration will also be a most useful body.

But let us get back to a more fundamental and philosophical issue. I regret that while the Honourable Member for St. George South tries to put down the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central as being pseudo-intellectual and who tries to be pseudo-intellectual at a...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:...East Central, either one... at a time when he is going back to the Classics and quoting the Classics. He did not attempt it in the original language on this occasion because he knows he has to check it out before so that he would be accurate. So, Sir, he himself is being intellectual, or pseudo-intellectual but he accuses a Member out here because he simply seeks to put the whole concept within the realm of ideas and political history. That kind of thinking is certainly not going to get us very far.

They do not have any objection to the CPA and spending money on the CPA but if it is an issue relating directly to the Integration Movement they are opposed to that. It seems to me they are opposed to it because it is coming from this side or because I have something to do with the idea. That is what I may have said, if I were not in here. I am not saying that is what they actually believe. They might. I do not know. But I am not saying that, Sir, because I notice you are looking very pensive and thoughtful on this issue and you know I will stay within the framework of the Rules.

But, Sir, let us understand that we are seeking to create in this Integration Movement a form of government that is unique. We have to create and fashion it. But there is something that we cannot escape, that in any form of government there are certain elements that are common. There must be an executive. There must be a bureaucracy. There should be some deliberative, consultative or legislative body and there should be the element of judicial examination so that if the fundamental precepts and concepts are breached, there could be some adjudication in matters.

What is the issue inside the Integration Movement at this time? That issue is that we have the executive in place because it is the Heads of Government and the Ministers who meet from time to time in various fora and discuss issues relating to CARICOM and come to decisions, so the executive is in place.

We also have the bureaucracy in place, the administration, that is, the CARICOM Secretary-General and his staff, consultants and whrtever else he brings to support the staff. 4.25 p.m.

That is the Administration, the Bureaucracy. It is the same inside of the national government where we have the Executive and we have the Bureaucracy or the Civil Service. But, in addition to that, for Barbados we have this Parliament whose task it is to meet from time to time to discuss issues of national importance and through the process of debate and discussion to come to conclusions and to pass laws. They can ask questions. All of those things. That is what can be done. We have it in place for this country. We say that Parliament is necessary because it is a check on the Executive.

What we need is a deliberative and consultative body within CARICOM, and that is what the Agreement says, a consultative and deliberative body because there is no one in CARICOM who is going to agree to the establishment of any legislative body within CARICOM. So if you want to dwell in the land of make believe there is no way that you are going to get agreement on that. Who is going

to agree on it? This, we are trying and in life, we have to try and we have to put forward ideas because we believe in good governance and we believe that good governance involves an Assembly. To go to those issues in which we say, "look at how the Members are elected." It is this Parliament, according to the Agreement, which would have the authority to select the representation to go up to the Assembly of Parliamentarians. This Parliament. It says that countries would have not more than 4 Members. Those are all worked out.

What is the argument against it? I find it very difficult to follow. The European Parliament started - I am speaking from memory - but I believe it must have been 1957, 1958 thereabouts with Members selected by the Parliaments of Member countries by indirect elections. That went right down. The first direct elections to the European Parliament took place some time in 1977 or 1978 or thereabouts. So this argument about how the people are elected is a false argument and one in which people are straining to find reasons for disagreeing with the proposals. That makes me sad to think that Members would be searching around for that kind of argument which cannot stand up to argument or to reason. I think that we can do better than that.

And then there are other areas that have been mentioned, that it is only a talk shop. I have always been taught that where there are issues involved that if we can sit down and reason together, discuss and talk, that that in itself is a contribution. Talk is at the heart of the democratic process. You will have to say whether they are democrats or not. Because this virtually is an attack on the institution of Parliament itself, undervaluing and devaluing the process of arriving at decisions by debate and by discussion. I think we should all be concerned about this and I think we should review our positions.

The fact is that this is an idea that we believe in, this is an idea that we will stick with and this is an idea that we will work for, the implementation of the idea, if it takes 3 years or if it takes 30 years.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just one moment. Order, please. Please let us have some order. I am happy to see that Members are willing to discuss this issue in a very friendly way but I do not think I can allow the Rules to be breached as well. Honourable Members, just take it easy.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, this matter has gone through the organs of CARICOM. We have a number of signatures. At this stage there are more than the signatures that brought into being CARIFTA which ended up in the Caribbean Community and we will work very

patiently on this matter. To date Barbados has signed the Agreement, Guyana has signed the Agreement, Trinidad and Tobago has signed the Agreement, Grenada has signed the Agreement and the Bahamas has signed the Agreement. We are moving forward slowly and patiently but in the implementation of any great idea time is of the essence. If Jean Monet or Shumann or Henri Spaak had felt that their idea for European unity would not have come into being they would not have persisted.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, there is some talk about the federal idea and that reminds me that the Federation itself had a Parliament and these latter day successors of the Party of the first Federal Prime Minister supported the Federation and supported the Parliament. They are opposed now to an Assembly of Parliamentarians. They all know that, at this stage, there would be no agreement for a Parliament that could legislate. We could not get any kind of agreement on that. But there is a window of opportunity open here in which we can peep into and in which we can get through in order to establish an institution that is important for the development of the regional integration movement. I do not want to see a Regional Integration Movement developed that is made up only of executives and bureaucrats. 4.35 p.m.

We on this side, Sir, as has been said, we are executive here. And to think that there could be argument against this, coming from that side, which is seeking to involve them in the process of deliberation - asking questions, receiving reports, being able to pass votes of censure or whatever because the Assembly would have to work out its own procedures - all of these things.

We have to start at some point and a lot will depend upon the Assembly itself because an institution is more than the roles and procedures that govern the institution. It has a lot to do with how people see this institution and how they work with the institution and how they seek to increase the influence of the institution. So we have to look beyond the Articles of Agreement to the very life of the institution itself, when it is established and the role that the members see they can play as you get that interplay of the forces within CARICOM.

I would expect, Sir, that the programme of work for integration would obviously come before the Parliament. I expect, Sir, that reports on what has happened would come before the Commission. Not the Commission, Sir, I am talking about the Parliament not a Commission. The Commission will be the subject of another debate.

So that is where we are, Sir. Let me say once again that a Parliament, and there is nothing to say that

this Parliament would be a carbon copy of other Parliaments. It has to develop a life of its own and it has to work out processes and procedures of its own that will suit the circumstances so there is a creative role here. But no one today should be denying the importance of Parliament including respect for the institution as an important aspect and part of the political processes in a country and within an international organisation. That is what it is all about, Sir.

And, Sir, instead of looking about for subsidiary issues to disagree over I would like to appeal, to those Members over there - appeal to them, Sir. Any one who wants to discuss anything and the initiative does not come from here they are free to ask for a discussion on the matter.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: This Government, Sir, is bringing an initiative here before this Parliament for debate and at the end of the debate for decision and this is now the time for decision. In spite of his words, Sir, I know the Member for St. George South in his heart of hearts, he simply wants to lead the pack over there in finding some populace grounds for disagreeing with this issue but in his heart of hearts ...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I know you do not have to watch him. I know you do not have to watch Henry.

Asides.

