

THE House of Assembly Debates (OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 9, 1993

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 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. SANDIFORD, 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. 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. W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.B.M., J.P., (Minister of Tourism and Sports)
Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.
Mr L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.
Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.)
Mr. J. O. TUDOR
Hon. D. W. BOWEN, (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)
Mr. G. W. PAYNE
Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A., LL.B.

Prayers were led by Mr. L. L. Brathwaile, J.P. Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of Tuesday, 26th January, 1993.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th January, 1993, which have been circulated, be taken as read and confirmed.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

PAPERS

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Drug Abuse (Prevention and

Control) Regulations, 1993. I am also commanded to lay the Drug Abuse (Notification of Addicts) Regulations, 1993.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year 1990-91.

2954

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James North, his question on the supply of sugar to Barbados during 1992.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries: Will the Minister state the following in respect of the supply of sugar to Barbados during 1992:

(1) the terms prescribed in the invitation to tender published by the Barbados Marketing Corporation with respect to

- (a) origin,
- (b) quality,
- (c) quantities,
- (d) packaging,
- (e) times of shipment and (0 terms of payment;
- (2) the persons and/or businesses invited to tender;

(3) the amount of sugar for which the price of \$10 116 074.47 was realised to December, 1992;

(4) the amount of that sugar

- (a) remaining in stock at the end of December, 1992,
- (b) declared unfit for human consumption and dumped before entry to the Port Bridgetown,
- (c) declared unfit for human consumption and dumped after in-bond storage, and
- (d) sold for any purpose after having been condemned as unfit for human consumption;

(5) the items, and the sums expended per item, in the total expenses of the Barbados Marketing Corporation of \$7 103 018.21;

(6) the amount of sugar involved in the payments to P. S. International of \$4 853 581.90 and to Sea Freight Agencies of \$1 525 398.47;

(7) the amounts disbursed for

- (a) sea freight,
- (b) handling charges in the Port of Bridgetown or otherwise,
- (c) ground transportation for in-bond storage at the former Barbados Industrial Development Corporation's (BIDC) bond in Su Philip and otherwise,
- (d) the rate per tonne paid to BIDC amounting to \$41 056.40,
- (e) the rate per tonne for wages and salaries in the sum of \$73 557.10, and
- (f) the number and categories of persons employed at the said bond in connection with the sugar shipments?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, his question about the deplorable physical conditions at the St. Matthews School.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, to ask the Minister of Education

1. Is the Minister aware of the deplorable physical conditions obtaining at the St. Matthews

School in Jackmans, St. Michael and that those conditions are injurious to the health and general wellbeing of staff and pupils?

2. Would the Minister

- (a) consider the following suggestions as being progressive in the light of Government's immediate inability to relocate the institution, and
- (b) give immediate attention to their implementation:
 - (i) the repair of windows, sanitising of premises, with special emphasis on lavatory facilities, maintenance of proper janitorial services to alleviate the build up of dust that is evident whenever visits are made to the institution, and
 - (ii) with the assistance of the Ministry of Public Works, Communications and Transportation and the Ministry of Labour, Consumer Affairs and

2955

12.25 p.m.

the Environment, to lay the basis for a well defined playing area for students, by clearing the premises of undesirable trees and bush which only presently maintain the threat to the safety of the staff and pupils alike, thereby also providing the impetus for the development of a gardening project for the school especially the Composite Section of the institution?

ORDERS OF THE DAY SUSPENSION. OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am moving at this point the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6,16,18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: On the last meeting of the House, the understanding was that we would have proceeded with Item 4 on Private Members' Business today. After an exchange of information between the Honourable Leader of the House and the Honourable Member for St. Peter to the effect that the Minister of State was not going to be available, it was agreed that debate will be deferred, subject to Your Honour's approval.

I am checking with other members to see whether the debate on privatisation, No. 3, can be continued. Other members have been expecting to talk on No. 4, so I will let the Honourable Member know during the course of the morning.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 7 - COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1992-93, NO. 4 HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE - PROGRAMME 01: DIRECTION AND POLICY FORMULATION SERVICES- SUB-PROGRAMME 01: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION SERVICES OBJECT NO. 103: NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS" OBJECT NO. 207: UTILITIES

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, as the Schedule for the Supplementary Estimates 1992-93, No. 4 indicates, the provision in the approved Estimates for 1992-93 under Head 16, Ministry of

the Civil Service, Object No. 103: National Insurance Contributions was \$139 078 and that under Object No. 207: Utilities was \$171 843.

Speaking first in relation to National Insurance Contributions, the sum of \$139 078 has proved inadequate and it is necessary to supplement that provision by the sum of \$61 246 which should take the vote through the remainder of this financial year. The supplement is required in order to meet the necessary commitments for this particular item, National Insurance Contributions, which is concomitant with the employment of people. So long as persons are employed, either in permanent service or on a temporary basis, it will be necessary to pay National Insurance contributions for them. It is therefore necessary to supplement the item. The amount approved, as I have indicated already, was \$139 078. The expenditure at December IS was \$136 488.54, leaving a balance at that date of \$2 589.46. The projected expenditure to the end of March of this calendar year is \$63 835.39. When the balance of \$2 589.46 is taken away from the projected expenditure of \$63 835.39 the sum of \$61 245.93 is required as the supplement and that, when rounded off, comes to \$61 246 which is the sum by which this Committee is being asked to supplement the vote.

In respect of Utilities, as the Schedule indicates, the sum of \$171 843 has been provided in the approved Estimates but a sum of \$49 381 is required so that the commitments under the vote may be met for the remainder of the financial year. The supplement is being requested especially to meet a change at Government Headquarters in the telephone system which was determined to be obsolete and near impossible to repair. In fact, Sir, I believe that if the system in operation is not the original system which was there from the start in the Government Headquarters building, it certainly has been there for almost 20 years or even more. With the change in technology, equipment specifications and whatever else, the system has become obsolete, and BARTEL has indicated that it is virtually impossible to repair and the best approach would be to install a new system which would not only be a

modern system but one with features which the existing system does not possess. The change is being made on the recommendation of BARTEL. This supplement would cover the additional cost for the new system.

A sum of \$4 000 per quarter is also required to pay for connection to the Sewerage System. Government Headquarters is now hooked up to that system and it is necessary to provide the necessary funds to pay for that service.

In addition to those 2 items, Sir, there are also costs related to electricity used at Government Headquarters so that the bills may be met towards the end of the quarter. The sum of \$49 380.13 rounded off at \$49 381 is required to supplement the item for Utilities.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that Head 16 stand part.

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the Right Honourable Prime Minister in introducing this supplementary Resolution under Head 16 has given reasons why there should be an increase in the amount to be voted for Utilities. What is significant, however, is that in introducing that part of the Resolution relating to National Insurance Contributions the Minister has merely stated that the vote has proved inadequate; but the reasons for those inadequacies have not been explained to this Committee. It cannot be because more people are employed.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has given way. I would like to indicate that there are about 13 additional temporary posts being utilised and 13 additional persons therefore have been employed. I would just like to give this information so that the member may proceed with his point on the basis of that foundation.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: The Prime Minister has stated that there have been 13 temporary posts created in the Civil Service. We do not know the Ministries to which they have been assigned, although they are being paid from the Civil Service vote. Let me say that overall in the Civil Service there has not been any increase in employment. In fact, there has been a reduction in employment so that basically the increase in expenditure has had no effect at all on the unemployment position in Barbados which, as you know, remains extraordinarily high with some 27 000 people out of employment today in Barbados.

I want to concentrate particularly on the National Insurance Fund. The last actuarial review made of the National Insurance Fund was laid in this House in December 1990. Under the National Insurance Act there has to be a review done by the end of December

1993. Every 3 years there is an actuarial review of all of these funds administered by the National Insurance office. Therefore that review has to be done.

I am concerned, Sir, that if employers, both private and public, are permitted to default in their legal obligations in making payments under the National Insurance Fund and the various funds administered by the National Insurance Board, the effect will be undermining of the social security scheme of Barbados and, in the long run, persons who when they reach the age of 65 are looking to the Fund for their retirement benefits, will find themselves at a disadvantage. That must be obvious to everyone of us.

I have been watching the number of cases being increasingly brought before the Courts suing employers who have not been paying National Insurance Contributions into the Fund. Now, Sir, part of the money has been paid by the employees, so such employers have received money from employees and have not passed it on to the Fund. I am suggesting to this Committee that those funds are trust monies. Such default is occurring not merely in the private sector but in the public sector as well.

Now, Sir, the Transport Board owes the National Insurance Fund in excess of \$16 million. I believe it is close to \$19 million. This is one of the worst examples of an employer who has taken the employees' money and now cannot pay it into the Fund. Therefore, employees are being disadvantaged by the delinquent manner in which the Transport Board has acted. Now, Sir, this is a very serious matter. There is provision in the law to prosecute the employer.

I have not seen any criminal cases being brought against the Transport Board. I have seen only one criminal case being brought against one private employer for failure to pay over to the Fund money collected by way of trust for the National Insurance Fund. It is still pending so I cannot talk about it. Government has to be castigated, and particularly the Minister in charge of Transport, for allowing within the last few years an institution under his control to be in a position where some close to \$19 million in debt has accrued and no payment has been made. Therefore I repeat that such default can work to the detriment of the Fund and finally undermine the very security of that Fund. 12.45 p.m.

Now I want to give the Government a positive suggestion, Sir. The Government will find that the legislation has been altered in Ontario, or is in the process of being altered. I think the Bill may have gone through by now making it a criminal offence for statutory bodies and corporate bodies to collect moneys from the public and

2957

not to turn it over to the Fund. And it is a criminal offence not only for the bodies but for the directors and those persons who are managers and who would have the responsibility to run the corporations. So there is precedent in the Commonwealth. If the legislation had been changed here. Sir, the Chairman and other Directors on the Board would have been under a duty to ensure that the funds were properly paid in and we would not have the position where the funds collected have not been paid in.

I make the point very strongly, Mr. Chairman, because under section 31 of the National Insurance Act there is also an obligation on Parliament and on the Minister responsible that where there is a deficiency in the Fund - so too under the Severance Payments Fund - to vote money to meet that temporary deficiency.

Under the National Insurance and Social Security Act, Mr. Chairman, the provision in section 31 makes it absolutely clear that this is so. I am going to read the provision under the Severance Payments Act too, Sir. That Fund is also administered by the National Insurance Board. The provision is similar to the one under the National Insurance and Social Security Act, Sir. It is section 27(2). It says:

"Any temporary insufficiency in the assets of the Fund to meet the liabilities of the Fund under this Act shall be met from such sums as Parliament may advance for the purpose."

It is absolutely clear. Sir, the Actuarial Report which was laid in this House at the end of 1990 made various recommendations for improving the viability of the funds administered by the National Insurance Board. Some of those recommendations have been met. But in Chapter 4 of the Report this statement is made:

"Benefits paid by the fund in the form of rebates or direct payments have decreased from \$3.8 million in 1988 to \$2.3 million in 1990 on a cash basis, but it must be noted that at the end of 1990, the fund had outstanding claims of \$1.7 million which had been approved for payment, but not paid because of an insufficiency of funds. There was also a contingent liability of \$5.9 million representing employers' claims".

So that is \$7.6 million at the end of 1990 - a deficiency. Now that deficiency has increased and the problem is that there has been nothing done to bring a Resolution, in accordance with the law of Barbados, before Parliament in order to increase the fund to meet the liabilities of the Fund.

That is the law. The IMF cannot tell us not to do that. The reason why you are having difficulty is, firstly,

the

Transport Board has not complied with the National Insurance and Social Security Act and paid over the moneys that it had collected from the workers and its share in order to give the workers the security that they can get their moneys under the Severance Payments Fund.

The National Insurance Funds should be kept sacrosanct. An employer has an obligation not only to deduct, but to hand over. The Board has an obligation to see that that employer deducts and hands over and I am charging that where the Board sits and does nothing that there is a breach of statutory duty.

Mr. Chairman, I am speaking from knowledge of 2 cases in my constituency. I threatened to sue the National Insurance Board for not collecting from private employers and the Board eventually paid up and settled the 2 claims.

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I am suggesting that in the case of the Transport Board that the Government has an obligation to bring resolutions to Parliament to put the money into the Fund so that the workers can get their severance. If not the workers should sue the Board and sue the Attorney General as well in the process, for the delinquency of the Crown. And, Mr. Chairman, just as this goes for the Transport Board, likewise it should go for other employees.

I am reading again from the Report again, Sir, at page 30.

"The Severance Payments Act provides that any temporary insufficiency in the assets of the fund to meet its liabilities will be met from sums advanced to the fund by Parliament. Any sums advanced must be repaid with interest."

It goes on to say, Sir, the Government would have known that where there is an insolvent employer the Fund will have to meet that responsibility.

I suggest that just as must be done in the case of the Transport Board workers, the Government must meet the deficiency occurring in order to pay the sugar workers their money. Once the Fund cannot meet it, if there is an insufficiency, the law is clear. There is no argument about this. We must supplement it. I suggest that the Government has the resources to do this from the cess being collected from the sale of the Guatemalan sugar. Use that to meet that deficiency. There should be no hesitation in dealing with these matters within the process of the legislation that exists.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. George North caught my eye.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, it is not always that I agree with some of the things that are said by the Leader of the Opposition but I have to agree with some things he said today.

There has been some laxity on the part of the National Insurance in collecting funds due to it.

Now, unfortunately, this has been historical. In the early 1980s the Manager and owner of Miramar Hotel escaped from this country owing the National Insurance maybe \$1 000 000 of moneys that he had collected from the workers and put it to use on his hotel. That, Sir, is wrong. It has been happening, it would appear to me, Sir, from the time the scheme began. In other words not only during the time that we have been the Government but also during the time that they have been the Government it has been happening. I regret very much, no one regrets it more than I do. I was not aware of it until recently, but I regret very much the issue with the Transport Board. The Transport Board owes a considerable amount of money to the National Insurance Board. Moneys that have been collected from the workers. That is to be regretted and I can say that now because I castigated the members on the other side in 1986. I did not speak, I did it when I was the Minister.

I castigated the Members on the other side in 1986 for also allowing a similar thing to occur during their time. I cannot blow hot and cold. If the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would like to exempt himself, he may do so. He was Prime Minister at the time. He did make a statement in here, Sir. I said it in 1986 and I said it last year. If you want me to repeat, I can repeat it again. The Honourable Member who was then Prime Minister deplored it on the files. I read it into the record and I said then that it was to his credit that that was done. I also deplore the fact that Transport Board deducted levies from the workers and did not pay them over into the Fund. This is precisely what has happened. Wages were deducted. Not only did they not pay in their own contribution, but they did not pay in the workers' contribution which they had deducted. That happened when they were the Government and it happened when we were the Government. 12.55 p.m.

Sir, it is no excuse for me to say, and I am not disputing the Transport Board, that the Transport Board did not have enough funds to run its operations. Therefore, they had to make use of what funds that

were available at the particular time. I do not agree with that. I believe, Sir, that if the Board has obligations to meet in terms of making those kinds of payments, then those payments should be made. Now that we have been looking at the Transport Board and we have trimmed it down considerably to a more manageable size, Sir, it is still carrying out the work that it was intended to carry out. It is not doing all the routes that it had been doing because some of the routes we have moved and others have moved onto those routes. Now that we have trimmed it down to a more manageable size, I am expecting that the Transport Board will be meeting its obligations to its workers.