Sir, this is a question of power politics and we will see how things will play out. But in this matter, in all seriousness, I would implore that we find common ground on this issue. It is going to be passed but it would be good to know that there is unanimity on this issue, that we can sink the differences and realise that we are all committed to Parliamentary institutions and that this will break new ground within the CARICOM movement and it deserves the support Of all Honourable Members of this Chamber. With those words, Sir, I beg to move, once again, that this Resolution do now pass.

DIVISION The

bell was rung.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative the House dividing as follows:-

Ayes: Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford, Hon. P. M. Greaves, Hon. B. M. Taitt, Hon. M. A. King, Hon. E. E. Greaves,

Hon. W. O. Franklin, Hon. N. K. Simmons, Hon. W. W. Hall, Hon. C. V. Walker, Hon. D. W. Bowen, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, Mr. L. L. Brathwaite, Mr. T. C. Estwick, Mr. J. O. Tudor - 14.

Noes: Mr. H. deB. Forde, Mr. O. S. Arthur, Mr. D. A. C. Simmons, Hon. H. B. St. John, Mr. L. R. Tull, Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, Mr. R. C. Eastmond - 7.-

ORDER NO. 6 -THE FISHERIES BILL, 1993

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: The Bill before us seeks to repeal the Fishing Industry Act, the Fisheries Regulation Act, and also to repeal certain parts of the Marine Boundaries and Jurisdiction Act dealing with foreign fishing. It would also provide consequential amendments to other enactments affected by the new legislation. As far back as in 1986, Barbados hosted the Food and Agricultural Organisation Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission and CARICOM Community Workshop on Fisheries legislation. Mr. Speaker, arising out of that workshop were a number of recommendations that member states should take prompt measures to review/ the Fisheries legislation so that such legislation would enable coastal and flag states to implement their obligations aid take advantage of their right under the Third United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. 4.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, because of the emphasis which is being given to further exploiting of fisheries resources and in keeping with the recommendations of the workshop, a review of existing legislation was undertaken to ensure that it conforms with the principle of the Law of the Sea Convention to which Barbados is a signatory.

An Inter-departmental Committee was set up, Mr. Speaker, along with an FAO technical adviser to draft the proposed legislation. The Inter-departmental Committee comprised representatives from the Fisheries and Administrative Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Foreign Affairs and the International Transport Division along with the Port Authority and the Barbados Defence Force. After a series of meetings, it was generally agreed that the provisions of the existing Fisheries legislation which is the Fishing Industry Act, Cap. 262 are inadequate to ensure the proper development of the fishing industry. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for the control and management of certain aspects of the fishing industry and related activities is spread over a number of pieces of legislation. In a moment, I will enumerate and refer to those pieces of legislation.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, after wide range and wide scale discussions and consultation with the fisher-folk

and with members of the public, comprehensive legislation was prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Legal Affairs. I should say that the object of the draft legislation is to provide for the proper legal framework for the development and management of the fisheries resources in the waters under the jurisdiction and control of the Government of Barbados. Provision is also made in the draft legislation for the licensing and registration of fishing boats, for the exercise of effective control over foreign fishing and fisheries related research activities in Barbados' waters, for the safety of fishing vessels and for the investigations of accidents at sea. It also provides, Mr. Speaker, regulation for the successful implementation of the provisions.

Mr. Speaker, the main existing enactments bearing upon fisheries in Barbados are the Fishing Industry Act, Cap. 262 to which I just alluded, Fisheries Regulations Act, Cap. 391 and the Barbados Territorial Waters Act, Cap. 386, also the Marine Boundaries and Jurisdiction Act, Cap. 387 and the Marine Areas Preservation and Enhancement Act, Cap. 392. The proposed new Act will now replace the Fishing Industry Act as well as certain portions of the legislation to which I just referred.

Now the Fishing Industry Act, Cap. 262 provides for the registration of boats and the issuing of licences for fishermen. These provisions, as they presently stand, establish ownership of vessels and provide a system of inspection as the means of establishing the sea worthiness of vessels. Part III of the Act provides for the granting of loans to fishing boat owners. This function is now provided by the Barbados Development Bank in accordance with its charter. Part IV provides for the holding of enquiries into accidents involving fishing boats.

The Fisheries Regulations Act, Cap. 391 sets out conservation measures for turtles and sea eggs and regulates the now defunct whale fishery. It also prohibits the use of fishing with explosives and poisons. Although the provisions of this Act, Mr. Speaker, have ecological and environmental implications, they are however the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture.

The Barbados Territorial Waters Act, Cap. 386 is under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and provides for the extension of territorial waters to 12 miles. Under this Act, the Minister makes regulations for fishing in the territorial waters of Barbados among other things. But this is one of the main provisions of this Act.

The Marine Boundaries and Jurisdiction Act, Cap. 387 establishes the Barbados exclusive economic zone as contiguous to the territorial waters extending up to 200 nautical miles from the base line of the territorial waters. The Act prohibits fishing in the EEZ or territorial waters

except by citizens of Barbados or under an authority of a permit or agreement with the Government of Barbados. Such a permit or agreement can only be granted by the Cabinet of Barbados.

The Marine Areas Preservation and Enhancement Act, Cap. 392 provides for the designation of portions of the marine areas of Barbados as restricted areas for the purpose of the preservation and enhancement of natural beauty, the protection of flora and fauna and the promotion of scientific study and research and the general protection of the marine environment. If I may highlight some of the provisions of the new fisheries legislation and what they are designed to do. I must say the Act to a large measure breaks new ground. Some of the requirements of the new fisheries legislation is designed to make a proper basis and legal framework for fisheries control and management to allow the fishing industry to develop to its full potential in accordance with the provisions of the terms of the United Nations Charter on the Law of the Sea. 4.45 p.m.

It provides a mechanism for consultation at all levels about fisheries management and development as well as the provision of information and expertise necessary for the development of the sub-sector. It also seeks to achieve regional cooperation - in fisheries and the proposed legislation is in keeping with the structure of fisheries legislation of other CARICOM countries thus providing for regional cooperation in fisheries management and development and the control of fisheries resources by distant water fleets.

The Act also seeks the registration and licensing of local fishing boats and the licensing of commercial fishermen. It provides a basis for the negotiation of fishing rights for Barbadian fishing boats and for the licensing and control of foreign fishing in Barbadian waters. There is also a requirement that all sport fishing operations should be licensed. In respect of the collection of statistics, Mr. Speaker, that provides a mechanism which was set up to monitor catches, local demand, consumption, imports, exports, processing fleet and to record data crucial to the planning and development of the fishing industry. It also provides certain controls over fisheries-related research and survey operations being carried out in our waters. The Act is replete with penalties for offenses and there are rules for the safety of the fishing vessels and for investigation of accidents at sea. As I said, the Act was fully discussed with the members of the fishing industry and we sought the widest possible consultation and, to a large extent, a number of the comments and recommendations of the fishing industry are included in the proposed legislation.

We have also taken into account in drawing up the new Fisheries Act the question of the environment.

We have taken regional legislation into account as I said like the OECS Fisheries legislation.

With these introductory remarks, I move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a tribute to the fishermen of Barbados that against a background of slender resources, of capital shortages, sometimes outdated equipment, and faced with the fluctuations that often occur in the market place these fishermen have shown the endurance to make the fishing industry one of the most important sub-sectors in our economy.