Sir, I have said it here before that we have got to take other steps in relation to the Transport Board. Whatever happens, Sir, we first have got to meet the obligation to the National Insurance in one way or the other. Either we will do it from the assets of the Transport Board or the Government will have to meet those obligations. It has got to be done. The point is, Sir, that these deficits should not be allowed to continue. In that respect, Sir, I am in agreement with what the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the Leader of the Opposition has said on this particular Resolution.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Chairman, I do not propose to make any excuse for the Transport Board. I do not propose to make any excuse for any employer. I think that we have to check the methodology involved over the years which has brought us to this particular situation. Since 1980, I recall there was much discussion in this country when companies were making arrangements or re-arranging, if you will, with their bankers to pay their payroll. There was always the big question of whether or not they accepted the gross payroll from the company or if they only paid out what was referred to as the net payroll, bearing in mind that around that same time there were several small companies in the information process of business which had set about to institute payroll systems for the private companies in the industrial estates and in other places.

The question at that point has always been whether it is the "gross" or the "net", bearing in mind, Mr. Chairman, ^x that business people have their arrangements with their bankers, and the banker is supposed, at the end of the week or at the end of the month to pay that payroll for that particular company. When the bank makes the arrangement to pay the payroll and the bank decides that it is only going to pay the net, we still have outstanding the question of the payments made by the employee and by the employer which do not get into that system. What applies here for National Insurance also has applied for the Severance Payment as well. This is further complicated, Mr. Chairman, by the fact that the company does not make any submission at that particular time to the bank for their contribution. Indeed, they do not even make a submission for the net figure of what the employee pays in. It is only shown as a deduction against the gross. Therefore, they are really not submitting any requirement for that to be paid in. This has developed over the years that companies, as

2959

mentioned by previous speakers, have not been paying in their funds because they feel that the company will just pay the payroll and they will take their chances.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the time has come that all companies, statutory boards and what have you will have to try to make some arrangement to pay in their National Insurance funds on behalf of their employees and on behalf of themselves. This creates a whole snowballing effect and this is now 13 years since we have been looking at this problem in any serious manner. We are hearing a discussion on a daily basis about those who are not receiving severance or national insurance. The sooner we put a stop to it, the better it will be for all of us. If we do not address it now, Mr. Chairman, 10 years from now those who are now 45, 50 and looking at 55 will be a little worried. Thank you very much.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as I look around this House, I have one regret. It is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central are not in their place. This Resolution that we are debating now directly concerns the fundamental question as to what steps have to be taken in Barbados to ensure that a mechanism which was devised by both sides of this House to ensure that in particular periods of economic dislocation, that the workers are assured if they lose the security of their employment at least a measure of security in the form of severance pay being paid out of the Severance Fund. In 1972 or 1973 when this Bill was introduced, it was introduced with that objective to ensure that re-organisations could take place in the country and that when those re-organisations took place one would have the comfort of knowing that human suffering could be alleviated to the extent of severance for past services to the entity where one was working. It was agreed that the best

way of making provision was by way of a contributory scheme in which both the employer and the employee participated in the contribution. 1.05 p.m.

Regrettably, in Barbados there has been a slowness in understanding by all sides that the respective contributions of both employer and worker are a cost. Wages negotiations have taken place against a background of this law, but in reality people seem to have ignored the fact that it is a cost that has to be carried by the particular industry. Government Statutory Corporations in their capacity as employers have been some of the chief offenders in this respect, and I believe that the time has certainly come when all sides of this House must make sure that there are such amendments to the law, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the Leader of the Opposition, has said, to ensure that the reality of these facts is brought home to the people.

The chief offender, as I understand it, is the Transport Board. I feel that despite the fact that we are in a restructuring exercise with the International Monetary Fund, there is absolutely no legitimate excuse for action not to be taken in accordance with the Act by the Government to ensure either way by a guarantee or by way of a direct loan to the National Insurance Board that those workers who have been displaced as part and parcel of the* restructuring exercise in Barbados to be compensated in accordance with the laws of Barbados. There cannot be any moral, legal or financial justification for not taking action.

The money you are using is Barbadian money. You can be assured that you will be repaid, because our experience in the past has been that when the Fund was in temporary difficulty advances are made and it is repaid over a period of time. It is more amazing to me and illustrates the fact that little thought was given to the restructuring exercise in relation to your transport. I would have thought that at the time when you made the decision about restructuring the Transport Board, you would have ensured that the competitors with the Transport Board, the replacement entity, would have in some way contributed towards the cost of the exercise.

It is very interesting to me, Sir, that what we have done is to replace one entity which is operating in a certain area with a multiplicity of lawless entities. I have absolutely no doubt that few of the entities carrying out transport activities formerly carried out by the Transport Board make any contributions to the National Insurance Fund in respect of their employees. My investigations reveal that they work on a kind of partnership basis, a percentage in the dollar. I have not had the opportunity of studying the precise relationship between the employer and the employee. I am sorry that the Honourable Members are not here, because I would tell them, and I think we should have a debate on it, one of the functions of a modern trade union in all of these societies like ours has to be to ensure that its members' security of tenure is protected against activities of fly-by-night people who come along and employ people on different terms and conditions from those which they have been able to negotiate around the bargaining table for their members.

I say this too, Sir. As a result of this present crisis, in the future employees should understand that they should not deal with employee organisations if they cannot help to protect legitimate employers who demand and pay a decent wage. It is a serious thing that you have different entities operating in the same market on different terms and conditions of service. It is economic nonsense and we have to have a solution to that.

There can be no doubt about it. We are in a serious position with respect to severance pay. You cannot have one half of your employers paying it and the other half

2960

not paying it. It is not a level playing field. It is very similar to Caricom. One part has one kind of currency and another has a different one. It is wrong, so we have to grapple with it.

It is a matter of great regret to me that the Government did not appreciate and understand the ramifications of their action when they took the Transport Board's money from the levy and put it into the Consolidated Fund. We knew very well that the effect of that would be that there would be so many spoons in the pot, there was no way of ensuring, once it went into that pot, that the Transport Board's spoon would be able to come out with all that was in the pot. We knew that. It is the same thing with the health levy. We warned you over there that it was a foolish policy to think....

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That was the whole point. The Honourable Member has been good enough and kind enough to make it publicly known that when I had responsibility for this matter I made it abundantly clear that heads would roll, as far as we were concerned, if people had deducted the money from the wages and not paid it over.

Now, Sir, I feel for the integrity of the Severance Payments Scheme in Barbados, as well as for the integrity

of employer/employee relationships, that we make an especial effort to deal with this matter. It is not only the Transport Board workers, it is going to be the hotel workers too. We have had instances of it but we cannot comment on them. Attempts were made when the case the Honourable Member spoke of occurred to adjust the law relating to receivership and bankruptcy so as to give some measure of security to the claims of workers whose money had been deducted and they could not receive it from the company after it went into receivership. I believe there was an amendment to the law adjusting the priorities. That obviously has not been a satisfactory solution.

We need to ensure in our own minds by an examination of our law relating to receivership and to bankruptcy as to the priorities of the rights of the workers in relation to severance when a company goes into receivership or into liquidation and matters of that kind. That has to be dealt with. As I said, and I repeat, I feel that this matter is creating such a feeling of injustice among people who are aggrieved in this matter, that we as members of the Legislature have to face the issue.

Everybody knows that the inevitable consequence of the programme entered into by the Government was that there would be large scale unemployment resulting from restructuring. We were all told that our employee and other costs were too high, that in order for us to get out of our economic difficulties/ to be competitive, we had to slash employment costs in Government, in parastatal corporations or statutory corporations and in the private sector. With our laws a finite amount of money could have been determined as to what it would cost. We should have made provision for that. 1.15 p.m. My final point is that I cannot understand how Government could negotiate a programme with the International Monetary Fund and not insist that as part of the programme that the laws of Barbados in relation to severance pay have been complied with. It seems to me there has been gross negligence in the working out of that programme on the part of the Government because it is responsible.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether I missed something in the debate, but from the time I was in the Chamber I listened to what transpired and I heard a lot of dialectics about the National Insurance Fund and particularly the Severance Payments Fund. A lot of good sense has been spoken but I am a little bit concerned, not about the weaknesses in the system which we continually hear about from the Government - I should say here that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North tends to think that the failures of the Government can be justified by reference to past failures.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: That is a complete misrepresentation of what I said. I was merely repeating historical fact not justifying anything. I want to make it clear. I was not justifying it because in my view it is not justifiable.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Change the word, Sir, explained. He explained away Government's failure to deal with what is a very serious problem by saying it was going on for a number of years. It is not the first time I have heard that ^k kind of reaction from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North in relation to problems of this nature.

A lot has happened in the last 2 years. We have witnessed the entitlement of workers abridged savagely and we have also seen the rights of workers in relation to social security seriously trampled. Why I say that I may have missed something is because I am primarily concerned with what is Government's position in relation to the payment of the Transport Board workers of their severance money. It would be unworthy of this Chamber to spend an hour or two debating a Resolution for some more money in the Committee of Supply that touches on one of the burning current issues and all the Government can do is get up, dance around the problem and beg for a little understanding because it has a difficulty with employers not paying

x

2961

in money. They are the Government and Government has a responsibility to govern. If employers, whether they be private employers or parastatals, as we discussed in relation to the Transport Board, are not sticking to the law with the result that workers are having their rights seriously compromised, then let the Government do something about it.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North is always easy with these glib answers when he is asked about these things. He tells the Transport Board workers that he sympathises with them. This is what the Deputy Prime Minister of this country tells workers who are severed for several months and cannot get their money. He says, "I am sympathetic with you, but go and apply to the Severance Fund." Well knowing that the Severance Fund is broke.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Can we have order, please.

Mr. L. R. TULL: That is what the Deputy Prime Minister is telling the people laid off from a statutory corporation under the aegis of his Ministry. For months people are walking the streets, marching, begging and pleading for Government to do something about their severance payments entitlement. They are not even advised how to go about going to the Fund. We have a debate in here today in which we are hearing a lot of fine language about the problems that the Fund and the whole social security scheme has been encountering in recent times.

The workers want to hear when they are going to get their severance money and they want a commitment from the Government that they will get their money by a particular date. If this debate is to mean anything, those are the questions that must be answered. Quit talking around the problem all the time. Government has no difficulty in putting employers in the Law Court for not paying their national insurance. In fact, in recent times there has been a proliferation of actions brought against employers for not paying the employees' money into the Fund.

Nobody on this side should have to tell Government how to govern. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North has boasted in the past - he will get up now and object to the word "boast" and say "state" - that he had the first hand in this social security legislation, that the National Insurance Scheme was his handiwork. Well, the child is suffering and he has to do something about it. Like other people, I am a little bit sick and tired of all this business of talking around the problem.

The Government knew when it entered the programme with the International Monetary Fund and when it came in October 1991 with a number of measures that there would be as a consequence a large number of layoffs both in the private and in the public sector. It would have known that there would have been heavy demands on the Severance Fund. If Government had gone into this with its eyes open and had known what it was doing and had planned for it we would not be in the position we are in today.

•*

The workers are now considering the Government as the enemy. That is not a tradition in Barbados. For over 50 years workers in this country have considered Government as a friend and protector against social injustice. Now in 1993, we have reached the situation where large numbers of workers across the country are now seeing Government as the enemy that they have to be fighting wars against. A certain insensitivity and callousness characterise all the Government's actions in recent times in relation to workers' rights and entitlements. Government cannot say that it did not anticipate what is happening today. The fact that it did nothing to prepare for the situation it is facing today suggests 1 or 2 things or both: either it does not care what the situation is in relation to these people - and one can fairly interpret that as the situation that is mouthed in recent times by the Deputy Prime Minister - or alternatively, the Government is so incompetent that it moves into a situation such as this without laying the proper foundation for dealing with these problems when they arise. It is one or the other, or both and I believe it is an element of both. There are certain sections of the Government who do not care and there are other sections who have demonstrated a manifest incompetence in dealing with anything that comes up that is not routine. 1.25 p.m.

I am asking again, Mr. Chairman, because I really do not have much time to get into all these semantics and dialectics, about the state of the National Insurance Scheme. That has been the subject of numerous debates in this Chamber over the past 2 years and most of what was said today in relation to that is what all of us and the country have heard *ad nauseam*. So we want to move beyond that.

There is a new and compelling situation in Barbados today, a situation as I said, where workers no longer can consider the Government as their protector and guardian but as the entity against which they must constantly be waging war because of the insensitivity and callousness not only by Government action, but by the voices of certain spokesmen for the Government every time they get up and make public statements about what workers are entitled to in this country. It is about time the Government gets off the workers' backs. I cannot speak of what impositions are being made by external bodies. I am not into that at the moment but whoever is responsible now for the situation in this country where the workers have to be on a constant daily basis carrying the heavy load on their backs,

2962
I am saying to them it is about time they get off and that the Government has the overriding responsibility to do something about it.

There is no point coming in here crying crocodile tears saying that employers do not pay in money to the fund. If they do not pay money into the Fund when they collect it, let the Government do something about it. The Government will get no sympathy from me for coming before Parliament and confessing failure in an important area of social security and use as an explanation, since the Honourable Member said it was not

a justification, its failure to act by saying, "Man this has a long history. This has been going on a long time so what is the complaint about." That is not what Governments are elected for, Sir. That is all I have to say on this matter at the moment

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I really did not anticipate I would be speaking a second time but coming after what the Honourable Member for St. George South himself spoke of as dialectics, it has become necessary for me to say a few things. It was not only dialectics but the antics of recent days. Let me state, Sir, that some of the Transport Board workers were severed in December 1991. The severance continued over a period, nearly a year. Some were severed as late as November 1992. Some of the workers have been due their severance from then. The workers received a letter from the Transport Board indicating that they were entitled to severance. The Transport Board is an employer like any other employer and like all the Honourable Members over there. Each one of them, I am not sure about the Honourable Member for St. Peter, but all the other Honourable Members employ persons. They are all employers and they are, I hope, all contributors to the severance payments in respect of the persons they employ. If at any time it becomes necessary for any one over there, over here or anyone in Barbados to sever those workers, then severance becomes due. If they find themselves unable to pay the severance, then the law prescribes what should be done in that case. We do not have 2 sets of laws relating to this particular matter.

There is one set of laws governing severed workers in Barbados. The Severance Payments Act governs private employers as well as the parastatal employers. There is nothing to exempt one or the other. We do not have one set of laws dealing with one in one way and another set dealing with another in another way. It is all there. If employees had been severed and not received their monies they would know what to do. They would have gone to the Severance Payments Board, filled in the necessary forms and got their money, because they have done it time and time again. I would not be surprised if some of the same workers had not been severed from elsewhere and got some money through the same procedures. They do not have to wait a year for their money. But no, it is the Government. They have members like the Honourable Member for St. George South to come and encourage them in foolishness. This is the problem. There is evidence of that which took place a couple of days ago. He cannot be outdone by somebody else. He has to do the same foolishness that somebody does.

Certain remarks made by Hon. P. M. GREAVES were ordered by Mr. CHAIRMAN to be expunged from the records.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am about to resume now, Sir. The same foolishness that was done he has been caught doing the same nonsense. Instead of today telling people to go and work he is telling the people do not work. Can you imagine that kind of nonsense, Sir?

Mr. L. R. TULL: On a point of order, Sir. You can always tell when the Honourable Member is rattling...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order? 1.35p.m.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. George South were asked to be expunged from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN. .

Mr. L. R. TULL:-What the Honourable Member has said about me is not true. I have not said anything in the course of this debate...

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I wish Honourable Members would cool off a bit If the Honourable Member for St. George South will give way for a moment...! have ruled, as I had done previously with your comment, that the remarks be withdrawn and struck from the records.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I have not given way. I am speaking. The point of order has been made, Sir. I am speaking, Sir.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am on a point of order.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, you have to make your ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will both Honourable Members take your seat? The Honourable Member for St. Michael North rose on a point of order based on a comment that was made by the Honourable Member for St. George South. I intervened to say to the Honourable Member that I had instructed that the remark be withdrawn and struck from the record. That is the position which we are at the moment. I do not know if the Honourable Member

2963

wanted to continue his point of order and I will hear him on that. I was speaking to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North because the Honourable Member for St. George was speaking.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I am the substantive speaker. I have been interrupted.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am on a point of order, Sir, and that has not been dealt with.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order from the Honourable Member for St. George South?

Mr. L. R. TULL: You are now going to hear, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North, in his contribution, said that I told people not to work. That is the point I rose on. There is nothing that I have said in my contribution in this debate that even touched on that, Sir, and it is to that point I speak when I say that the Honourable Member is misrepresenting what I have said.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not consider that a point of order because the Honourable Member did not say that it was said in your speech.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Only to that extent, Sir, the Honourable Member is truthful.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am not allowing that, Sir. Is that to suggest that I am not truthful in other things? I do not mind what he said, Sir. I am raising a question with the Chair, Sir, and I am objecting to that.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Sir, I was making the point...

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am on a point of order. The Honourable Member has suggested that I am partly truthful and I want Your Honour to rule on whether that remark made by the Honourable Member is proper. I am saying that it is not.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member, if my memory serves me correctly, said to that extent is the Honourable Member truthful. That is a positive statement which I cannot fault.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, I have been making the point about the entitlement of workers to severance. I have been making the point that the law makes no distinction between those who are employed by the Honourable Member for St. George South or those employed by the Transport Board. I was making the point, Sir, that if the Honourable Member for St. George South had been unable to meet his severance obligations then that worker or workers employed by him would have to look to the Severance Payments Fund according to the law for payment.

I was further making the point, Sir, that the same would apply to the Transport Board workers. If they had in January, February or March last year made the application to the Severance Payments Fund, they would not have had to march last week in the streets of Bridgetown because they would have got their money.

Aside.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am not prepared to say that. I do not know who advised them. I am merely saying what the law is and to that extent the Honourable Member for St. George South should have advised the workers. He has now set himself up, Sir, as an adviser of workers and a guardian of their welfare. Now he is that. If he is such a guardian of their welfare, then he should not have allowed them to be one year

without any severance benefits. He should have advised them what to do to get their severance payment and he could have done it, Sir. There was no need for the Transport Board workers who had been severed in December 1991...I make this point and I will continue to make it...to be marching in 1993 for their money because they could have got the money from the Severance Payments Fund. If the Severance Payments Fund was not sufficient at the time to do it, then the Government would have had to supplement that Fund to pay them.

Aside.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I did not say that the money was not sufficient, Sir. I said that if the money was not sufficient and that is not only for the Transport Board workers. That is also for workers anywhere even Cave Shepherd's workers. If the money was not sufficient to pay those who are entitled to severance payments, then it is the responsibility of Government to make sure that the Fund is kept at a level to meet its obligations. That is the position. The point I am making, Sir, is that the workers could have been paid earlier than now. That is the point. The workers could have been paid earlier than now and they must know this. I assume, Sir, they all know the law because every single one of them over there except the Honourable Member for St. Peter is a lawyer.

Aside.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: The point is that Government has made a decision to make the money available directly to the Transport Board rather than through the Severance Payments Fund to pay those workers who have been severed. The severance, hopefully, will be paid by March 15th, Sir. 1.45 p.m.

2964

Not hopefully, will be paid not later than March 15 by the Transport Board. The Transport Board will be put in funds for the specific purpose of paying the workers their moneys in 2 instalments. The first instalment, Sir, will be paid not later than March 15. The second instalment will be paid not later than June 15. So the Transport Board will be put in Funds for that purpose. The point remains and I must make this point, Sir, that the workers could have received their moneys earlier if they had observed all the provisions of the law and I am told some of the workers have already been severed from other employment and have had to resort to the severance payments fund for their moneys. That is well known and that is the law of this country and we should observe the laws of this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Christ Church West.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: The Honourable Member's second introduction really has left all of us amazed at the circuitous manner in which he is arguing his case. The point is, the Honourable Member is Minister in charge of the Transport Board. He should be aware of what has been happening in that Board, whether it has been deducting the money, paying it into the Fund, making sure that the employers are paid. The Transport Board has the first obligation, not the Severance Fund, to pay the workers severance when they are made redundant which includes as well a reasonable amount of notice and what they have done is whether you have been working at the Transport Board for 15 or 16 years and in whatever capacity, supervisor or conductor, they are merely giving you 4 weeks notice as against somebody who has been working there for 2 or 3 years. I say that is in breach of the law as well. The Honourable Member can shake his head 50 times that is the law of Barbados and it is going to be fought out in the courts if necessary, with some of the workers.

It is not good enough for the Member to tell us now that only after the Government is under pressure, pressure from the workers and pressure from this Opposition, that he is now going to make money available to the Board to pay them in 2 tranches - March 15 and then June 15, 1993. This should have been done since last year and the Honourable Member would have known that the Severance Payments Fund was broke since 1990. I am reading from the Report. If the Honourable Member brings a Report in the House, the National Insurance Board Actuarial Review at page 30, paragraph 4.2 says that it must be noted that at the end of 1990 the Fund had outstanding claims of \$1.7 million which had been approved for

payment but not paid because of an insufficiency of funds. There was also a contingent liability of \$5.9 million representing employers claims. There were 2 loans made to the Fund of \$3.5 million drawn down in 1987 and \$6.5 million drawn down in 1988. Just a minute. No more money has gone in since then. The Honourable Member must know that. If he listens to the Chairman he will realise that the Chairman has made it quite clear that at February 3 the Fund only had in \$1.7 million and it had outstanding claims against it close to \$5 million plus another \$3 million due for refunds to employers. The Honourable Member must know there is not enough money in the Fund...

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: The Honourable Member knows when there is not enough money in the Fund the Severance payments have to be put in funds. That is the law, Sir.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Funds are put in every day by the people who put in legitimately. What I am saying is that the Government has an obligation under the law, when you are having these outstanding claims to put it in funds. I am saying the Government should have put it in funds when it knew it was deficient to pay the Transport Board workers. I am going a little further. I am saying that the Government has the position where the Severance Payments Fund today cannot meet the number of claims that have arisen against it from the restructuring programme both in the Government sector and in the private sector.

The Government knows that there are some employers that are insolvent, like the sugar people. It knows therefore that it has to put the severance payments fund in funds. You cannot get around that. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has said you are talking local politics, it has not got a foreign component. What is the reason for the delay? If you do not make decisions on these and bring the Resolutions before the House so that we can deal with them you will always get the situation where people are going to go around and say don't wait until you get your money. You will get that situation and therefore you must be on the ball to prevent that from occurring to make sure that the workers are getting their money and this is what the argument is about. The Honourable Member knows that.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am saying that we want a clear statement from the Government that the amount of the Severance Payments Fund will be topped up to meet the legitimate claims. I am asking that legitimate moneys be put in the Fund to pay all workers who have been severed. The Fund cannot make it and the employers cannot make it. I am asking the Government to give an undertaking to amend the law in future to ensure that those employers who deduct moneys and do not pay it in that not only the corporate bodies but the directors as well as the managing officers are prosecuted, so that we will not get the position where you are getting a situation that large numbers of workers are on the breadline without any money coming in from unemployment benefits and they are suffering in the way that they are.

2965

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

SUSPENSION

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

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 1.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it should revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Committee is resumed.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, Sir, there was just one slight point, the reconsideration of the position, on which I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael North will agree with the Opposition. While we welcome the statement that the Government is going to ensure by way of a direct payment to the Transport Board that there will be sufficient funds for the Board to honour its obligations to the workers with respect to their liabilities....

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: to those workers who are eligible. We welcome that position, but we are a little astounded that it has taken the Government so long to recognise that it was under an obligation to ensure that the workers in the peculiar context of the fact that the Transport Board as an employer is regarded in many people's minds, although not legally correct, as being an extension of the Government, and what we fail to understand is why criticise the workers for not going to the Severance Payment Fund. As an enlightened employer I hope that the Transport Board, like all other employers, will feel that it is their obligation to instruct their workers, particularly when they know that they cannot pay, as to their rights. You are eligible for severance, regrettably we do not have the money to pay but we advise you to go to the Severance Payments Tribunal.

When the workers find themselves in a position in which the trade union obviously failed in their duty in instructing them, in not telling them to go to the Severance Payments Fund, at least the conscience of the employer will be clear. I understand that such letters have gone out in respect of the factory workers. That is a different matter. I do not want to get into that here, because I do not see how that Could ever be an issue. I do¹ not see how severance pay for factory workers could ever be an issue, because the fundamental basis upon which the restructuring is taking place is that you have to have a reduction in the employment of people, and the law in Barbados is that in such circumstances severance is due.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am very glad it is not an issue and as far as I am concerned it will not be an issue. As I said in here, people forget that this House of Assembly has debated the issue of severance pay for the sugar industry and I thought we had got that assurance from the Government side that the Government will ensure that the Treasury of Barbados puts funds at the disposal of whatever institution is necessary. We know it is necessary. The Receiver has said he has no money. As a matter of fact, the industry is so bad that not even the ADC has any money, because the ADC is laying off their workers. Just as the Honourable Member has told us in here that Government has had to rethink its position and give the money direct to the Transport Board workers, I have no doubt it is going to rethink its position and give the money direct to the sugar industry authorities.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Just as a matter of interest, Sir, so that he can continue in that light, yesterday it was announced that the Government was making the money available to the BNB for the BNB to make available to the Receiver, or whoever it is, to pay the money to the sugar workers.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: That is not the same thing as what you announced today. That is the point I am making. You announced that you are going to pay the money direct to the Transport Board and the proposition I was putting forward is that a similar situation should take place with respect to the sugar industry. I did not hear you say you gave it to the BNB to give them, so let us get it clear.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Fine. I am very glad the Honourable Member is telling us that is what the position is. This is the final thing I want to say, and I repeat, we should not be in this position. Everybody knows it is an essential part of the programme of the Government of Barbados that in all areas of economic activity in Barbados which are unprofitable you must have a shake out

2966

which inevitably must lead to lesser employment. Your programme was designed to do that, and I say this for you, it was very successful, because you created record unemployment.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I want to pick up from where the Honourable Member has left off. We have had from the Honourable Minister of Public Works, Communications and Transportation an undertaking that the Government is going to pay the Transport Board workers their severance beginning not later than March 15 and ending not later than June 15. Speaking for myself, Sir, I would like to see them paid sooner. I think that enough time has gone and they really are entitled to the money now. I found it a little difficult to understand the Honourable Member's argument that they should have gone to the Fund,

when they went to the correct source, which is their employer, first. The employer should have had all the forms available and should have facilitated them so that they could have taken them straight over to the Fund. In a way the speech by the Honourable Member is a direct criticism too of the trade unions.

Aside.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I am interpreting it that way -as a direct criticism of the trade unions' method of representing the workers. He is saying that the trade unions have sat down and, in some cases since December 1991, have not dealt with the matter. So I interpret his speech as a criticism of the trade union representation. 3.10 p.m.-

I also want to advert to the position of the insolvent Barbados Sugar Industry Ltd. It is obvious (and I will try to explain it simply) that the appointment of the Receiver, as I said in here weeks ago, resulted in an automatic termination of the contracts of employment. Weeks ago, I passed on that information to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and to the Honourable Member for St. John. That was my opinion. I also told the Receiver. There are a few latter day converts who get up and talk a lot of foolishness and write nonsense to the newspaper, but I am not going to be diverted by them.

The point is that I have never changed my opinion. As a matter of fact, for the benefit of history - not for people who buy degrees and find themselves with doctorates - I have not bought my LL.B. or any degree. There are some people who buy theirs and are all sorts of Rt. Reverends and Doctors and who write foolishness in the newspaper and, obviously having bought their degrees, are not able to analyse situations properly. The Receiver and the people must be told that I made available the relevant parts of my opinion available a long time ago to show that the position was clear. The point is not whether or not workers in those circumstances are severed. The

practical problem is from where are you going to get the money.

If you are put into receivership and your total assets are handed over to the Receiver obviously you have to look to the Receiver to be paid from those assets. If those assets are not sufficient to satisfy the debt of the preferred creditor - in this case the BNB - it is obvious that the terminated workers have to look to other sources for their compensation. As I said, if the Severance Fund was not in funds - it is my information that it does not have the money to pay - then Parliament should provide the money.

I am saying to the Government that in the interest of proper industrial relations it is critical for all of us that the crop be reaped. The Barbados Labour Party is no latter day saint running up and down the country parading ourselves and making empty statements as some others are wont to do. We have a history of defending the workers of this country. We are the people who formed the first trade union that has survived in Barbados. Our credentials are beyond any questioning by anyone. Government must give firm dates to the workers and let them know when they will be paid.

I heard a statement attributed to the Honourable Minister of State that they are going to be paid during the crop. The crop ends in May but a firm date must be given. Doubts are created in people's minds when they are told they will be paid during the crop and the crop ends about May. I believe Government must set a definite date to meet the obligations. I think the obligation is accepted. I have heard nothing that contradicts my belief that everybody accepts that there is an obligation. I think the argument is about the time of payment.

I am suggesting to Government to give a firm date so that the workers can have confidence in that date and prevent people from exploiting the situation against the national interest. That is really what I am very concerned about in Barbados at the moment.

I want to say here that I would like to hear from the Government on the Floor of this House that by day X every worker who has been severed as a result of the receivership will receive their severance payment.

I suggest that Government use the cess which it is collecting from the sale of sugar from overseas.

Government will make in a full year between \$10 to \$14 million out of the sale of the sugar that we are buying from Guatemala and retailing here to the consumers. The Barbadian consumer, you, myself and all of us in this House and the people outside who use sugar are contributing to that Fund. I know it is going into the Sinking Fund but it is possible to use it now, because of the threat to the crop. That is the whole point.

2967

Do not give people the opportunity to create further problems in the industry. I am glad the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is listening to me because this is a practical thing. Use some of that money even if you have to put it back into the Sinking Fund later out of the crop money. Just do a borrowing against it. It is extremely important that we deal with this matter urgently if we do not want a state of unrest. My fear is that if we get a state of unrest in the sugar industry we will be feeling the effects 2 and 3

years hence. We must prevent this from happening.

I am asking the Government to make the payments. I am strongly recommending this. We can find that the national interest is served and the workers are paid and vindicated and feel happy and we can get on with the task of trying to restructure the sugar industry in the interest of the whole country and in the interest in particular of the 7 000 people who are directly involved in this industry.

Mr. Chairman, I am only speaking as a pure layman who managed to get a degree. As I said, I did not buy one and I therefore cannot claim higher knowledge. I did not buy a degree and stick it next to my name so I am not claiming any special knowledge. When I speak, I do believe I do so with some conviction and belief and not merely for notoriety, and I am not a reverend yet.

The question that Head 16 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC
SAFETY SUB-PROGRAMME 01: IMMIGRATION
DEPARTMENT - OBJECTS NOS. 624 & 625:
PURCHASE OF VEHICLES & PLANT
EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman during the last Estimates debate 1992-93, under Head 28, Object No. 624 a sum of money \$32 700 was provided to purchase a 10-seater van as a replacement. However, during the course of the year it was realised that a typewriter which the Immigration Department had became unserviceable and, as a matter of fact, the manufacturers of that type of typewriter were no longer producing it. It was decided by the Immigration Department that rather than buying a 10-seater van they would forego that and buy a smaller vehicle for the sum of \$19 000 and thereby making it . possible to purchase a computer for under \$13 000.

The computer falls under Object No. 625. Therefore what this Resolution seeks to do is to reduce Object No. 624 by \$13 000 and increase Object No. 625 by \$13 000. Under Object No. 625 there was no mention of a computer so therefore we want to include a computer, printer and software under that Object No. That is in essence what this Resolution is about. 3.20 p.m.

I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to express my disgust at the state of the appearance of the building which houses the Immigration Department in Bridgetown. I think it is a disgrace when you drive down the wharf to see a government building that has bits of wood boarding up broken windows. Things cannot be so bad with Barbados that a government building in the prime part of Bridgetown is allowed to be in such a disgraceful state of disrepair as this building is.