It cannot be gainsaid that in terms of the portfolio which we call the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries that, alongside livestock production, fishing has over the years done extremely well. Insofar as we on this side would want to record the success which our fishermen have achieved in this country, we would note that Government's purpose in an exercise like what is before this Honourable House would be to assist the fishermen to make more of their career, to provide appropriate regulations so as to protect the industry, to provide the types of incentives that would make people want to continue to fish. In this regard, there are a number of concerns that we on this side have and even though we have studied the Bill before this House and would not really be opposing it, there are a number of matters which must still be raised in the name of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

To begin close to home and to the constituency which I have the honour to represent. Over the last few months - I believe other Honourable Members of this House may be aware of it and if the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is not aware I would like to draw it to his attention now - west coast fishermen have been complaining of about 3 major problems. Many west coast fishermen have been complaining that there are certain properties on the west coast which are guilty of dumping sewage and effluent into the sea and they fear this sewage and effluent may very well lead to problems in their career. These fishermen would say that some hotels, for example, have lines leading from the hotels out into the sea which sometimes get broken and which may sometimes present problems of pollution.

In addition to this, a number of fishermen who may not be commercial fishermen have been complaining that when they go to catch bait they are often pursued on the beaches by law enforcement agencies. I believe that in all fairness the problem here is that it may very well be that

there are reservations along the west coast which are very much not to be used for the purpose of fishing but which have not been clearly demarcated to the fishermen and the result is that some of them seem to be of the view that as they ply their trade and seek to catch their bait that law enforcement agencies in this country are out to get them.

I believe, Sir, that when they are "confronted by problems like this perhaps the best solution to the problems would be through communication. I am therefore going to urge the Honourable Minister to ask the Fisheries Department to engage the attention of these fishermen and try to sort out their problems because some of them are very vocal and not enough has been done for them.

In addition, Sir, there is also the problem which I would like the Honourable Minister to consider...

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: I do not want to stop the speaker but I would just like to indicate that there has been at least 3 meetings in the last year with fishermen, the Coast Guard, the Fisheries Officer and myself - I was present at Trents, at St. James Composite School - Coastal Conservation, Belair Research. All these matters have been discussed at the 3 or 4 meetings. As a matter of fact, everything has been resolved. I believe he was invited to one of the meetings. I believe he was invited to one of the meetings and he had the opportunity to attend so I do not want it to go on record that nothing has been done. There have been on-going meetings to have these problems resolved and they were resolved. 5.05 p.m.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that all of the problems have been resolved in that only yesterday I had word with some of the fishermen who I believe claimed they went to some of these meetings and as far as they are concerned they are still complaining that the problems facing them are still there. For instance, there is the problem where some fishermen cannot understand why sometimes when out to sea the Coast Guard would stop them. Some fishermen are of the view that as they are lawfully doing their fishing business within Barbadian waters that there are times when the Coast Guard just comes up to them and gives them the impression that they cannot fish there. They say this is a very real problem which has been facing them. I am asking the Honourable Minister to look into the matter.

Now, Sir, when one considers the nature of the activity that we call fishing, one must note that they have been many occasions when fisher-folk have often had to rely on resources put up by one another. Fishermen often practise the spirit of cooperation. Some of them pool their resources. Some of them share boats and other equipment. In that regard I am urging upon the Ministry of

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to set the stage through the Advisory Committee which I believe is referred to in the Bill before the House, for fisheries cooperatives to be launched in this country.

The reason I am saying so is that very often a number of people who would normally want to get involved in the activity are faced with the problem of lack of capital, sometimes insufficient experience and sometimes inadequate or outdated equipment. In a situation where the very nature of fishing often calls on fishermen to practise a type of mutual cooperation and assistance .with each other, I am asking that the Government pay heed towards encouraging the development and growth of fishing cooperatives. There have been some Caribbean islands the size of Barbados, sometimes not as well off as Barbados, that have done very well in terms of encouraging and promoting fishing cooperatives.

Of course, as I make this point, Sir, I am bearing in mind the fact that, generally speaking, fishing is a private sector style operation so there must be some effective' limit to which the Government can go. Therefore, if the Government itself is not going to be directly involved its responsibility must be to set the type of scenario which would allow the fishermen to benefit from a type of environment which would be conducive to their prosperity on the high seas.

Sir, one concern of my colleagues on this side and myself is over the question of registration. I believe that in time an exploration of the Bill before the House will show that registration is more or less mandatory. Recent experiences in Barbados in respect of registration of boats will indicate that registration has not always proceeded expeditiously. It seems as though at the point when all the boats should be registered that there are times when the period limited for registration has to be extended because not all the registration that is to be done is done in time. I believe this is a legitimate area of concern which merits the attention of the Ministry.

It could very well be that, like some other departments within Government, the Fisheries Department itself might be under-staffed. It could very well be that there are other factors which stand in the way of prompt registration. But problems in the real world may very well arise if a fisherman uses a boat which is not properly registered and which sustains some accident which is insured but the absence of registration might very well influence an insurance company not to want to indemnify loss. Where fishermen make enormous personal sacrifices to contribute to the growth of this sub-sector in this economy to producing food which is in great demand in this country, we must take the appropriate safeguards to ensure they do not suffer loss through perils and accidents

and then because of a technical rule of registration where they are not registered on time they lose insurance indemnity.

Now, Sir, over the years we have had 2 problems with which I believe every Member of this Honourable House is familiar. You will recall that between the period 1985 to 1988 a¹ large number of Barbadian fishermen were often picked up between Tobago and Trinidad and sometimes charged. But you will also recall too, Sir, that in the last 5 years or so, they have been countries poaching within our territorial waters. They have been countries from afar off poaching and I am going to address this issue.

We have heard reports of businessmen and fishermen from as far away as South Korea and Japan poaching in Caribbean seas. Now, while supporting firm and stiff penalties against those who poach and pirate our fishing resources without permissions, we still have to be rather cautious. This caution must be exercised in this way. My interpretation of the Bill beforehand is that wherever a non Barbadian vessel is found fishing in Barbados, it will be guilty of an offence if it has no authority to fish in Barbados. At the same time, I do not see enough of a distinction between foreign in the sense of non CARICOM and foreign in the sense of CARICOM. In fact, it would be unfortunate to call CARICOM foreign.

The point I am making, Sir, is this. In a situation where St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, Tobago and Trinidad and Dominica are reasonably close to Barbados, and where it is possible that through inadvertence, through some error or sometimes a little carelessness they fish in our seas illegally, our view is that the penalty that should be inflicted on them must not be as severe as the penalty that should be visited on the Japanese and the South Koreans. The reason for this should become obvious from this point of view that if Japanese and South Koreans can come here and poach and make thousands upon thousands of dollars out of our seas illegally in a situation where Barbados would hardly ever think of approaching the waters of Japan or South Korea to reciprocate, but in a situation where Barbadian fishermen themselves may inadvertently trespass on the seas of CARICOM neighbours, I believe that Barbadian fishermen would fear that should CARICOM countries be treated with the same severe penalties as non CARICOM countries and that Barbadian fishermen trespass on the seas of Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent or even Venezuela, and these countries in the Caribbean retaliate, then I believe that our fishermen would be extremely worried about that. I would want the Honourable Minister and his Ministry to look at this matter. 5.15 p.m.