Let me give the Government some advice again, Sir, because they say we do not give them positive advice. The Government has a series of buildings that should be disposed of now. It is not making any use of Marshall Hall or the old Bridgetown Town Hall. If we go into St. Thomas just past Rugby, there is a former Children's Home we are not making any use off. If you want to create jobs that building can be leased out to young people who may be interested in running a day care centre for the aged. There are several Government buildings in this island that are in disuse. They have fallen into disrepair and nothing is more annoying.

There is also another building near to the Immigration building, an old Customs building just behind Collins Ltd. on prime land, that the Government has in its possession. The Government is getting no rent from it. The building is in a disgraceful condition.

Let me address certain problems relating to Immigration procedures. Normally the Immigration Department is a reasonably efficient department. The public servants there are very civil people. They usually give prompt answers. But I am a little bit concerned that people who have established permanent connections with Barbados - I can give a couple of cases to the Minister - and have invested in Barbados have to apply 2 and 3 times for work permits. These investors are employing Barbadians. Yet their children have to be constantly re-applying for student visas instead of being given some settled status.

If we are to attract investors, we need a much more better way of dealing with the problem of work permits and immigrant status. Once we are satisfied that the applicants are *bonafide* investors who want to reside here on a long-term basis, there is no reason why they should be given limited work permits and have to re-apply 2 and 3 times. If they are honouring their obligations, are

not known to the police for having offended the law, are paying their taxes, practise good industrial relations and are not security risks, we should not delay in giving them some settled status.

My other concern relates to the way in which the Department deals with applications by Barbadian citizens who are born to Barbadian parentage but they are born Outside of Barbados. So they must be recognised as citizens of Barbados. In its enthusiasm the Department is dealing with the matter in such a manner that it is putting unnecessary administrative strain on Barbadians who have for years, since Independence, carried Barbadian passports they are now being made to prove again that they are Barbadians. Again, I can give the Minister several cases that have come to my notice. I think we need clear guidelines on this matter.

I would be really horrified if my last 2 children who were born outside of Barbados - one was born while his mother was outside Barbados within the service of the Crown - are not recognised as Barbadians. I know of other cases where this is happening. You should not put such persons through that type of administrative hassle of which I have spoken. My children were born in the last 7 to 8 years. But I am talking about persons who have been recognised since 1966 as Barbadians and have carried Barbadian passports since Independence. We know their parents. Let me say this to the Government. Every time we establish administrative bottlenecks and take up the time of people and Government servants to do certain things it has a cost and we are making the cost of administration and the cost of running the country more expensive. I believe we should be simplifying administrative procedures in order to reduce overall costs. I would hope that the sentiments which I have expressed will be borne in mind by the Immigration Department. All of the worst criticisms which were made of the Department in the past years have virtually ceased. We now publish a list of those people who have been approved for work permits. Looking at the function of the Immigration Department at the Grantley Adams International Airport, I have seen tremendous improvement in the way in which we are handling people and visitors to the island. There is a certain friendliness. I would hope this could continue as part of the usual manner in which our Immigration officers perform their tasks.

I will have an opportunity later in the year to speak about the person who heads that department, the Chief Immigration Officer. He came over to the Department from the Police Department. He has done an excellent job during the years. I have known him from childhood. He has come out of Vauxhall where my relatives are. He went to the right school, Foundation School. He has given excellent service. I hope that in a couple of months' time when he

retires, he will be suitably recognised. But I would like it to be shown in the records of this House that I, certainly, have appreciated the work he has done to bring that Department to the stage it has reached today. He has brought the Immigration Department to a stage where I do not now hear the harsh criticisms against our Immigration Officers that we heard years ago. He is the sort of gentleman who punctiliously investigates complaints made. If you are wrong he will tell you, you are wrong. -If you are right he will tell you, you are right. He also uses his discretion very wisely. 3.30 p.m.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: I just want to respond to one or 2 things mentioned by the last speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. It is true that the Chief Immigration Officer goes on pre-retirement leave, I believe on March 3 and finally he will leave the Service at the end of June. I don't think it will be premature on my part to say that I found him an excellent administrator and I would like to thank him for all the work he has put in. He, as the last speaker said, started the Immigration Department as it is about 10 to 11 years ago and the success of the Immigration Department will have to depend largely on his administrative ability. He was a police officer and I suppose that has a lot to do with the discipline which he was able to bring to the Department. I know he will be missed. I can only wish him all the best in his retirement.

As far as Barbadian citizenship is concerned and people holding Barbados Passports there are 2 things I think we have to consider. Sometimes when people born to Barbadians living overseas apply I always ask the Immigration Department to explain to them what they can apply for especially if they are living in a country where they might lose the citizenship of that country if they gained citizenship of Barbados. So, to some applicants it might appear as though we are long-winded but it is in their interest because sometimes people think they can apply for it but I think we should really advise them. As you know, if a person is living in the States the benefits of education *et cetera* are great if he is an American citizen but then if he gives up that citizenship then he is at a disadvantage. So it might appear to some people as though the Immigration Department is being tedious in dealing with the application but it is "in their interest rather than otherwise.

On the other hand I know that my own nephew has suffered from this. He was born in England over 30

years ago and he came to me the other day and said, "I thought I was a Barbadian." He had a Barbados Passport all along and now he has applied he has realised he is not a citizen of Barbados although he has been living here for 32 years. It will be regularised but he has to send to England to get his birth certificate and I guess the same will apply to my son at some time as well when he will have to send

2969

to England for his birth certificate, get his mother's this and his father's that. That is just the system and it is something which we have to look at.

I also agree with the last speaker about the buildings that we own. This is something which I always talk about. There are a lot of buildings in Bridgetown from which I believe we can get large sums of money to do things. One of these buildings which comes to mind quite readily is our Harbour Police Station building because it is now out of use and I believe that is a prime property for sale.

The Immigration Department itself is undergoing repairs and all of the bits and pieces of wood you see out through the windows are there because it is undergoing repairs. I think the office upstairs is quite adequate but what they are trying to do is put a lunch room to the bottom. I believe there is some other government agency which is claiming part of the downstairs building and that is creating a problem to decide exactly what to do with the entire section of the ground floor and that is the problem. Until that is resolved I dare say that the pieces of wood or the untidiness will remain. With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Head stand part.

The question that Head 28 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one money resolution in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by the Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ORDER NO, 4 - A BILL TO AMEND THE COOPERATIVES SOCIETIES ACT, 1990.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the present Bill regulating co-operative societies goes all the way back to 1940 and a lot has happened since then. Mr. Speaker the Co-operatives Society Act 1990-23 was gazetted on the 13th August 1990 but has not yet been proclaimed. The reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is that it is a big Bill and regulations need to be made. We discovered that since the Bill has been passed that there have been a few amendments that need to be made to the Bill.

Since the gazetting of the Act, Mr. Speaker, a number of cosmetic errors have been discovered which are now to be corrected in the amendment Bill to the Act but there are 3 substantial omissions which we will seek to correct at this time.

Going back to the 1990 Act, Mr. Speaker, in 1987 Cabinet co-opted a committee to have a look at the then Act and this Committee was chaired by Dr. Frank Alleyne and included the Chief Executive Officer of the Credit Union, Mr. Doyle, Mr. Murray, Dr. Nicolas Liverpool and Mr. Sherman Moore along with Miss Myrtle Jones the Registrar of Co-operative Societies and Mr. Paul from the National Association of Co-operatives sat in as well. That Committee held some 23 meetings with the main committee and a number of sub-committees. 3.40 p.m.

In 1987 when the Committee was looking at the 1990 Act, it was observed that during the years 1980 to 1987 the credit union had made a movement of a significant source of public savings and borrowing; so much that at March 1992 the total savings in the credit union was \$161 million while the assets now total something like \$185 million. In 1987, the credit union movement had grown from 26 registered societies in 1981 to 42 in 1987 with a membership of 6 000 persons in 1981 and 25 000 persons in 1987. As of 1992, Mr. Speaker, the position by March 31st was that there is now a total membership of 8 849 persons with savings of \$128 526 983.00 and assets of some \$184 911 343.00. Of the number of societies registered, 46 of them are credit unions and these credit unions now have some 42 000 members with a saving in the credit union of \$128 million and assets of about \$184 million. There are a few smaller ones such as 5 farmers' co-ops, 5 transport co-ops, one fishing co-op, 5 consumers and 5 savings at the school. The total saving in the total movement is \$113 314 936 and a

total asset of \$188 255 572. That is the state of the movement as of March 31, 1992.

In the main legislation, we made a lot of changes that would give the Registrar of Co-operatives a lot more authority than she had under the present one since we were concerned that with the growth of the movement that we had to provide the authority to the Registrar together with the staff in order to make sure that the movement is kept under fairly tight surveillance. As we discovered when the Committee met, there was need to monitor, control and protect the savings of members. We needed to ensure greater accountability by management personnel and other officers in the movement as well as to provide some stabilisation mechanism for the movement which would act as a buffer in the event of financial difficulties in the society.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that I am still not satisfied in my mind that that mechanism is adequate. There has been a lot of discussion about the stabilisation mechanism. The present Act does not make any provision for it since there was some fairly stiff opposition to the mechanism being introduced. The regulations make provisions for a reserve fund. But I am actively looking again, Mr. Speaker, at 2970

the proposal for a stabilisation mechanism for the co-op movement. This is against the background that this movement is now a very big movement. As a result, one of the substantial amendments that is being proposed to the 1991 Bill would be to allow the inspection of the accounts by the Registrar Department. This was not even included in the 1990 Bill.

The 3 substantial amendments to be made to the 1990 Bill are: In section 3 a new section has been included as section 3(2) which will provide for sections 2(11) to 2(17) of the Act applicable to all societies and not to credit unions only. Sections 2(11) to 2(16) of the Act are important because they deal with the Supervisory Committee. This Committee has the authority to inspect the books and make sure that everything is in order. This was not applied to all of the societies. The amendment is being made that sections 2(11) to 2(17) of the Act will be applicable to all societies and not to credit unions only.

The second or major section is section 17 of the Act which gives the Registrar the power to direct a society to change its name if it contravenes the legislation' of mandatory change of name. However, a society may wish to change its name voluntarily with the Registrar's approval for various reasons. Section 10(a) is, therefore, included in the amendment of the Act for such purpose.

Sir, as I said, the third function of the Co-operative Department is to assist the societies in putting into place the correct procedure to be adopted for auditing of the accounts and inspecting the accounts of all types of co-operative societies. In error, this provision was excluded from the Act and, therefore, the Department does not have the power to carry out this function. So the inspection of the account by the Department is important since it is a means by which the deposits and savings of members are protected from being lost through carelessness, fraud and incorrect accounting. There is also an inclusion of sections 164(1),(2) and (3) which will permit the Registrar and staff to carry out this very important section. This new inclusion of sections 164(1),(2) and (3) reads as follows:

(1) The Registrar or any person appointed by the Registrar for the purpose shall at all times have access to all the books, accounts, papers and securities of a registered society and shall be entitled to inspect the cash in hand.

(2) Every officer of the registered society shall furnish such information in regard to the transactions and workings of a society as the person making such inspection may require.

(3) Any person who contravenes sub-section (2) is guilty of an offence.

Mr. Speaker, these are the 3 main amendments to the 1990 Act. The others are purely cosmetic. I am pleased also to report, Mr. Speaker, that the regulations have been made and signed. The main sections of the regulations, which I would very quickly like to draw the attention of the Chamber, is that in regulation 9 provision is being made for the adoption when appealing the termination of membership. Regulations 10 to 12 have to do with the setting out of the contents of financial statements and how these must be laid out in order for people to be able to follow them. Regulation 13 will deal with the procedure to be adopted for the election of directors and regulation 14 will set out the procedure for the meetings of directors as well. Regulations 15 and 16 deal with the appointment and define the duties of a secretary and a treasurer. Regulations 17 and 30 make provision for the duties of the Supervisory Committee of Management. This is a very important Supervisory Committee of Management because it gives that Committee the authority to inspect books and cash at anytime and generally to make sure that the co-op is functioning efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, at this present time there are some concerns I have about the present functioning* of the movement. At the moment, Mr. Speaker, the majority of credit unions exhibit a fair stage of management

of their resources as evidenced by the early steps put in place. There are still some areas that are not tight enough. Some 17 of these societies employ full time staff of a total of about 122 persons. The Barbados Public Workers Union is the largest that employs 54 employees. Most of the credit unions have been moving towards computerization of their accounts but this is not as fast as we would like. One area of concern to the Registrar and to myself has been the level of training of the officers who are elected to the respective committees by the Supervisory Committee of Management. 3.50 p.m.

Historically these societies started almost as friendly societies, and the older persons who gradually moved up to management in quite a few cases do not possess the ability or the management skills to handle these societies now they have assets to the tune of \$184 million. It is sometimes difficult to get some of these old members to understand it and therefore I have a real concern. At the moment there are training courses by the Barbados Co-operative Credit Union and the Barbados National Association of Co-operative Societies, but elected officers have not been participating in these courses as desired. A strategy is now being worked out to make it compulsory for newly elected members to attend training sessions within the first 3 months of their being elected. This is very important, because a lot of them belong to the Management and Credit Committees and are at the moment without the requisite training in order to function effectively.

As I said, the implementation of a stabilisation unit is being looked at again. Although there is a Reserve Fund

2971

in place, I am not sure that the Reserve Fund is adequate enough to really come into play in case you have any big problems with this type of situation. It is one of my main concerns that with a movement with this amount of money the safeguards before now have been lax, and even now I am not as happy as I should be with only the provision of a reserve fund. Once again I will examine the possibility of the stabilisation procedure or even the possibility of looking to see if they should not come under the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act or one of those that would allow fairly stringent examination of the procedure in accounts of the Credit Union. As soon as we have done our research and have made a decision on which way we are going, the necessary amendments will be made to the Act and brought before Parliament. We need to have greater concentration on the education of members and we want to promote other types of co-operatives, for example, industrial workers, *et cetera*.

The new Act sets out fairly clearly, Mr. Speaker, the liability of directors at section 72, which makes it very clear that they are jointly and severally liable to make good any loss or damage by the society. They are also to disclose interest in any contract or transaction. Before they take up their positions they must be bonded. There is provision in section 196 for the Credit Union to maintain liquid assets, and in section 86 the time frame within which the annual general meeting should be held, not later than 3 months after the close of the financial year, or not later than 6 months if authorised by the Registrar. Section 127 makes provision for the filing of monthly returns and the express provision for the promotion of other types of societies.

The development of the non-Credit Union has been rather slow. The main difficulties of these societies are really the inadequacy of capital, which has resulted in little or no service to members, poor management, as well as a lack of full participation in activities by members.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, on this whole thing has been the reports of some wrong dealings in some of the societies. Only today I saw an article in a newspaper, but the more recent one to be documented is alleged misappropriation of funds from the Barbados Police Co-operative Credit Union, and in this case on 5th January, 1993 the auditors reported in the course of the audit of the account of the Barbados Police Co-operative Credit Union for the first year, from April 1991 to 31st March, 1992, the discovery that the total receipts for the year did not correspond with the total bank deposits. A detailed check showed that cash received was not always banked intact, reconciliation with the receipts and the bank showed a shortage of \$62 790 and no reasonable explanation had been given for this shortage.

The Registrar immediately authorised the auditors to do an interim audit to 31st March, 1992 and has revoked the appointment of the officer and has advised that the matter be prosecuted. This, Mr. Speaker, is one which has been documented but there has been a certain discomfiture in other of these societies about the quality of the management. This is why I am more than anxious to make sure that the amendments to this Act be carried through, so we can have the Act proclaimed and the regulations introduced which would allow the Registrar to have a lot more authority than she presently has, since this is one of the fastest areas of savings to the average working class person, and it would really be very heart rending if the management is not in place, and moreso if the Registrar of Co-operatives does not have the authority and the staff to supervise the management.

The Co-operatives Division has been strengthened with additional members of staff, most of whom are now in place. A Registrar and a Deputy Registrar have been appointed and there are only one or two other appointments to be made which would bring the office of Registrar of Co-operatives up to strength. With an enlarged and strengthened department, together with the proclamation of this Act and the making of the regulations, I would hope that this machinery would make for better policing of the co-operative movement and allow the movement to grow and play the part it is playing in the present economic situation in Barbados.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of the Co-operatives (Amendment) Bill, 1993.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I beg to second that, Mr. Speaker, and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we on this side have for many years encouraged the growth of the co-operative movement in this country. I believe, Sir, it is true that Honourable Members on this side who have served in the Barbados Labour Party Government were the first in Barbados to introduce tax incentives and a number of other incentives to give stimulus to the cooperative movement. As the Honourable Minister says, it is known that in the last 10-15 years the cooperative movement has grown spectacularly, especially those entities within the movement which are credit unions. 4.00 p.m.

However, there are a number of imbalances and a number of concerns that we on this side have. You will notice that, in the words of the Honourable Minister, there are not many cooperatives involved in agriculture and fishing and the productive sectors. You will notice that the Honourable Minister said that a lot of the money which

2972

has been invested in the cooperative movement is really in the hands of credit unions.

We are concerned that at a time when the Government itself has indicated that it is committed to restructuring that some stimuli be given to agricultural, fishing and industrial cooperatives and that some stimuli as well as supervision be given to those cooperatives in schools. There are some schools in Barbados which are involved in cooperatives and particularly credit unions. If you see how they work, much is left to be desired. The reason for this is that some schoolteacher who is otherwise engaged in teaching activities has to take time off each day to volunteer to work in these school credit unions. Some of these teachers have no training in credit union accounting, some have no training in management and some have not been known to have the time and energy to do the record keeping which is necessary to protect these entities. In addition to this concern, we feel that one of the problems facing the movement is not the question of how to regulate by legal arrangements but what the Minister twice referred to and that is the question of management.

It is true that the Barbados Cooperative Credit Union League Ltd. and the national organisation responsible for cooperative societies on their own do try to assist sometimes. It is also true that the Caribbean Confederation of Credit Unions at Maxwell also tries its best. I believe that in order to protect the movement against the types of vagaries that can occur, not only supervision and strict regulation is necessary at the level of the Division headed by the Registrar but also the question of management. This is critical.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are aware that many years ago we had a vibrant credit union movement. The Civic was in the forefront and certain problems confronted the Civic both of management and of theft which caused the movement to experience a lull. We, in the Barbados Labour Party, would not want anything to happen to stunt the growth of the cooperative credit union movement in this country. Therefore, Sir, what we propose would be that proper courses in accounting and management be arranged, even if it means that the Government of Barbados either has to find a subvention or in some other way find ways and means by which persons who head co-ops are given training in proper accounting and management methods.

I am aware that there are some co-ops especially in the outer villages of Barbados where that traditional bond of fraternity that used to govern the movement under the days of the Rochedale pioneers has kept these entities together but at the same time some of these credit unions are held by extremely aged people who have not been attracting younger members to their fold and who themselves lack the technical expertise both in terms of managing these entities in the short term and in terms of assisting these entities to go further. That is why earlier in my contribution today I mentioned the question of imbalances.

The bigger credit unions like the Barbados Public Workers' Credit Union, the Barbados Police Cooperative Credit Union and the Barbados Union of Teachers not only grow at a faster rate, attract more capital and

have bigger membership but, at the same time, they seem to be the ones that the system is favouring in terms of keeping them going. There are credit unions at Ellerton, St. George and St. Albans, St. James where the traditional principles of thrift, brotherhood and cooperation are still practised.

The credit union movement and the cooperative movement evolved to assist the small man. We would not want any self-help type of organisation which exists primarily to help the small man and which in hard economic times can help the small man achieve something to go under. I know that even though there is no documented evidence that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North or the Honourable Member for St. Michael South are known to be credit union members, even they have an interest in the movement. It is for the small man so you would not automatically think of these gentlemen as being involved when you think of small men. Even they have some interest, however academic or intellectual it may be. That is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is trying to tell me as I speak.

In relation to the regulatory work that is to be done in the Cooperatives Division, for a long time the Division was kept very small. It seems at one point it was under the Ministry of Agriculture and it seems it has now gone into a different Ministry. At one point, that particular Division was badly understaffed but luckily it was headed by a person who gave a full commitment and tried her utmost and who herself went out into the highways and hedges to do part of the education necessary to encourage Barbadians to understand what the cooperative movement is about.

I am still of the view that a lot can be done to the Registrar's Division. There have been times when I have sent young children to the Division in search of materials to help them do their school work because some of the school courses do in fact involve a knowledge of credit unions and of co-ops and sometimes when I refer students to the Cooperative Division they do in fact get what information is available but that information is still not good enough.

It would seem, too, Sir, apart from this problem of insufficient information within the Division that over time even though the Division has been at the forefront of ensuring integrity in the credit union movement at the same time it would need some material equipment to help it. I have gone there from time to time. In an era

2973

where computerisation has taken over, I would suggest that the Cooperative Division be equipped with the type of machinery and equipment which the 21st century wants.

Before I close, there is one concern that I, as a member of this side, have and it is the question of default or neglect by credit unions and the potential for it to which I believe the Honourable Minister referred. We are concerned that - I believe the Honourable Minister referred to some little wrongdoing in one credit union — there are those involved in the movement who when they come close to money cannot resist the temptation to misappropriate. I would urge this Honourable House that when it comes to dealing with those persons who practise dishonesty against cooperatives that the full arm of the law be visited upon them.

I feel that a person who is involved in assisting with a credit union or cooperative and steals money should be given a sentence of no less than 30 years. I honestly feel so. What that person is doing is stealing from his small brother. These entities emerge - I would not recommend Kali justice. There is something called Kali justice which some member might be thinking about - severing somebody's hand. I would not recommend that type of Kali justice which would most likely be recommended in Iraq or some other barbaric place.

I seriously feel that any officer of a credit union or cooperative who misappropriates funds is guilty of an extremely serious offence in view of the nature of the enterprise from which he is stealing. He is not stealing from Barclays Bank or from Royal Bank although stealing in itself is wrong. He is stealing from a small man whose whole life's earnings could have been put into it. This is one of the problems that would have affected the Civic years ago.

With these few thoughts I have risen to speak on this measure before the House. I am sure that Honourable Members on this side who will speak after me will reaffirm our Party's commitment to the cooperative movement and will encourage the Government to do its utmost to keep the movement going. We do in fact agree that there is a lot to be done in the way of technical expertise, management, accounting, record keeping skills and keeping members loyal to the movement. Years ago in credit unions and cooperatives there was a brotherhood where people came together in a bond. Nowadays with the passage of time as relationships have become more impersonal a lot of credit union members do not get together for that sort of fraternity that used to exist before. A type of fraternity that the whole society would benefit from at this time.

With these reflections then, Sir, I am obliged to you. Thank you.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to add a few words to the excellent speech made by speakers so far. All recognise the importance of the movement and when one considers the progress that has been made over the last 10 years it is indeed remarkable. The asset base is now as the Honourable Minister said approaching \$200 million. 4.10 p.m.

The importance of supervision I wish to stress. I have had the misfortune of being involved in one capacity or another with a number of failures in the financial sector in Barbados. The first one, of course, was the Barbados Cooperative Bank. I was part of the investigation which resulted from that institution becoming insolvent. I was also involved recently in the Trade Confirmers' Enquiry. There are a number of lessons one can learn from a study of the operation of those companies.

There is no doubt that loans can be made in good faith upon security which at the time when the loans are made appear to be good and solid. It is only by constant and continuous supervision that timely decisions can be taken when the resulting changes in the fortunes of that security can be recognised early and corrective actions taken. Management is crucial. There is no question about it. At some time it will behove the regulatory authorities, in this case it is the Registrar and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce, to continuously monitor whether the movement can continue to be allowed to regulate itself and in particular, whether the Registrar with the increased staffing which has been placed at the disposal of the Registry is sufficient to ensure that the supervision which is necessary in these financial institutions is taking place on a day to day basis.

I know there is a strong feeling within the movement that it is sufficiently flexible and well endowed in its membership with people of the right calibre that it can be self-regulated. I remember the debate. I believe there is still strong disagreement within Barbados and particularly within the movement whether the Stabilisation Fund should be the subject of legislation or whether that should be the subject of an internal domestic regulation- within the movement. The compromised solution of the Reserve Fund is a reflection of the failure of all to be unanimous in this area.

We must recall, Sir, some other lessons too that we have in the rest of the world. After all the Savings and Loans Organisations in the United States of America are classic examples on a very much larger scale, of course, of the type of activity one gets in a credit union movement. We know what has happened there. We know what has happened in the Savings and Loans Organisations in the United States.

2974

In the United Kingdom there have been types of credit unions devoted to lending money for buildings, for example, the building societies. There have had to be great modernisation of the legislation to ensure that the supervision there is tightened. We must not think that because we have passed the Act, we are now amending it and we have regulations that we do not have to be continuously on our guard. Human nature being what it is our experience has told us that just as we have discovered one or 2 areas of serious concern in particular credit unions in Barbados to date, that they will be multiplied. That is the reality of life. The Financial Intermediaries Bill that was passed here recently is an attempt by Government to improve in the other financial sector such as the banks, trust companies and financial organisations, the level of supervision in that area. What we really have is a parallel bit of legislation, one dealing with the financial intermediaries and one dealing with the credit unions. The fundamental point which should be got across is that the credit unions aim to do at a cheaper rate and a more personal rate many of the things the financial institutions do for their customers. The essence of the credit union is to provide funds and opportunities for savings which are to be onlent to members on less harsh terms and conditions. When one looks at it the trust companies have assets of about \$400 million, according to the latest statistics. The credit unions have \$180 million and growing. The banks are much larger.

In Barbados we used to have a position in which the credit unions and the trust companies were operating in the market of lending subject to the Rate of Interest Act. My understanding of the present position, and this has not been very clearly articulated yet, is that neither the credit unions nor the trust companies are subject to the Rate of Interest Act. That means that for the first time the credit unions and the trust companies will be operating on competitive terms with the commercial banks who were exempted many years ago from the Rates of Interest Act, for both savings and loans. This is a very important part of our financial environment that must be stressed. The competition now is going to be stronger. It means that the quality of service the credit unions render to their members has to be as good as, if not better than, the one they can get from comparable financial institutions.

I am very glad we have reached the stage where all of us can be proud of the fact that this is a genuine democratic movement operating in the financial area which has grown from strength to strength. All of us, I think, should do our part to ensure that whatever regulatory environment is necessary to ensure the

preservation of its integrity in relation to savings as well as in relation to lending should take place. We cannot have a situation in which the faith of people who invest their savings in an institution is shaken because of bad management or for whatever reason.

The Leader of the Opposition as the first speaker for our side said that we will lend our support to this attempt to tighten up the matter. But we recognise that from time to time this legislation should be revisited to make sure that the fundamental objectives of a good regulatory environment, that is, to preserve the integrity- of the movement remains in place.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not entirely surprised that 2 years after the Cooperative Societies Bill was brought to this House in late 1990 it has had to be brought back to this House for substantial amendment. When that Bill was brought to this House in 1990 it was cited by the Democratic Labour Party as being one of the major pieces of legislation by which it intended to transform the industrial, agricultural and landscape of this country. But even then we found many flaws in the legislation having to do first of all with its being cumbersome and secondly with the way in which, in our judgment, the spirit of the co-operative movement and the integrity of the co-operative movement, as a movement, could have been compromised by some of those changes which borrowed too heavily from the Companies Act 4.20 p.m.

I think I spoke then about some very fundamental misgivings that I had regarding the deficiencies in the legislation. They had to do with the reluctance on the part of Government to make satisfactory provisions to make sure that the co-operative movement could not face the possibility of financial difficulties of the sort that have overtaken other co-operative movements in the rest of the world.

Now, Sir, I am a little bit disappointed that some of the concerns that were raised then and which were taken by the Government are not now being reflected in some of the amendments that are being made. For example, when I spoke then, I was very concerned that in so far as the legislation is drawing from the Companies Act it seemed to me to be making it too easy for entities that really were not subscribing to the co-operative spirit to register as co-operatives for the purposes of evading taxes by reason of the latitude that was provided in the new legislation. Section 129 had concerned me greatly. It simply said that a company registered under the Companies Act, among other things, could by special Resolution determine to convert itself into a registered society.

Now, that concerned me greatly, Mr. Speaker, because a co-operative society is a society that has a special meaning. People come together for the purpose of helping themselves. And the co-operatives benefit by reason of having a tax liability that is different

2975

from other kinds of economic organisations. So that to me, Sir, just to allow a company registered under the Companies Act by special resolution to determine that it could become a co-operative without making sure that that company subscribes fully to the spirit of the co-operative movement was a great potential loop hole which I thought we should have plugged.

I believe the Co-operative Societies Act should be made to promote bona fide co-operatives rather than promote fly by night operations which want to take advantage of the generous tax concessions granted to the co-operative movement; and I am still very concerned about that.

I am hearing of grandiose plans for the formation of all kinds of enterprises along the line of co-operatives. I would urge the Government to walk carefully in the matter. The experience of the savings and loans in the United States of America indicates what can happen when once we begin to play fast and loose in enterprises such as these. I therefore, Sir, would still like to see any future revision of this legislation incorporate amendments made not only to maintain the integrity of the movement as a movement, but equally so on the side of caution.

I had in 1990 also drawn reference to the need, if we were going to amend the legislation, to bring it in line with developments taking place in the rest of the Caribbean. In particular, and I think I then cited the Trinidad experience, I recognised that as the co-operative society and the movement grew larger and larger it would need to start engaging professional staff. If the co-operative societies were to engage professional staff they have to make special, financial provision to treat those professional staff as professionals. In the Trinidad legislation the Co-operative Societies legislation has stipulated that some of the surpluses generated by the co-operative societies in Trinidad could be earmarked specially to support a pension fund for professional people employed by the co-operative movement. Our legislation in Barbados, while recognising that 25 per* cent of the surpluses of the co-operative movement can be put to charitable purposes did not specially determine that the surpluses or some proportion of the surpluses of the co-operative could be or should be put to the purposes of creating pension funds for the staff of the co-

operative movement. I feel very strongly about the matter, Sir.

I believe that if we are to encourage the co-operatives to be run along professional lines we have to treat the people employed by the Co-operatives as professional people. I do not believe that institutions, whether they be co-op movements or any other set of institutions should be without adequate pension arrangements for the people they employ on a professional basis.

I therefore would really welcome the amendments to our legislation, much in line with the talk that has been put out today that there is need for them to be more professional and so on, to create the facility whereby part of the surplus of the movement can be put towards creating a pension fund for the professional people who the co-operatives will have been employing now and will employ in the future.

But, Mr. Speaker, I must get back to the real concerns that I had then, which the Minister adverted to today and by implication suggested that the Government has not resolved. I am still very unhappy with the way in which the matter of a stabilisation fund for the co-operative movement is being handled. If the Government strongly believes that there is a need for a stabilisation fund for the co-operative movement, to which people must contribute, then the Government must govern, Sir. I certainly supported a stabilisation fund. At the time some people in the co-operative movement were opposed to it. But we must never, in Barbados, put any of our financial institutions in a position where people put up their savings, believe their savings are secure and then there comes a day when those savings have vanished. We have to secure people's savings. The worst thing that can happen in the society is for the confidence of the small people who save in the institution to be shattered, whether that is by devaluation or by the lack of a secure way of holding those people's savings. I strongly support a stabilisation fund for the co-operative movement.

I sense too that the Government also strongly supports the formulation of some kind of stabilisation fund. We know why we need it. And I believe, Sir, the Government must govern. If you believe strongly in a stabilisation fund make sure there is one rather than create the situation in this country where people some time in the future, who have invested this \$185 million in these societies, wake up and find that by reason of the fear of Government to act in their best interests, their savings have been put at risk.