We in this Opposition are rather concerned about the condition of some of our fish markets. While it is true

that times are hard and that there have been cuts in many Ministries the conditions in many fish markets leave a lot to be desired. Indeed the fixtures that should be in some of these markets leave a lot to be desired. In fact I believe at one point the fishermen at Oistin were complaining that they could not store their ice and that they had problems with refrigeration and such like. I believe that in addition to that there are certain small problems around a number of our fish markets in Barbados which the Ministry should be aware of. Off and on I speak to fishermen and they tell me that they do in fact get visits from some officers in the Fisheries Department. But it would seem to me- as though the time is ripe for the Minister and the Ministry to actively consider a sophisticated type of extension services between the Fisheries Department and the fishermen. In the same way that there are extension services in the Ministry of Agriculture the time has come for us to develop a serious, sophisticated system of extension where you would have extension officers from the Fisheries Department meeting and talking with fishermen and solving their problems. Because sometimes some of the problems relate to things like the disposal of waste. And simple little things that can be done once communication occurs between the department and the fishermen.

We on this side are also concerned that the stocks of some sea creatures have diminished over time. A classic example would be the diminution in the size of our sea egg population over time. It is also possible that other species of fish and sea creatures would have declined in recent years. The time has therefore come for us to see whether we have not been guilty of some over fishing in relation to particular species. The time has also come for the Ministry to investigate the prospects of replenishing those stocks of creatures which have been diminishing and declining in numbers over time.

Towards the end of my contribution, Mr. Speaker, I shall also be urging the establishment of a properly run, modern research unit within the Fisheries Department. But, Sir, in the Twentieth Century when, with the advance of science and technology men have not only reached the moon and computers have become the norm and a lot of scientific inventions have been made, but the time has come for us in this country to seriously turn our minds to inland fish farming. I would want the Government and the Minister to tell this Parliament what plans the Government has for fish farming. If it does not, what constraints, difficulties or problems face the Ministry to prevent this. Another concern that often arises in respect of our fishing industry is this, Mr. Speaker. A lot of persons who purchase boats have to find enormous amounts of money to acquire these boats and very often have to enter into credit transactions. So that if, for example, a boat cost, let us for argument say \$250 000 and an entrepreneur keen on making his livelihood out of fishing is about to get that boat at that cost and can only find one tenth or some other

fraction of the cost and goes to a financial institution and acquires the balance of the purchase price on credit, Sir. We have a situation where it often happens that in the minds of the authorities that person who eventually obtains and acquires that boat is deemed to be the owner and we do not have any system, as far as I know, in Barbados where the financial interest and the charge in favour of the lender or the creditor is registered.

The point I am making therefore to the Honourable Minister is this, that in situations where you get a person acquiring a boat on credit, where he owes money and where he might have to pay over 10 or 15 years that the interest of the lender should be registered as a charge, especially for purposes of insurance because in the event of accidents or peril the insurers would want to indemnify but they ought to be able to set a register in our Fisheries Department to see that the charge...It works very much like a mortgage or a bill of sale and I would like to urge that.

Now, Sir, I am asking the Honourable Minister to give this House, in his reply, the latest on the fishing position at Skeete's Bay and Consett Bay. To that extent have the plans for the expansion of the fishing business at Skeete's Bay and Consett Bay been on stream? What return has there been? And how do things look for the future?

I also would like at this point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to raise a concern. I represent a constituency which is in the north of this country and the fishermen at Speightstown have for the last 5, 6, 7 years been wondering when will the time ever come for the facilities that they operate from to be upgraded? Fishermen at Speightstown have been properly and sensibly asking the question, "When would we in the north be given current, modern, up-to-date facilities so that we can not only land our fish but also that we can make the best of our business?" What I would want the Honourable Minister to tell this House is what plans the Government has in relation to the expansion of fishing facilities at Speightstown.

We on this side are also seized with the knowledge that in very many parts of the world through joint public and private sector efforts, fishing has become modernized. Very many countries the world over have seen fishermen in those countries develop modern, sophisticated means of catching fish, exploit very efficient equipment, even practise a measure of automation. And so we are urging that this Government creates and provides the incentives for the fishing industry with the view to fostering greater modernization allowing fishermen to have available to them the type of modern, up-to-date equipment, that the types of accessories and fixtures necessary for boats to function in a modern environment be provided. In this regard I am asking, to what extent - I see reference to research in the Bill - do we have a research department that is

highly organized and able to match up with the times. I have no doubt that there must be some entity, some unit within the Fisheries Department which might be handling research. But I am saying that in view of the very important contribution that fishing has made to this country we need a well organized, concerted approach to the question of research with the view to properly appreciating where we are going in the industry, with the view to seeing how we can improve, with the view to seeing what we can do by way of enhancing exports and reducing imports of fish, with the view too, possibly, of processing fish so as to help fishermen to face the problems of gluts. One way of overcoming the frustrations that would face fishermen when gluts come would be through processing. The reason for this is obvious, Sir. When fishermen fish and experience gluts prices drop dramatically, they might find that the income they earn is lower than normal, they might, out of a sense of frustration, not want to market the catch at such low prices and I believe that some system can be worked out where, through processing the excess, the surplus they could be given a guaranteed price and of course the surplus can go towards increasing the national production of the country and possibly also go towards export, Sir. 5.25 p.m.

With those observations, Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that the Government should note that fishing is such an important industry and such an important subsector to Barbados that in addition to any sort of legislation that is provided to regulate the activity, that Government also should actively consider incentives and I would want the Minister to tell us what special incentives his Ministry and his Government would have at this time to further strengthen a sector which has, over the years, largely through the efforts of those who participate in it, done fairly well in this country. With those remarks, Sir, I am obliged to you.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the record of the Barbados Labour Party with its support for the fishermen of this country is well known. It is a proud record and I only need to remind Honourable Members of our establishment of the Oistins Fisheries Complex and the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex, the two illustrations of our enormous support for the fishing industry in our years in Government.

Our efforts 100 to establish a fisheries terminal at Speightstown were frustrated by our loss of office but on the whole, Sir, I think that we can stand proud behind our record in support for the fishing industry in this country.

We fully support the measure before the House. Indeed we regard it, Mr. Speaker, as coming a little late in the day because ever since the Fisheries Act was put on the

Statute Book and I refer to Cap. 262 of the Laws of Barbados, they have been radical and new developments affecting fisheries in Barbados. For example, Sir, the Law of the Sea convention defined new areas of activity. Our territorial waters are extended to 12 miles and the exclusive economic zone to 200 miles so we had new territory over which we had to exercise control and sovereignty and the old Act, when conceived, never contemplated any such thing. So that for that reason alone it was important that a new legislative framework be put on the Statute Book, not to mention, Sir, that the industry has attracted considerable amount of investment within the last 15 to 20 years.

In 1960 there was scarcely any talk of iceboats. Today we have some 70 or more of them, each one of which maybe cost \$200000 and beyond. So that the industry has attracted considerable new investment in recent years and it has emerged as a major subsector in the Barbadian economy making considerable contribution to our nutritional needs and our nutritional security. So that on the whole there was an unanswerable case for a new legislative framework for the regulation of the industry.