I spoke then, Mr. Speaker, as well about what I regarded as the very unsatisfactory clause 196.1 still today find that obnoxious and I would like to see it amended out of the legislation, Sir. Effectively what it says is that credit unions must maintain liquid assets in a form to be prescribed and that failure to maintain those liquid assets means that they can be put into receivership.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my concern with that is that it puts on credit unions a financial imposition or it exposes them to a financial threat that is draconian by all the standards applicable to finance institutions. It is standard practise, Mr. Speaker, for financial institutions to be required to maintain liquid assets. The Central Bank of Barbados requires that the banks maintain liquid assets to the extent of 8 per cent
2976

of deposit. But nobody would think in terms of putting a financial institution into receivership merely because it does not meet a liquid assets ratio. One puts an institution into receivership because that institution is insolvent but not because it is temporarily short of cash. The obnoxious aspect of this legislation is that it is telling credit unions that if they are temporarily short of cash that they can face the threat of being put in receivership. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, how we can retain that in legislation. What the Government should in fact be looking towards is prescribing how to provide a safety net for co-operatives in the event that they do not maintain the liquid assets as required by law in much the same way that the Central Bank of Barbados, as a lender of last resort to the Bank, maintains the existence of a safety net to Banks in the event that their liquidity is not what is prescribed by the law.

I do not think the banking system in Barbados could function if the banks in Barbados were faced with the threat of being put into receivership in the event that they were short of cash. I cannot think of any financial institution anywhere in the world that would want to operate in a legal environment in which being short of cash is a sufficient reason for a receivership to be imposed. It is obviously something that the Government has not properly thought through. 4.30 p.m.

It is part and parcel of that deficiency in the legislation resulting from Government's diffidence in answering the question of how best we can provide a safety net for these co-operative societies given that they are financial institutions. The way how I see it, Mr. Speaker, is that most of these institutions are co-operative societies by reason of the nature of their share capital and in the way they are structured. They are financial institutions in terms of their operations. Government has the responsibility, in my view, to make sure that their operations are stabilised in the same way that

commercial banks and insurance companies are stabilised in law.

Aside.

Mr. CX S. ARTHUR: The Prime Minister wants me to talk about the economy which is stabilised. I am not dealing with fiction this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I am not telling tales or dealing with fairy tales, Sir. The Prime Minister knows better than anybody else in this House that the stability of the Barbados economy means that it is cast in stone. *Rigor-mortis* has set in. The Barbados economy is as stable as a corpse, Sir. It is stiff. It is dead and the Prime Minister of Barbados wants me to say that, Sir, and I am only helpful to him in making that point this afternoon. It is stable in the same sense that over the course of the last 4 years it has declined by 15 per cent. The only comparison that I know of when an economy has

declined by as much as our economy is Jamaica, which declined by 17 per cent between 1974 and 1980. That is by the way and I will have ample opportunity in dealing with that false notion of stability during Private Member's Business.

Sir, the point is that we have defaulted on the exciting prospects of creating a sensible legislative framework within which the co-operative movement can develop in all of its manifestations while maintaining the integrity of the co-operative spirit. I believe, Sir, that our concerns must be as much directed towards ensuring the growth of the movement as protecting it against those kinds of persons who would want to abuse the integrity of the movement. In my contribution today, I have directed at that one concern; that, yes, let us create legislation by which the institutions can benefit from all of the innovations in company law but make sure that at the end of the day the support that we give to co-operatives are to bona fides co-operatives. I would urge the Government to make sure that those persons who have very grandiose plans to set up institutions that are not really co-ops in terms of their structure are frustrated. The Government knows what I am talking about. There are people who would want to set up enterprises that are not co-ops but would want to benefit as co-ops.

The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to maintain the integrity of the co-operative movement. As I understand the Minister, Sir, one of the main objectives of this legislation is to vest power in the Registrar. I think and I am speaking from memory now, Sir, that one of the concerns we had about the legislation that was brought in 1990 was that some of the powers of the Registrar as exercisable under the old Act had been taken away. In fact, Sir, I remember objecting to the fact that while under the old legislation the Registrar had powers to settle all disputes arising in the co-operative movement, the new legislation had, in fact, transferred that authority to the High Court. In many respects, this conflicted with the spirit of a co-operative where people come together to help themselves but also in the belief that the co-operative spirit should obtain in all their ways and doings not only in relation to building but also in relation to the settlement of disputes.

Sir, if this is the intention of the legislation in part, it will have my support. As I said, Sir, I am still concerned that some of the considerations that were raised particularly to the security of the financial position of the co-operative movement to allow the movement to better provide for its staff and the concerns that were raised to make sure that the integrity of the movement be above reproach. Those concerns have not yet been totally addressed in this legislation. I am confident that in the same sense where we have had 21 amendments brought to that revolutionary piece, of legislation of 1990, that sometime in the

1977

near future we may have another 25 amendments to this. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, just a brief intervention and it has to do with the bringing of legislation and amendments to that legislation. That is a tradition which is well honoured by both parties. We can seek for perfection in bringing legislation to Parliament and, in seeking that perfection, time will pass by and we may not get the piece of legislation on the statute book. I believe it is a practice that has been adopted by both parties that one should come with legislation when once the major principles and processes under the proposed piece of legislation are settled then perhaps out of experience or in order to correct any oversights or whatever come with the amending legislation. This is what has occurred in this particular piece of legislation. As I said, there are many instances and we can bring them because they are a matter of record which in less than two years amendments have been brought. A point which the Honourable Member for St. Peter has stressed and I think correctly so

and, certainly, as Minister of Finance I will be particularly interested in this - that point is to ensure that the regime under which credit unions and similar entities operate such as the legislation, framework and environment should constitute one of integrity.

It is most important that confidence should be maintained in these institutions and that the personnel and mechanisms should be there to secure operations that are transparent and in accordance with proper accounting procedures. We do not have to try to make good any defalcations or failures in the operations of these institutions. We can talk about savings and loans, security houses or other kinds of banks, but it is always better to put a tight regime in place beforehand and to have the appropriate monitoring mechanisms to ensure that procedures are observed rather than to come afterwards with a hard luck story and then wondering how the matter may be resolved.

Sir, I think these amendments go some way towards that. If in the course of our experience there are other areas which would indicate a tightening of the regime, we will certainly do that. But we want to be sure that investors, and in this case the small investors, are able to have a niche in our economy within which they can invest and make a contribution towards the stability of the economy, and to contribute out of that stability to progress and development. That, Sir, is the path we are on.

I thank you. 4.40 p.m.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, let me thank all those persons who contributed to this debate for their offer of co-operation on this particular one. I took note that the main concern of the Ministry and myself is also shared by the Opposition in that proper management must be in place to administer these Credit Unions, which have now grown to be quite sizeable financial institutions. I also take note of the suggestion for improved training facilities for the management of these co-operative societies. The suggestion of having a look at section 129(1) has been taken and it will be closer examined. The technical implication of exploiting this Act for the saving on income tax will be examined and we will make our findings known when we have completed it.

I just want to give this House the assurance that the Registrar and her staff will do everything possible to improve the supervision as well as provide additional educational facilities and opportunities for the members in management and accounting and keep a very tight rein on the whole mechanism. She now has additional authority under this Act, which I will seek to have proclaimed as soon as possible, to give her the additional ammunition she needs.

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

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

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

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee. *Clause 1 was called.*

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Chairman, the amendment in Clause 1 is to substitute "1993" for "1992". I beg to move that clause 1, as amended, stand part.

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

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

Clauses 2 to 20 were called and passed. 4.50 p.m.

Clause 21 was called and passed.

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

2978

On separate motions of Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, seconded by Hon. C. V. WALKER, the Bill was read

a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 8 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
BORROWING OF 1 400 000 ECUs TO ASSIST
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks the approval of this Honourable Assembly for the borrowing of 1 400 000 ECUs from the European Economic Community to assist with the implementation of the Livestock Development Project. The Government of Barbados and the European Economic Community entered into a financing agreement on July 14, 1992 to facilitate the start of the implementation of the Livestock Development Project. Arising out of that agreement was a requirement for the financial contract between the Government of Barbados and the EEC as represented by the European Commission to facilitate the start of the implementations.

Before I start to outline the main components and objectives of the loan, I should like to give some information relative to the terms. The loan will bear interest at the rate of 1% per annum to be paid semi annually on June 1 and December 1 each year. The loan will have a repayment period of 40 years including a grace period of 10 years. The purpose of the loan, generally speaking, is to assist with the implementation of the Livestock Development Project through the establishment of a credit facility which will be administered by the Central Bank of Barbados. Loans will be channelled through the commercial banks and the Barbados Agricultural Society to eligible livestock farmers to facilitate the purchase of inputs, small construction work, stock and fencing.

Mr. Speaker, out of this 1.4 million ECUs an amount of BD\$450 000 would go to the Barbados Agricultural Society which has a small loan portfolio and farmers who would not normally meet the rigidities of the banking system would be able to benefit through the BAS. The idea is that these small farmers should benefit from the overall livestock project. The primary objectives of the loan are to achieve a long-run improvement in the productivity of the small livestock farmer, to encourage the development of livestock enterprises based on local inputs and to promote a more systematic approach to marketing in order to help the small holder to sell his or her animals.

Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence to highlight some of the main components of the project. The majority of the funds would go toward the rehabilitation of the farms at Greenland. We know over time that the buildings have become fairly rundown and are in poor state. The proceeds from the funds will go towards repairing livestock buildings, the purchase of machinery and the equipment and will also assist with the renovation of office facilities.

It is also hoped that we will be able to commence what is technically called a beef feedlot project. There would be facilities for the fattening of calves for beef in an intensive situation as opposed to the normal grazing situation.

The loan will also provide training for officers in the Agricultural Information Unit and, in addition, certain pieces of equipment, computer and audiovisual equipment would be provided out of the proceeds of the loan. There will also be certain consultancy facilities arising out of the loan which would strengthen the Ministry of Agriculture capability to service the needs of the farming community.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, another component of the loan would be to provide assistance to the grassland scheme currently operated by the Ministry of Agriculture. It is anticipated that an additional 100 hectares of forest crops will be produced under the project. Of course an overriding objective and aim of the programme would be to stimulate domestic production in livestock products with a view to reduce the dependency on imported meats. Right now we are still some way off meeting our target in terms of beef production. We are only providing about 28% of the beef required for the local market and the imports are about \$14 million annually.

In respect of mutton, we are importing now at the rate of about \$8 million and while we are self-sufficient in the production of fresh pork we are still importing about \$6 million in pork products. To a large extent, the project would assist in reducing over time - and this is more a long term objective of

the project - the import bill as far as beef and mutton and pork products are concerned; thereby reducing the foreign exchange outlay on these products. There is still further potential, notwithstanding the gains which have been made over the past several years in this area, for livestock production. I believe the passage of this Resolution will ensure that we go a long way towards improving and realising our full potential in the area of livestock production. 5.00 p.m.

- With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, we on this side are a little concerned about the dilatoriness with this agreement which we believe has been the subject of negotiation for many years. We are very concerned that this Government has not yet recognised the necessity for approaching this very important matter of the productive sector with that degree of zeal which one considers is necessary. We believe this livestock project can play an

2979

important part in contributing to the enhancement of the productive sector.

Now that the Honourable Minister has given us more details about the project, we must express some serious concern about the project design. To use this money for the rehabilitation of the buildings at Greenland is a matter of concern. Greenland has been used for a considerable period of time as a demonstration farm for the growing of grasses and for the rearing of heifer calves - if I can remember correctly - in order to ensure that the small farmer in the Scotland area and in the rest of Barbados would have access to productive stock in the form of heifers periodically to make them more competitive. There was no need really for the utilisation of this money in that direction. It is the neglect of the Government and its lack of appreciation of the need to keep the infrastructure up-to-date and in good condition that has caused this.

The Government must make up its mind what role it intends to play in the agricultural industry. You are having now the Government using this money for the purpose of rehabilitating Greenland, that is on the one hand. On the other hand you have the Government through its Agricultural Development Corporation and its other arms permitting good productive agricultural land to fall into a state of disuse. On another hand you have the Government saying it is going to privatise some of the rest of the land it has under its control. The Government, by these kinds of inconsistent policies, is creating and sending the wrong signals. I would have thought, Sir, that the Government would have told us what has happened to the scheme which was devised to ensure that one of the major problems we have in the Scotland area and other areas of Barbados, namely the question of stray cattle doing damage to other people's land, would be alleviated. That scheme was to provide an area of land which would be used for the purpose of permitting people who had livestock but no land to graze their livestock within that area. It was to be a central grassland area. The aim was to encourage people to have grazing rights in that area on a communal basis to prevent them from having to leave their stock untethered which created great problems in the surrounding areas. If these funds were being used for that purpose that would be a useful project. It would be an attempt by Government to use its resources to deal with a very important problem.

Mr. Speaker, none of this money is going to be used for dealing with the problem of equipping rangers and others with the necessary tools to round up these stray animals. None of this money is going to be used to deal with a problem which has been with us for a very long period of time, namely, the question of the implementation of a plan to have a modern up-to-date abattoir in Barbados.

Those are the areas of deficiency in the livestock infrastructure necessary for livestock development in Barbados. None of this money, as I understand it, is going to be used to deal with the question of the creation of conditions which will help reduce the cost of the enormous feed bill we have in Barbados. That is another problem in relation to the livestock industry that we have. This is a very important problem because it would* be a waste of resources. It would be a contribution to further frustration in the future, if you lend out money to people, however generous the terms of the loans, to develop and grow more livestock when the end result of your other policies is that when the livestock come to be marketed there is no market for them or if there is a market it is an uneconomic price that they are going to be given. None of this money is going to be used, as I understand it from what has been said, to deal with the question of a proper research into the impact of the trade liberalisation policies that the Government has committed itself to. 5.10 p.m.

I want to say this. It is a very serious statement. If the Government continues with its policy of trade liberalisation at the behest and at the dictates of the multilateral institutions or current political theory in

relation to agriculture at this particular period in time and liberalises by way of the removal of all elements of protection from the poultry industry, from the beef industry, from the mutton industry, the pig industry, the dairy industry and from other areas, you are going to lead to the collapse of those industries in Barbados. They are uncompetitive at the present moment. They need a longer period to be able to adjust. They also need help and research in the area of dealing with this problem of costs, the problem of a proper abattoir.

These are problems that have been there for some time and what is hurtful is that a considerable amount of work was done in these areas. There must be plan after plan for a new abattoir in Barbados. There must be at least three. FAO did one. I am sure that the Government itself must have commissioned at least two. So that we fail to understand how you could talk about utilising this money and you talk about livestock development and you do not see this in a holistic way, as a former Honourable Member would say. We have made some gains in poultry and in all of these areas. Dairying and poultry are probably the 2 outstanding areas.

The Scotland area in Barbados, whether we like it or not, will never, in my opinion, be utilised because of the nature of the topography in cane growing in any significant amount in the future. It is going to be livestock, tree crops, and it is going to be an area of some kind of ecological tourism. That is the kind of economic activity that is going to go on in that area.

2980

Now, Sir, it is time that the Government understands that it must have a plan and a programme to ensure that that V₁₂ of Barbados is brought back into full production. A livestock programme that ignores the problem of straying animals, the problem of the landless farmers down there, that ignores the other problems that you have. There are even problems now with diseases as a result of the uncontrolled keeping of animals. When you pass by the East Coast Road at night you see cattle going around. I know because I was at a picnic in Bathsheba recently. The basic position is, Sir, we must do something about it. So I hope that the Government will really rethink their activities in this area and approach it with much more seriousness. There were, to my knowledge, specific programmes to deal with all these matters and we are very disappointed that this livestock project, as set out by the Honourable Minister, is so deficient in this area.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very pleased to see that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture has grasped the opportunity of the absence of the Member for St. John from the House to get in a few words on agriculture. Of late we have come to expect that policy on agriculture in this DLP administration is articulated, not by the Minister of Agriculture as has been the case historically, but by the junior Minister of Finance. All of the plans in relation to the transformation of the sugar industry are taking place in the absence of an input by the Minister of Agriculture. And I therefore want to say that in so far as the Minister of Agriculture has not been able to participate in the large matters pertaining to his portfolio, that since he has got in a little piece on livestock ...

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I am pointing out that the comments made by the Member for St. Peter are certainly not factual and contain certain terminological inexactitudes and therefore, I hope they would not stand on the record because it is within the knowledge of Members of this House that the Minister of Agriculture made a very full statement in complete and total rebuttal of all of the charges made by the Member for Christ Church South *on*, agricultural matters. I think that in itself refutes what has been said by the Member for St. Peter.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Member for St. Michael South is too experienced to have gotten into this debate to make such a trivial point. His intentions are larger. He wants to refresh my memory and to remind me that the strictures that I have applied against the Minister of Agriculture in relation to the usurpation of his functions by the Member for St. John could equally be applied to him and the way in which the Member for St. John has equally usurped his functions in relation to the articulation and the development of policy on the financial aspects of agriculture in this country, Sir. So that I want to lump the Member for St. Michael South and the Member for St. Michael South Central together. I am glad that they have

now found the nerve to speak in this House on agricultural matters in the absence of the Member for St. John. I urge the Member for St. Michael South Central to be glad that he got a little pick on livestock. It is not the largest part of the agricultural sector. But make the most of it. And I trust that when the Member for St. John comes back and he hears that you have spoken on agriculture that he will not speak about you with the same kind of strictures that he has spoken about other persons in Barbados.

Asides. 5.20 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said that I am always behind the back of...

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not heard him. He did not make that statement in his speech. So the Honourable Member should continue on the Resolution before you. Your introduction was very long and irrelevant and I would suggest to the Honourable Member to get back to the Resolution.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South raised a point that really needs further developing. Before the Minister of Agriculture spoke, we were not clear as to exactly the purposes for which these funds are to be applied. Now that he has spoken, Sir, it would seem to be clear that a large proportion of these funds will be used to undertake activities relating to rehabilitation and operations of a farm owned by Government. This becomes an issue, Mr. Speaker, because one of the controversies that has arisen during Government's attempt to structurally transform the Barbados economy is precisely the role that the Government of Barbados is to play and is playing now in relation to the major productive sectors of the economy.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Government of Barbados has in recent times closed down the Central Livestock Station at the Pine, at least it has sold off the animals. The operation of the Central Livestock Station at the Pine is not now at the same level nor in the same form as has been the case in the past. Equally, the role of the ADC seems to be totally unclear. At a time when Barbados is importing sugar from Guatemala, I think it is a national disgrace that most of the ADC's estates are in grass. This has to do with the fact that the Government seem to have committed itself to a course of action whereby it is going to minimize the productive role of agriculture under the governance of multilateral institutions. While it is reducing its role in agriculture in general and has signalled its
2981

intention to reduce its role in the livestock sector as well, Sir, we now have coming before this Parliament a loan, the intention of which is to seek a way of financing Government's involvement now at Greenland. Sir, Government needs to spell out as clearly as possible exactly what is the role it intends to perform in the agricultural sector in general and in sectors such as the livestock sector in particular. I am aware that in 1991 and 1992 the activities at the Greenland Farm were substantially curtailed and many of the persons employed there have been sent home. In 1991, it would have appeared on the strength of the evidence available that the Government was really intending to let Greenland go the way of the Central Livestock Station at the Pine. The lack of clarity, therefore, in Government's purposes is much regretted. One looks forward to the Minister of Agriculture making a clear statement as to precisely what really is the role that the Government of Barbados proposes to play in agriculture. Can we expect that the ADC lands will be pressed back into service to help produce sugar? I really believe that it should. Is the Government still interested in the cotton industry? In fact, Sir, I would really like to hear from the Minister of Agriculture whether the funds invested by his administration of late into cotton are bearing fruit or whether that cotton project is a waste of funds and time as are some other aspects of Government's activities.

In relation to this project, Mr. Speaker, I have to note as well that the Estimates of Expenditure for 1992-93 had in point of fact at Head 25 under Sub-programme 623 allocated an amount of \$370 000 precisely to upgrade the facilities at Greenland. The Estimates this year had made that provision except, of course, the Financing Table did not indicate that any funds would have been provided from the European Development Fund for that purpose.

It would seem to me therefore, Mr. Speaker, and in the absence of correction by the Government, that the Government has not been in a position, because of the shortage of funds to proceed, with the proposed activity that it had intended to undertake at Greenland on its own steam. Now that it has got access to the EDC funding for livestock development in Barbados, rather than look to the overall development of the livestock industry in Barbados, what the Government is doing through this activity, that it wants this House to agree to, is to use the EDC funds to make up for the absence of revenue to carry out the work at Greenland that the Government had, in fact, intended to carry out on its own accord.

Mr. Speaker, this is obviously what this project is about. Government had asked the House to vote money to do work at Greenland this year. It had not identified the source of funding for that project. That activity has been caught up with the general financial strictures that has confronted Government. It has access to

EDC funds and

rather to look towards the development of the livestock industry in general in Barbados, it is pressing 40 year money that it could be used for the general development of this economy into the use of the state. That is basically what the project is about. If there is a contrary position of the Government in relation to the matter, Sir, I would like to hear it since so much of the project, as articulated by the Minister, appears to centre around the rehabilitation of the farms at Greenland.

Sir, the Minister also spoke about the putting of some . of the funds into a credit line to be administered by the Central Bank of Barbados. About 2 years ago, I spoke in this House regarding the Central Bank's administration of funds for the productive sectors of the economy, particularly then the Industrial Credit Fund. I noted the experience had been that funds administered by the Central Bank on behalf of the productive sectors going through the commercial banks have not gone very swiftly. It has taken us a lot of years for the Central Bank to disburse monies through the commercial banking system for the benefit of the industrial sector under the auspices of the Industrial Credit Fund. I think about 2 years, after we had the opportunity to review the Central Bank's relationship to the Industrial Credit Fund and commercial banks and the disbursement of those funds, we put the case that we really thought that a lot of the administrative hiatus should be taken out of these special funds created for the productive sectors. We thought that the Central Bank relationship should be minimized and that really the role of the Barbados Development Bank as an institution that performs a developmental role in relation to the disbursement of funds to the productive sectors should be re-examined again.

Sir, here it is the Barbados Government has access to 40 year money. I think the interest rate on the money is 1 per cent and the Government has a 10 year grace period on the repayment of the loan. Naturally, I really believe that the Barbados Development Bank should be put in a position where it should be disbursing some of these developmental monies. I know the Barbados Development Bank under the chairmanship of the present chairman has fallen on particularly barer times.

I have no reason to believe that the Barbados Development Bank should not be used as an institution for the disbursement of funds to the productive sectors. But the Government may have little confidence in the present chairman and there may be good reason for it. But the fact is that whenever the Government has access to this kind of money, 40 year money at 1 per cent interest and a long grace period, we really have to look to get some of this money into the Barbados Development Bank.

Sir, I really cannot overstate my disappointment that we should continue to look to the Central Bank of
2982

Barbados to carry out development functions. In point of fact, the better approach would be to get some of this funding going through the Barbados Development Bank, particularly when it is soft money like this. I think it is a mistake, Sir. I really believe, as I have said already, that in every instance where you have had to have this tripartite arrangement - you have to disburse money through the Central Bank by way of the commercial banks to the productive sector - there is too much red tape and the monies are spent too slowly. It would be a better relationship, in my view, when you get soft money like this and you want to get it into the productive sectors, you should lend it to the Barbados Development Bank and let them on-lend to persons in the productive sector who have projects to move. 5.30 p.m.

I am not sanguine at all about putting this money into the Central Bank of Barbados. I am not trying to discredit the Central Bank. We are borrowing development funds from a development institution. Let us put it in our development institution too. The rebuilding of a relationship between the Development Bank and the productive sectors in Barbados should be such an important part of the restructuring of this economy that this would be as good a place as any to start. I do not recall if Barbados has recently had access to 40 year money with a 10 year grace period at a 1% rate of interest. That is a gift. The Barbados Development Bank has not in recent times been able to have access to these kinds of funds and therefore I would really have to make a plea on behalf of that institution.

The Minister was not in a position to state what are the terms those loans under which the credit line to be administered by the Central Bank would attract. But certainly if the Government is getting money at a 1% rate of interest, Mr. Speaker, obviously that credit line would have to be very concessional, except the intention is that the Central Bank make a lot of money on the facility.

I would really want to call attention to that particular concern we have, Sir, that some of this soft money should be going to the Barbados Development Bank, rather than the Central Bank, to rehabilitate the role the Barbados Development Bank should be playing in the development of the productive sectors in general. I also want particularly to underscore the concerns that have been raised by my colleague, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, regarding the diffidence of the Government in carrying out plans to erect

an abattoir in Barbados. The member for St. Philip North will recall that there was one year in which the Government put a substantial sum of money in the Estimates for an abattoir and that money lapsed. In the following year the Government came by way of a supplementary and asked this House to vote a large sum of money urgently to construct an abattoir. That money also lapsed. The point is very well taken that, in the absence of modern abattoir facilities in Barbados, all this investment in livestock production is going to be of no avail. I do not think one has to embellish the point that one has to look at livestock development not just in terms of primary production at the pasture level. If you have good primary production and bad facilities at the level of abattoir and marketing, then the investment at the primary level would have been wasted. The concern raised by my colleague, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, is in that particular vein, that there is an imbalance in relation to the manner in which Government conceives of investment in the livestock sector. The continual pumping of money into pastures, farms and whatever else without the upgrading of abattoir facilities is a waste of time. I would like to hear the Minister of Agriculture therefore speak specifically to the issue as to what are the factors that have stopped the Government of Barbados from proceeding with the plans which have been drafted to give effect to the abattoir project, since without that the livestock sector will continue to languish.

The Minister also spoke about \$450 000 going to the Barbados Agricultural Society for the purpose of on-lending to farmers. -He was not clear, however, as to whether the money going to the BAS was a grant from Government to the BAS or a loan; if it was a grant, whether the BAS would be using that to establish a revolving fund. It would seem to me that if the BAS is getting a grant from Government to on-lend, then it makes sense for the Government to undertake such an activity only if the BAS would make sure that the funds it gets as a grant to on-lend would be used in perpetuity for the purpose for which Government made the funds available in the first place. I want to delve a bit more as to precisely the arrangement surrounding the BAS' access to this money the Government is going to make available to it. Is it going as a grant or is it intended that BAS should repay it? If it is going as a grant, does Government see this as a one shot relationship, or does the Government intend for BAS to maintain a revolving fund in this area?

I raised that issue to lead on to another point. In the past revolving funds have been established for the livestock sector in Barbados. My colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, as Minister of Agriculture, brought to this House in 1985 a supplementary to put money into a livestock development fund for Barbados. The intention was to have it develop as a revolving fund over a period of 3 or 5 years and in each year there would have been a commitment on the part of the Government to build up the fund, such that you would have in Barbados a capital base from which people interested in livestock

2983

development could have been able to draw, with one person's loans recycled eventually to help provide capital for somebody else.

This Government has not followed through on the business of a revolving fund as conceived. One therefore has to ask the Minister of Agriculture to be far more forthcoming in relation to the other aspects of this project he has not spoken about. I say that, Sir, because the Addendum to the Resolution says this is intended to be a 4.5 million ECU project. Parliament is being asked now to approve the borrowing of 1.4 million ECUs, which is just over one quarter of the project. I have an interest in asking the Government what is the other three quarters of the project, of which the Minister has not spoken. He has said this is a \$4.5 million project, but he has only told us of \$1.4 million of it.

I need to know, therefore, what is the whole concept Government has in mind. We have been given a partial description by the Minister. He has only described that portion of the project that would encompass 1.4 million ECUs, but there is another 3 million ECUs in project activity intended. If the Government has something in mind of that scale, it could have brought to the House a Resolution asking us to approve in principle the full borrowing so that we do not have to have another debate on it when next it wants to borrow money again for the purpose. But I certainly have an interest in enquiring of the Minister exactly what is the width of the project Is the Government intending to go back to the business of having a revolving fund for agriculture in the way in which it was always intended? , 5.40 p.m.

I am sure that the Minister will speak on these matters. I am glad to hear his voice and I trust in days to come he will be speaking about agriculture. I am very concerned with the statements issued from other persons who have usurped his responsibility. I do not believe we are hearing enough from him and therefore, I think he should speak as widely and as handsomely to this particular Resolution as the absence of the Member for St. John will allow.

I am obliged to you.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: The Minister, Sir, will reply on behalf of the Government but I have an interest in these matters and I do not know why the Member for St. Peter would have tried to drag the Member for St Joseph into this debate. He had a revolving fund in 1985 and he revolved through the door in 1986.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I would not like this particular project to be minimised or miniaturised or any such kind of spin put on this particular project. Let us understand that this is a major contribution toward the improvement and resuscitation of the agricultural sector in Barbados. Let us not try to damn it with faint praise. It is a significant project and it speaks to the question that in Barbados we import a considerable amount of meat and meat products. This particular project is directed towards the stimulation of non-sugar agriculture by bringing together financial resources and certain inputs in order to put one aspect of our agriculture into place in accordance with our current Barbados Development Plan.

We all talk about agriculture and the place of agriculture in our overall economy. This is an initiative to seek to bring that new vision and put that new life into a part of the agricultural sector that will flow into and permeate the entire system. I would not like this to be reduced, as the Member for St. Peter was apparently trying to do, to just a little project on a farm to use some old farm buildings or something like that. Let us put it in its full context, what this is not about, Sir.

A number of questions have been asked. The Member for Christ Church South asked about livestock wandering around the place. I believe this Honourable Chamber has addressed that particular matter by passing legislation, the Livestock (Control of Strays) Act. Perhaps some administrative steps will still need to be taken in order to deal with that, but the House has already started to deal with that problem. For the Member for Christ Church South to deal with the content of this Resolution as a deficiency of the Resolution is, I think, asking a bit much and he was really trying to stretch credulity to a much greater extent that we should really permit in this particular. So that was one question that was asked.

A second one related to some passing references to the Central Bank and certain comments that were not all complimentary, or complimentary at all, about the Central Bank in this particular matter in which he felt that these matters should not be dealt with by the Central Bank but by some other financing institution - I think he said the Barbados Development Bank. The fact is that the Central Bank in this matter will just be a kind of conduit. The funds will come from the European Commission through the European Investment Bank to the Central Bank of Barbados for onlending to the Barbados National Bank and to other commercial banks where agriculturalists may have their funding. That is how it will go. It will not be the Central Bank administering the funds as such but they will be going to the Barbados National Bank and to other commercial banks and there will be a facility, as I recall, for the Barbados Agricultural Society also to participate in the particular facility. So it will be broad based.

2984

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. I might have inadvertently misled the House but I took the Addendum to the Resolution seriously. The Minister has just said that the funds will not be administered by the Central Bank but the Addendum to the Resolution says that the credit line will be administered by the Central Bank of Barbados. I have to apologise to the House for believing that when the Addendum says that the funds will be administered by the Central Bank that they will be administered by the Central Bank.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, you should really take the Addendum seriously. I think the House should take the member's statement at its face value. What the Addendum says on page 2 is:

"The credit line will be administered by the Central Bank of Barbados and will be used to channel loans to livestock farmers through the commercial banks and the Barbados Agricultural Society."

What I have explained is that the funds will come into the Central Bank of Barbados which will channel the funds into the Barbados National Bank and other commercial banks and the Barbados Agricultural Society will also be participating in the exercise. We cannot put a full stop after Central Bank of Barbados. The sentence must be read in its entirety and that gives the full picture of it all. I am sure the member takes the point. This is not Opposition tactics, this is Government tactics. We will not belabour the point I am sure it is well taken and we will leave it at that.