My first point, Mr. Speaker, relates to the need to match staff resources with the new responsibilities because unless you have staff in sufficient numbers and equipped with the skills, the Act would become a dead letter in so far as the policing -and the enforcement of it would be possible. So my first appeal to the Minister is to ensure that the small staff which now is known as the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture is expanded both in terms of numbers and in terms of range of skills so that the Act can be effectively policed and effectively administered. It is particularly important, Mr. Speaker, that before the boats are pushed off, to use an expression of the industry, that the inspection takes place and that the appropriate certificates of registration and seaworthiness are issued, because when once the fishermen go to sea in the limited fishing season they hate to be interrupted by having to come ashore and see to things like ensuring that the boats are seaworthy and that the appropriate certificates are issued. So I would appeal to the Minister to ensure that the staff is in place and that the necessary checks and inspections and issuing of certificates, be undertaken well in time for the pushing off of the boats as it is called in the industry.

My second point has got to do with insurance. This is an area where fishermen traditionally have not regarded it as important that their boats be insured. Now these new boats are significant investments and the stories are compelling when you have a fishing community within your constituency and you hear these stories of fishermen •having one or two boats that within ten years they have lost without any compensation resulting from the fact that the boats have not been insured.

They tell me, Mr. Speaker, that the insurance is too high and that they have tended to trust to fate and good luck rather than insure these vehicles. It seems to me that the Government should take the initiative in commencing discussion with the Insurance Corporation of Barbados so as to ensure that some affordable insurance is made available to the fishermen. It may not cover all the value of the fishing boat but at least some part value, 50%, as a minimum will be covered if some affordable insurance policy could be made available.

My third point has to do, Sir, with the need to educate the fishermen with respect to the provisions of the new Act and the new obligations that will be placed on them. A lot of them are at sea when we are listening to our radio and Television. Though I find in recent days I have been much in contact with those at Tent Bay to be knowledgeable and articulate generally it is a fact that a lot of what we know by being on land and listening to our radios and televisions they may not know at the same time or at all.

It seems to me therefore that if the Ministry of Agriculture is to get the full cooperation of the fishermen, and their cooperation is necessary for the successful administration of this Act, that it may be necessary to have some classes, some means of communicating to them and educating them with respect to the new provisions of the Fisheries Act and also the new obligations that fall on them. I think that is very important and that the Minister will not get too far in the successful implementation of this new Act unless some sort of education with respect to the provisions of the Act and the new responsibilities falling on the fishermen is put in place.

My good friend, the Honourable Member for St. James North, who is the Opposition shadow spokesman on this matter and who has just sat down, referred in passing to the very savage penalties for those who fish within our territorial waters and are caught. I think the penalty is \$503 000, a massive half million dollars, that is a savage penalty indeed. Though I appreciate the thinking that is involved in the size of that penalty it is really meant to deter others from fishing in our territorial waters.

The point ought to be made, Mr. Speaker, that Barbadian fishermen are the biggest offenders in that regard. Barbadian fishermen often fish in other people's territorial waters. The fear among the local fishermen is that, if their CARICOM brothers can go no further and if their CARICOM brothers are treated so savagely and severely as a signal by this legislation, what will happen to them when they are caught by others fishing in their water, bearing in mind that they are the biggest offenders. They feel that there should be less savage provisions in relation to their CARICOM brothers because, when once the

principle of reciprocity is brought to bear, they will expect that they too will be treated very savagely and very severely when once they are caught fishing in other people's territorial waters. I think the Honourable Minister will be well advised to bear that particular point in mind because it is one of some considerable concern among the local fishermen. 5.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to say something about safety at sea. For a long while Barbadian fishermen vessels have not been well equipped as far as minimal safety provisions are concerned. Many of them have relied on their instinct, their luck, and their good fortune to survive over the years. They argue that it is easier for a fire to start in your house than it is to start in a fishing boat at sea. To that extent, they argue further that there is good reason why there should be regulations making it mandatory that you should have fire fighting equipment in your house but less so for them at sea, because the probability of a fire starting in a fishing boat they say is virtually remote.

The experience has been over the years that certain safety provisions are necessary. They have not been spelled out in this legislation. But I take it that under the regulations that will follow the details will be provided. The resistance is so strong that it seems to strengthen my point that a programme of education needs to be mounted in relation to getting the fishermen to see things in a new light and to change existing attitudes with respect to matters of insurance and also matters of safety.

Turning to another point, Mr. Speaker, we are in great danger concerning our existing markets at Bridgetown in particular and Oistins running into serious disrepair. These markets represent considerable financial investment on behalf of the people of Barbados. I am very distressed when I go to Oistins in particular to see the extent to which that still relatively modern facility is rapidly falling into disrepair. I think that the Minister ought to pay some personal attention. Often, that is the only way you get things done when the Minister himself takes a personal interest. Pay a visit and see things for yourself. Make sure that officers are directed to go and put things right and report back in a personal sort of way. The maintenance has not been as well attended to as it ought to have been and I think that explains in large measure why it is that Oistins and to a lesser extent Bridgetown are rapidly falling into disrepair.

I want to turn with your permission, Sir, to make a point or two about the plight of the fishermen at Tent Bay, St. Joseph. We are always going to have difficulties of some sort at Tent Bay because, as a fishing bay, it faces the Atlantic and that creates special problems. Efforts

weremade in the mid-1980's to improve the Tent Bay facility by widening the channel, by removing large stones from the channel and by establishing a slipway which will facilitate the hauling up of the boats from the water onto the land. The fishermen in their wisdom at Tent Bay advised Government architects and engineers that the slipway should have been put down east to west rather than north to south. They were overruled and their wisdom and experience were ignored by the engineers and the architects. The result has been that the slipway was never really functioning and in recent months it has been totally dismantled. The slabs have been taken up and just thrown aside on the western side of the Tent Bay-Bathsheba Bay.

A temporary measure was put in place for the hauling up of the boats and that has fallen into disrepair with the result that it is very difficult to haul up the boats at Tent Bay-Bathsheba. It is feared that, if there is a hurricane warning and they had to take the boats out of the water and even with 10 or 12 hours warning, they could not get more than 2 or 3 out of the water. Urgently needed is some form of temporary repair or temporary provision of a workable slipway so that the boats could be easily hauled out of the water and put back into the water if necessary. The fishermen regard Tent Bay as a doom bay. They think that the investment in the 1980's has been wasted effort and that the Bay in some respects has become more dangerous for them operating as fishermen and in the last 8 years they have lost something like 8 boats. The most recent loss was two weeks ago belonging to a Mr. Lowe at Tent Bay. They have all been destroyed in the Bay itself.

I am appealing to the Minister and I have already issued him an invitation to visit along with me the fishermen at Tent Bay within the next few days and to try to find the money whereby some temporary repair can be effected there at Tent Bay to ensure that the twenty-odd boat owners who operate from Tent Bay can continue to find the Bay useful. I should mention whether the Government thinks it wise to implement that part of the original plan which had called for a market there. I do not feel strongly about that. In fact, I will say frankly that I do not think that there is a strong case for having a market at Tent Bay. I do not think that the size of the population in that area would make a case for a market at Tent Bay. What is necessary, however, are changing facilities for the fishermen including toilet facilities. There is need too for short term storage. Those who come in with a large haul of fish late in the evening and cannot get to Bridgetown need short term storage for 72 hours at most and they need proper hauling facilities for getting the boats in and out of the water. That constitutes the minimum package that would be necessary in order to render proper assistance to the fishermen at Tent Bay. So I am appealing to the Minister to join me in a visit within the next few days so that we can talk to the fishermen and see at first hand the

nature of the difficulties which they are experiencing at Tent Bay St Joseph. 5.45 p.m.

I just want in conclusion to emphasise 1 or 2 very valid points made by the Honourable Member for St. James North who first spoke on this side. It has to do with the need to ensure the interests of lenders because very few people can afford to buy a boat cash. A modern ice boat is an expensive investment and those who lend the money, sometimes persons abroad, manufacturers, are concerned that it is not clear how they would have their interests registered in Barbados. Perhaps in the framework of an Act itself provision can be made for that sort of thing.

I was looking at Chapter 262 in the Act that we are replacing here and I noticed it was a very short Act in relation to the one that is under discussion and that at Part III provision was made for fishing boats subject to liens not to be sold without the consent of the Fisheries Officer. I wonder why it was not felt useful for some comparable provision to be included in the new Act. A considerable portion of the old Act was also taken up with lending by what has come to be the Barbados Development Bank through the assistance and some involvement of the Fisheries Officer.

What I am concerned about is what clearly identifies' funding there is within the Barbados Development Bank or, indeed, in any government agencies for on-lending to fishermen. How are we to ensure for the future that there emerges a new class of fishermen far more sophisticated, more inclined to use the technology available rather than have a class of fishermen into the next century that would have copied the ways of the fathers, as it were, and plied their trade as though the world around them has not changed and as though there is not now available a whole range of new techniques and new technology which would make the plying of the trade much more productive and ^x much more profitable.

When I was in the Ministry, there was ongoing thought, discussions and toying about with the idea of training courses along those lines. A deliberate attempt to go out and recruit fishermen with a fairly high level of educational background. I want to know what has become of those ideas which were once alive within the Ministry. When the Minister comes to wind up, I very much look forward to hearing him address some of these matters.

The question of trespassing in our waters by Pacific fleets - Koreans, Japanese and so on is a matter that in my view ought best to be addressed on a CARICOM basis. It seems to me that Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia, these small islands, do not really have the resources to police their exclusive economic zone and that they can only

begin to address the problem sensibly and successfully if they pool their resources and have a joint approach to the policing of their waters which are really contiguous.

At the Ministers of Agriculture Meeting in the mid 1980's and I believe beyond into this decade, that issue used to constitute one of the agenda subjects. I am not aware of whether any hard decisions have been taken or whether there have been any developments of a practical nature in that direction, but I would like the Minister to update me and let me know what has become of the idea that that question should be approached as a CARICOM issue.

I conclude as I began, Mr. Speaker, expressing support for this Bill which in many respects has been long overdue and urging the Minister to ensure that the staff is adequate to police the Bill and that through a programme of education the fishermen are made aware of the new provisions of the law and of the new responsibilities which fall on them.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join this debate for a few minutes to speak on the point that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph just spoke on. That is the control and management of the Caribbean Sea. Sometime about 1988, at a CARICOM Ministers of Agriculture Meeting I suggested that we should have a joint approach to both the management and the harvesting of what I then called the inner Caribbean Sea. The suggestion was put from Barbados that we should use it as a joint resource.

One of the difficulties about that was that the other countries felt that the fishing industry in Barbados was so advanced to theirs that Barbados had an advantage and if it was used as a shared resource Barbados would be taking too much out. Barbados at that time advocated that we should use a formula for the control/harvesting due to each individual country, working out a percentage of the economic zone of each country. If any one country at that time was reaping more than what the formula allowed they should pay a royalty and that royalty should go into a joint pool and the pool should be used for 2 things. By management of the sea we would try to provide additional resources which would be needed such as small aircraft, as well as proper control and a proper management team, doing stock assessment to ensure that we do not run the stock down. Also, pooling resources could be used to build up the individual fleet of the other countries which had some difficulty with the size and share of the Barbados fleet.

We advocated that as the correct way of keeping out the non-Caribbean people from it because individually we cannot police and manage the Caribbean Sea. I agree that

it must be a shared resource and I am certain that that proposal is still very much before the other countries as advanced by Barbados at that time and I am certain that the present Minister of Agriculture at the appropriate time will take it back and put it on the front burner.

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Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I would not like to detain the House very long, Sir, but I do not want to repeat the points made by the Honourable Members on this side who have spoken, except that I want to underscore... 5.55 p.m.

The position with respect to the real difficulties we are having with insurance of fishing boats and the requirement for registration is that the Insurance companies, even the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, quite properly requires an inspection by their staff, or their designated person, prior to the issuance of an insurance contract. It is to ensure that the boat has been sufficiently well constructed to be able to withstand the conditions when it is fishing. But we do have a dilemma.

Under the Fisheries Act, a boat is supposed to have a certificate annually. This Act now provides for a great improvement in that the life of the certificate will now run from the specific date in the year for which it is signed. That is an improvement and I welcome that. But we are still going to have the problem that unless there is a change in the law, or an increase in the number of inspectors, given the pattern of haul-up between July and October in a year, there will not be enough time for the existing inspectors to inspect all the boats.

I know the constraints under which the Honourable Minister is operating now and those constraints are that the Government does not even have money to buy toilet paper far less to provide more staff for the Minister. Therefore, I am suggesting that the law should be amended to permit the Chief Fisheries Officers to approve people of certain qualifications to be inspectors for the purpose of that section of the Act. There are a well known number of inspectors in Barbados. There are people who the insurance companies have designated and those people are people who inspect ships of all kinds. There are a number of them in Barbados. If a person is fit enough to be an inspector for the Insurance Corporation of Barbados so too I believe that such a person's certificate should have sufficient value that upon the production of a certificate by approved inspectors that you do not need to have the Ministry's inspectors to inspect the boat itself. That is the only way you are going to have compliance with that very beneficial section of the law.

The second area I want to deal with is the registration of boats. I have come across a number of situations in Barbados in which Barbadians are trying to take

advantage of the opportunities which are now presenting themselves arising from long line fishing. Now, the boats you need for long line fishing are different boats from the ones you use here. In order to buy one of these long line fishing boats you need money. It is possible to buy these boats on the equivalent to higher purchase - that is from a builder, or a ship broker in the United States or the United Kingdom, or within the Caribbean through a financial institution. There are usually 2 conditions. One is that the boat is kept in the registry of the United States of America or that the security interest of the financial institution, so long as the amount of money remains unpaid on the boat is registered in a competent fishing registry.

Our law here makes it abundantly clear that once the boat is registered in another country it cannot be on the Barbadian Fishing Registry, as a result the problem arises that if the boat remains in a foreign registry and it catches fish, according to the Rules of Origin in international trade, that fish is fish which comes from the country of the registration of the boat. Now, if that country is a country that does not have good trade preferences in the United States of America as far as all the fish that is caught on that boat is concerned, it will not be eligible for export to the United States of America duty-free, so we have a problem. That problem could easily be solved, in my opinion, by an amendment to that section in the Fishing Industry Act to provide for the registration of a boat in Barbados where the boat is chartered by demise. In Marine Law, as I understand it, and I have done some research on this, a charterer is an owner for the purpose of the Shipping Act and in Maritime Law both a person who is a full owner as well as a person who is a lessee of the whole boat is an owner.

In addition, I would ask the Minister whether it is not possible to make sure that the provisions in the Shipping Act which relate to mortgages and the registration thereof could not be incorporated in this Act. Normally, under the Shipping Act, the fishing boats are exempted from compliance with the Shipping Act but they are still ships. A ship is defined widely in the Shipping Act as any instrument that is capable of going to sea and is not propelled by oars.

I only want to make sure that the 2 Acts are integrated because if it is made clear that those provisions of the Shipping Act which make provision for registration of mortgages and they are well known internationally, once they apply to fishing boats I believe that would ease the situation greatly because everybody who is familiar with this area would be familiar with the provisions of a ship's mortgage. I want to draw that to your attention.

Now, Sir, we cannot talk about fishing unless we go one step further and talk about the effort that is really

needed to ensure that the development that has taken place over the last 30 years in the fishing industry continues into the future. I am not going to repeat what my colleagues have said but I am very worried about the situation that has developed in our 2 relatively new sophisticated fish markets. 6.05 p.m.

I really think that a determined effort should be made to ensure that the operations that take place at those markets take place under conditions which would satisfy modern public health requirements. It is an important point. You cannot continue to have fish caught on ice and then brought to market to be sold in an uniced condition. That seems to me to be wrong. The object of icing the fish at sea is to ensure that you retard the bacteria. If you are going to take them off the ice and you are going to sell them in conditions that are completely different, it is my opinion that you are promoting the development of bacteria.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: No, no. It is a question of making sure that the advance that we made in the provision of ice in the boats continues on the land and that we continue our educational process to ensuring that those who are handling and distributing the fish have access to ice use and do, in fact, make use of it. It is a question -of integrating all of the services that we have in this area. I want the Minister to understand that we regard that as a serious problem and I am sure that the Public Health Department of Barbados will soon be raising a hue and cry about the conditions. That means that in all of the areas where you have the ice boats you will have to make sure that the landings take place in areas where there is an adequate supply of ice. Some improvement has taken place in Oistin but not enough improvement. The boat owners still tell me that they cannot get an adequate supply of ice for their boats. They still have to go down town. It is true that there is more ice available to sell to the hawkers and others who are distributing the ice. It is true that some work is being done on the facilities for overnight storage. That is going on. I know that that is true. But the major problem of having facilities to sell ice to the boats to save fuel by their going to town has not been solved.

I also notice one of the sections, section 25 which deals with the Chief Fisheries Officer, requiring information about processing. I want to draw to the attention of the Minister that all of the new markets were constructed on the basis that some processing, on a small scale, would take place at the fish market itself both in the Ofstin and the Bridgetown Fish Markets there are a number of proprietors, small and medium, some large in the context of Barbados, who sub-contract primary processing, that

is, the scaling, gutting and boning right there in the fish market. I want you to check and make sure that due regard is paid to the fact that the activities take place at the fish market. This is not a question of somebody else buying fish and having them processed at a factory. It is a question of this primary processing taking place right there. I can understand the need for the Fisheries Officer to have the information from there, as you want to know the true production in Barbados. I understand that. But you must remember you have to educate the people who are involved in this, as to the necessity for that information.'

Subject to the comments I have made, and the other points that we have made on this side we do feel that by the time we reach the Committee stage and I hope that we do not finish this Bill in Committee tonight because we have raised some very valid points. I hope that the Minister does not feel because of the points that were raised that he should not have a look at them. These are very valid points and they are being made in the spirit of ensuring that this very desirable amendment to the law takes place but that the amendments are greatly improved.

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members from the other side who spoke raised a number of issues and concerns which, to my mind, are valid. Several of them are presently engaging the attention of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

I should like to respond to the specific queries and issues raised. The Shadow Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Member for St. James North raised a number of points. He spoke first of the question of incentives for fishermen. I think, generally, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Agriculture has been doing all within its power to keep the fisher folk of Barbados happy bearing in mind that we are faced with a number of constraints. With respect to incentives specifically there are still those in respect of repairs and maintenance and the question of duty free engines to the fishermen or to the boat owners. We have tried to establish cordial relations with the fisher folk and from time to time they have expressed certain concerns and made certain recommendations which, in a number of cases, we have been able to implement bearing in mind certain cost constraints with which we are faced. But, as far as is practicable, we would continue to offer the present incentives to the fisher folk and, where possible, look at the possibility of offering new incentives.

With respect to the question of dumping at sea, the matter is being dealt with by the coastal conservation project and I would not go into that. I know it is in good hands. It is a concern for all of us. The coastal conservation project is dealing with the matter. 6.15 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. James South I think adequately dealt with the question of harassment of the fishermen on the West Coast but I would like to add that there has been a clearly demarcated marine area off the West Coast and the fisher folk and the fishermen have been informed that it is illegal to fish there.

We have, in the Ministry, been pursuing the question of the launching of fisheries cooperatives but like every thing else, all types of cooperatives have their teething problems but we would continue to pursue it. The Ministry remains committed in principle to such an establishment and I am sure the advisory council would continue in that light.

With respect to the registration, all 3 members on the other side spoke of the issue and the concerns with respect to the registration. There are over 700 boats registered and we are well aware there are certain problems with the whole question of registration. Not least, Mr. Speaker, the unwillingness of some fishermen to register their boats. But having said that I must hasten to add that the majority have been complying and through what the Honourable Member for St. James North referred to as extension services, we have been reaching out to the fishermen. This is one of the areas that we have been tackling and trying to get resolved.

With respect to the state of repair or disrepair at the two major complexes, one at Bridgetown and the other at Oistins, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that we have carried out fairly extensive work at Oistins. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South alluded to some of the repairs that we have done and we have also carried out fairly extensive work on the jetty and this work is continuing. I refer to the provision of extension officers. This has been started and there are zone officers who have been assigned to specific fishermen in their zones and the problems that come out of these discussions are then relayed to the fisheries division for action.

The question of fish farming was also raised by the Honourable Member for St. James North. This matter has been engaging our attention. The FAO did a study on the feasibility of this type of farming and we recognise that there are certain constraints to the establishment of fish farms in Barbados but the discussions are ongoing and only two weeks ago we had discussions with some private sector entrepreneurs from China discussing the whole question of the establishment of fish farming in Barbados. Indeed with respect to our own local private sector we are discussing this matter.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph raised a number of matters which I would like to address. The problem which has been drawn to my attention over the last 48 hours relates to the fishermen at Tent Bay.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent about \$75 000 just a couple of months ago doing certain remedial work to the fishing facilities at Tent Bay.

We have removed the old slipway and erected a temporary slipway which is now being used by the fishermen. However we recognise that when there are rough seas certain problems arise and we are monitoring the situation before we erect a permanent new slipway. But the question of a site visit is well taken and that will be undertaken by myself and members in the Fisheries Division in the very near future - in a matter of days. It is our intention to make life as easy as possible for the fisher folk and the Ministry of Agriculture and indeed the Fisheries Office have been in on-going dialogue and consultation with the fisher folk at Tent Bay. Most of the work that is being done, I think it is safe to say, is as a result of their specific recommendations.

With respect to training - this is another matter that was raised by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. There is an on-going training programme, Mr. Speaker, where officers from the Fisheries Division visit all fish landing sites in Barbados and conduct training courses for local fishermen. These courses include fishing and training in navigation, safety at sea, maintenance of marine engines, handling of fish and the use of radio equipment.

With respect to the queries raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, he raised the question of inspectors "to police the Act and we will look at this suggestion. We believe it has merit as indeed is the issue or the possibility of including the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act in this new piece of legislation. Certainly this is a matter which we would have to discuss at length within the Ministry but on the surface it seems to have merit.

With respect to the concerns raised by the Member for Christ Church South, the public health concerns about the selling and boning of fish after it comes from the ice and is sold and processed in the normal noon day temperature are well founded. I believe this is a concern of the Ministry of Agriculture. We have been carrying out on-going talks, on-going short courses with the fisher folk but only with very limited success. We have been trying to show the utility the wisdom in retaining the fish on ice once it leaves the boat but as I have said, we have only had limited success in this area and we will continue. It is a question to my mind of education and we will continue to play our part in ensuring that they recognise the importance of using the ice facilities after the fish is landed, especially at Oistins and in Bridgetown where this is really happening. There are a couple of other points which have been raised that we will take note of. If at some later date it could be incorporated in the legislation probably by way

of amendment, rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that this would be done. 6.25 p.m.

With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. D. BOWEN, seconded by Hon. C. V. WALKER, 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. Parts I

through IV inclusive were called and passed. The

Schedule to, the Bill was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. W. BOWEN, seconded by Hon. C. V. WALKER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. W. BOWEN, seconded by Hon. C. V. WALKER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, at this point, I am asking leave of the House to revert to the Order of Business. I am asking this, Sir, because the Minister of Housing has a Ministerial Statement to make.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there is no objection, the Minister may proceed.

STATEMENT BY A MINISTER

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON LOWER ESTATE TENANTRY, ST. GEORGE

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, over the past few days the Ministry has been reviewing the situation at Lower Estate Tenantry and now takes the opportunity to clarify its position.

Lower Estate Tenantry is a scheduled plantation tenantry under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act,

Cap. 239B. As a result of this, qualified tenants have a right to purchase the lots which they occupy at the statutory price of \$1.00 per square metre or 10 cents per square foot. This right is normally exercised through the submission of a Form I Notice to the landlord who is then legally bound to sell the lot, in its existing condition, as soon as is practically possible.

More particularly a qualified tenant is one who has been residing on the lot for five (5) out of seven (7) consecutive years. In this respect, qualified tenants occupy lots which are rented as sites for chattel buildings which are to be used as dwelling houses.

In 1985 this tenantry was identified as one in which roads, electricity and water needed to be improved before lots were sold. As a result of this, a designation order was confirmed by Notice No. 901 in October 1985.

The effect of this was, among other things, to freeze the creation of new tenancies and allow the Government to develop an improvement scheme which would also deal with the matter of the eventual price of the lots. This measure was also preparatory to the acquisition of the land.

In October 1988, the Cabinet took a decision to acquire the tenantry. This process is not yet completed because of some legal difficulties. In the interim, however, the Government, at its own expense, without any consideration of direct cost recovery from the tenants and for the benefit of the tenants, financed the improvement of the roads, electricity and water in the area.

In the meantime, and in spite of the designated status of the tenantry, additional tenancies were created in an unplanned and irregular manner.

I wish to reaffirm that the Government remains committed to acquiring Lower Estate Tenantry and to ensuring that the rights of all qualified tenants, i.e. those who have been residing on their lots at Lower Estate Tenantry for a period of five (5) out of seven (7) years prior to 1985, are preserved. It should be pointed out that it has never been and is not the intention of the Government to delist Lower Estate Tenantry.

As Honourable Members know, the procedure for the delisting involves Ministerial consent and the approval of Cabinet and Parliament. None of this was contemplated or done. Therefore, any communication about proposed abandonment of the tenantry was sent through inadvertence and error.

Government will continue to seek to bring this situation to a speedy conclusion. Thank you. 6.35 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: End of Statement of Minister.

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS Mr.

SPEAKER: Reply to parliamentary question No. 36.

The Honourable Member is not in his seat but he had requested that the reply be laid on the Table and so shall it be.

End of Reply to parliamentary questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I think it is a good time for us to adjourn and I move therefore that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 22, 1993 at 12.00 o'clock noon.

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

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

CONTENTS**MINUTES**

Hon. P. M. GREAVES	3614
/ Confirmation of Minutes	
of Meeting of Tuesday, 1st June, 1993.....	3614

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS *

Hon. P. M. GREAVES	3614
--------------------------	------

Notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question
No. 36 was ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES	3615
--------------------------	------

Suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20,
42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of the
Sitting.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 - RESOLUTION THAT PARLIA MENT NOTE THE AGREEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ASSEMBLY OF CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY PARLIA MENTARIANS	3615
--	------

Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, 3615, 3617, 3618,
3619; Miss B. A. Miller, 3618; Mr. H. deB.
Forde, 3618; Mr. DeL. O. Bradshaw, 3619,
3621; Hon. B. M. Taitt, 3621, 3622, 3623,
3625, 3626; Hon. H. B. St. John, 3626; Mr. L.
R. Tull, 3628, 3631; Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford,
3632, 3633, 3634, 3635, 3636.

ORDER NO. 6 - THE FISHERIES BILL, 1993 .. 3636

Hon. D. W. Bowen, 3636, 3646; Mr. R. C.
Eastmond, 3638; Hon. N. K. Simmons, 3638;
Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, 3641; Hon. W. O.
Franklin, 3644; Hon. H. B. St. John, 3644,
3645.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS "

Hon. E. E. GREAVES	3647
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Clarification re Lower Estate Tenantry, St.
George matter.

QUESTION TIME

Question No. 36

Mr. O. S. Arthur was not in his place and the
Reply was laid.

SUSPENSION	3626
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ADJOURNMENT.....	3648
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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOWEN, Hon. D. W. (St. Michael South Central)
BRADSHAW, Mr. DeL. O. (St. Michael South East)
CHELTENHAM, Dr. R. L. (St. Joseph)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North) FORDE,
Mr. H. deB. (Christ Church West) FRANKLIN, Hon.
W. O. (St. Philip North) GREAVES, Hon. E. E. (St.
Lucy) GREAVES, Hon. P. M. (St. Michael North)
MILLER, Miss B. A. (City of Bridgetown) St. JOHN,
Hon. H. B. (Christ Church South) SANDIFORD, Rt.
Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South) SIMMONS, Hon. N.
K. (St. James South) TAITT, Hon. B. M. (St. Michael
West) THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H. (St. John) TULL,
Mr. L. R. (St. George South)