I am looking around for the other points that have been made. I believe from what I have heard there will

be support for this particular Resolution coming from the other side.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: The Minister has already set out the whole project. I simply wanted to make clear that when we hear about nothing being done about agriculture that this is an initiative for dealing with a problem, for the development of agriculture. I am sure the Minister in his reply will talk about the abattoir and such other aspects of agriculture as relate to this particular Resolution. In 1991 we indicated to the European Commission that there was need for funding under Lome for a project in agriculture and we applied for a particular project. The matter was agreed. I, as Minister responsible for Finance and Economic Affairs, signed an agreement in July 1992. Then we had to look at all the people who would do the study and tenders as well. All of that process had to be gone through. We have gone through it all. It is not any length of time. This specific project here was in late 1992. We are now into the second month of 1993 and we are approaching this Honourable Chamber for approval for the borrowing of this loan. What we have come here for is part of the loan we have to obtain under the Special Loans Act. This will be part financed by the Commission and part financed by the Government of Barbados. 5.50 p.m.

I would just like, therefore, Mr. Speaker, for us to have this all in perspective and for the public of Barbados to be aware that we are taking steps to resuscitate agriculture. It is part of our strategy for the livestock sector. All is within the framework of our overall development plan. I think there are many instances in which criticisms and brickbats are thrown at Government. I believe this is one occasion on which we can all join together and say "Let us work together and hope that this project is successful in its overall objectives of bringing about improvement to Barbados".

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, the intervention of the Right Honourable Prime Minister has served to remind us that often a Prime Ministerial intervention carries stature rather than content. If the Honourable Prime Minister has spoken with an absence of knowledge about agriculture it is not surprising because even though over the years he has expressed an interest, we know he has never followed the subject with any particular care.

Mr. Speaker, I was not privileged to hear the introduction of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, , Food and Fisheries, but I was treated, through the courtesy of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, to some notes on his presentation. It would appear that the major emphasis the money which we are seeking here to borrow from the European Economic Community under LOME really would be on the rehabilitation of the farm at Greenland.

Let me just begin by saying, Sir, that we in Barbados have not realised our full potential in livestock development. The Prime Minister really needs to be ^corrected when he indicates that this is a kind of major new initiative. It is really nothing new about this initiative in livestock. In the period 1981 to 1986, on which I can speak with some authority, considerable attention was paid to livestock development. By the time the Barbados Labour Party had left office in 1986 I think there was a momentum going in that direction. In fact, in the last Budget under our Administration presented by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, then Prime Minister, he committed \$1 million to that sector. It was then hoped, as has been pointed out a few minutes ago by the Honourable Member for St Peter, that that \$1 million would have continued for a few years as part of an injection of dynamic on the part of the Government. We paid considerable attention to the economical supply of energy on the farms through the Revolving Fund

2985

in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Attention was paid too to grasslands, irrigation, silage and new strains of cattle in Barbados generally. On the whole I think it is fair to say there was considerable interest and momentum in the livestock sector. What has happened in the last 8 years is that there has been certainly a lessening, if not a collapse, of that momentum and that dynamic. I think the Government has to bear considerable responsibility for that slackening of the pace and interest that has taken place in that sector.

I am glad, Sir, that we are once again focusing on the Scotland District because in Barbados the Scotland District has become synonymous with a problem area. It is the area where we suffer slippage of the soil. It is the Scotland District from which people run and emigrate and settle in the Heights, Terraces and even in the low lands in other parts of Barbados. The truth is that the Scotland District presents us in Barbados with problems, challenges and opportunities. It can, if properly developed, become the bread basket for Barbados. It has rich potential for the development, not only of livestock, but also for the production of vegetables, tree crops, citrus, flowers and foliage. To that extent we need to realise the full potential of that area.

This rehabilitation of the farm at Greenland is an attempt, as I understand it, to ensure that some of the potential in that area is realised.

Just let me give an important story about Greenland. When I was the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, I observed that Greenland was falling into disrepair. It was not, in my view, doing as well and looking as prosperous a farm as it should be. I made detailed enquiries about what was happening at Greenland. I found that the officer in the Ministry who was responsible for Greenland was not only a full-time officer at Greenland, but he was a full-time student simultaneously at the University of the West Indies, unknown to the Ministry of Agriculture of which he was a member. It turned out that I became aware of it as Minister but the officers in the Ministry claimed not to have been aware.

I mention that, not because it is an interesting story in its own right, but because it serves to remind the Minister that when you have activities going on far away from the Ministry you have to set up a monitoring mechanism within the Ministry to ensure that things are actually done. By the time you get around once or twice a year to paying a visit, sometimes not as often as that, things have really fallen back in a way that you are not aware of. That happened in the last few years in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. It should serve as a reminder that you ought to be extremely careful about these activities that are taking place, not at the centre, but at the periphery, as it were. 6.00 p.m.

Now I want to raise a question which you did not elaborate upon, if at all you mentioned it, it has to do with the funding under LOME. Barbados has developed, Mr. Speaker, an enormously bad reputation in LOME circles for the absence of speed with which it draws down its money under the LOME Convention. I think Barbados now ranks with some other country - I can't remember the name, it may be another country in the region and no useful purpose will be served by calling its name, perhaps Trinidad and Tobago, - as the 2 slowest countries in the ACP grouping making use of the funding under LOME. I am not sure whether this money under discussion relates to money under LOME 2 or LOME 3. But we are into LOME 4 and it is very likely that Barbados has not used all of its money under LOME 2 and certainly not all under LOME 3. In 1986 we had committed, in this country, a considerable sum of money under LOME to the fishing port at Speightstown. When that was abandoned, for reasons which we need not enter into now, a lot of that money became available for other projects and a considerable time passed before the Government of Barbados was able to determine what that project should be and to make a proposal to the European Community in order to get the balance of the money spent under LOME 2, as I think it was at the time. So I would like to know from the Minister really where we stand now in relation to the LOME funding for Barbados and whether we are still drawing down under LOME 2 or whether we have moved on to LOME 3.

If indeed this application was only made a year or 1½ years ago, Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that we would have done very well indeed to be about to draw down because there was a time when the Caribbean desk at Brussels was very poorly administered. There was a deficiency and shortage of staff and applications for money took a long time to be processed. That was even before my time as Minister. It has nothing to do with my being Minister. It is what we suffered in the region in making applications under the LOME Convention for funding.

Mr. Speaker I need to make another quick point and it has to do with the administration of this funding. The Ministry of Agriculture at one point had built up some experience and competence too in administering funds to farmers for livestock purposes. They had worked out certain criteria; they knew the farmers who were most prominent in the community and the revolving loan scheme was one that responded to applications with speed and with flexibility. I am happy to report that in my time I found satisfaction in the way that that particular scheme operated.

2986

In this particular funding, as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, we are going to have the commercial banks in

Bridgetown, many of which are without experience in servicing this sub-sector in agriculture. Many of the commercial banks, over the years, have had experience in servicing sugar though in recent times they have off-loaded and it is the Barbados National Bank that services perhaps 85 per cent of sugar loans; but very few of the banks can claim any experience in dealing with the sub-sector of livestock or the sub-sector of orchard development. It is a fact that the Ministry of Agriculture has had some experience in these sectors and I wonder why is it that so many institutions are going to be involved when many of them in my view, without experience, in the administration of this sort of matter?

So that apart from the very important point that has been made by the Honourable Member for St. Peter that we are over-loading the Central Bank with non-essential functions, the Central Bank has a key role in the Barbadian economy, but certainly one of its responsibilities is not to administer funding of this sort. It is arguably the wrong institution through which the administration of this money should be dealt with. But that point apart, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned with the other institutions like all the commercial banks, many of which really have no experience in administering and expertise in dealing with projects of this sort.

I think, Mr. Speaker, too that another point has got to be made. I think it was perhaps not fully appreciated by the Right Honourable Prime Minister when he spoke, but one of the problems which we have had in the total development of the Scotland District as an agricultural community and that is to say emphasising not only livestock development but fruit tree development is that we have had stray animals that have often destroyed the attempts at fruit tree development and vegetable farming in the Scotland District. It has been felt that the impounding provisions under the law have not worked well. That is not surprising because ours is still a humane society, Mr. Speaker, always quick to anger but very quick to forgive and to be humane. That is the nature of the society. So that a few sheep and head of cattle are impounded tonight; the owners come forward the next morning crying and the person who is responsible for the impounding relaxes and says, all right promise not to do it again and be more careful and that is the end of that matter. Two weeks later the same problem is again being experienced in that these stray animals, not being carefully supervised by their owners, are destroying fruit trees and vegetables. It has been felt that what we need in that area is to make a greater provision for communal grazing. Say, okay, you do not have to cause Mr. Y or Mr. Z difficulties, come to this 10 acre lot, come to this 100 acre lot and take advantage of the communal grazing facilities. So that what I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, is that the Honourable Minister in seeking to include another 100* acres or hectares into farming in that region would ensure that a significant proportion of that is devoted to communal grazing so that we will get away from the problem of stray animals. Animals not properly supervised destroy the attempts at fruit tree and vegetable production in that region.

The point must be made too, Mr. Speaker, about the need for the supporting facilities for livestock development. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South spoke about the fact that the Abattoir was a live issue in Barbados for the last 10 to 15 years and that we have made no progress in constructing a new Abattoir to service the livestock community and the general population in Barbados.

Simultaneous with that, Mr. Speaker, we have had a dramatic decline of the facilities both at the market in Fairchild Street and the market in Cheapside. It is unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, and I invite you some time in your travels to try to get into the market at Fairchild Street which is virtually impossible because the minibus men have now taken over the access to the market in Fairchild Street, so much so that it is impossible for those of us who like to go to that market still to gain access on Saturday mornings. In fact when you get in there the whole Western side of the market is so dead, so inactive, that you would believe you are visiting a graveyard when a funeral is not on. It is bad indeed, Mr. Speaker, not to mention that the physical facilities are in terrible disrepair and I must remind the House that by the time I left the Ministry of Agriculture in 1986, as Minister, plans were very advanced following the completion of the bus stand project just below to virtually build a new market on the same site. 6.10 p.m.

There were also plans for the radical restoration and redevelopment of the market at Cheapside. I find it very difficult to understand why we have allowed the markets around Barbados to fall into the state of disrepair in which they apparently are. We cannot really have effective development of livestock, Mr. Speaker, until we do something about marketing. It was very appropriate that the whole question of the abattoir and also the question of the markets should be raised in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side, as we have indicated, are lending our support to this Resolution. There are a few questions that we need answered and I hope that the Honourable Minister in his response will clarify a few of the issues raised and reassure us that this funding and the whole question of restoring some attention and energy to the livestock sector will be given the attention which it richly deserves.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, a debate such as what we have before us brings into focus the

importance of agriculture and related matters in the wider economic development. Even though what we have before us is to do with promoting livestock farming in a greater way than it has been promoted under this administration, Sir, this project which the Government proposes at Greenland must not be taken in isolation. At this point in the history of agriculture in this country, there are a number of matters which merit attention.

For example, Sir, over the years the Barbados Marketing Corporation has stood as an agency designed to promote agriculture especially at the marketing end. My understanding is that much as the BMC is still in existence enough of the activity that would normally make the BMC more productive is not going on. Indeed, in recent times, I understand the total revenue earned by the Barbados Marketing Corporation has so declined as to put a number of activities within the BMC in doubt. In fact, there are rumblings right now that some workers at BMC may be forced to go on a 3-day work week. I want the Honourable Minister to give this House the assurance that workers in the Export Unit within the BMC will not be put on a 3-day work week. I want the Honourable Minister to tell this House that the concern that workers at BMC are expressing that they may have to go home or on a 3-day week is a concern that is unfounded.

Sir, over time a lot of people who are engaged in agriculture and farming have been lamenting the fact that much of our beef and mutton have been imported from distant lands. Indeed, just recently within the last 6 months there have been some agriculturalists who were expressing the view that much of what we may be importing may not be of the standard that Barbadians would expect. I would think that if we are to make use of funding close to \$3 million that we would ensure that here in Barbados we can produce mutton, beef and pork of a quality that would not only satisfy those persons in Barbados who are looking for high quality meat production; but I would want to engage the Government to see if it can encourage enough livestock production as to try to increase our exports. Even though it is true that there are certain activities that we fund in the economy which might earn fast cash, a government is well advised that if it can explore every possible avenue to earn foreign exchange, then it should do so. I would want to know if the Honourable Minister, in his winding up, can enlighten us in this Honourable House when this project gets going if exporting is going to be one of the long term objectives in the project.

Another question too, Sir, is this. Even though the \$3 million that we will be getting will be vested largely at Greenland, we on this side are anxious to know what long term plans the Government has for the Agricultural Development Corporation. We have heard rumblings and rumours there may be a merger between the Barbados Marketing Corporation and the ADC. We in the BLP have long recognised that the 2 entities serve separate functions. But we are hearing there may be a merger of the Agricultural Development Corporation and the Barbados Marketing Corporation in circumstances where we on this side in the last 2 years or so have not been too impressed with the level of economic activity going on under the aegis of the ADC.

*

Sir, at least 3 agricultural stations, one in St. George, one in St. Philip and one in St. James have been out of productive agricultural activity in recent times. The reason why I mention this is that obviously if we are looking to agriculture to play its true part in the economy, we must also look to see how the support mechanisms there are that have been in existence which are not now in optimum use can be ploughed back into agricultural activity. I would also like to say at this point too, Sir, that even though this project would appear to be a project which the Government will be taking responsibility for, I want to know what plans the Honourable Minister of Agriculture will have and recommend to this Honourable House for getting people back to agriculture, for getting youth into agriculture and for getting persons who may now not be employed because there is nothing for them to do but who may have a keen interest in agriculture. What plans does the Government have for providing venture capital to persons who used to work in agriculture at one point, who, whether through severance or other means, will be coming out of agriculture as they are in it right now but who might want to go on their own, Sir?

Sir, another concern of ours is this. As you know, Mr. Speaker, capital is exceptionally important in

every area of business. From the time the Barbados National Bank emerged as a financial institution in Barbados, we have seen the Barbados National Bank being made to play a disproportionate part in trying to develop agriculture in Barbados. The reason why I say that, Sir, is that there are other commercial institutions that have not been called on to play the type of part that the poor Barbados National Bank has played. We know the history of the Bank where some divisions of that Bank have not done particularly well and have not functioned along commercial lines. As a result, the BNB has made some losses in taking risks in areas where other financial institutions were not taking. I am raising this point in the context of a recommendation which the Honourable Member for St. Peter raised. The Honourable Member for St. Peter was skeptical over whether the Central Bank should be used as the conduit through which this money should pass. He was urging upon this Honourable House that the Barbados Development Bank be made to play a part in this and I concur in that view. The reason is that, if the Barbados Development Bank truly exists to serve a developmental purpose, it is not fair that when small farmers go to the BDB for tiny amounts of money that they be sent to the BNB or elsewhere Sir. I concur in the view that the BDB

2988

which has been known to promote retailing and transport, for example, has not been called upon to do something for agriculture.

I, therefore, support the Honourable Member for St. Peter in this. But of great concern to us are the two issues that I raised earlier as to what extent is the BMC hard pressed to survive, to what extent that the workers at the BMC are unsure if they are going to continue on a 5-day week or not and to what extent will the ADC be making a contribution to agriculture and to agricultural diversification over the next 3 or 4 years. These are my concerns and all the other concerns that I would have had were aptly ventilated by Honourable Members on this side who spoke. Once again, I am deeply grateful and obliged to you, Sir. Thank you. 6.20 p.m.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I would quickly like to touch on 2 points. One is that the constraints to the future development of the livestock industry is really the establishment of the abattoir, as so rightly said by many members.

The present abattoir is not adequate any longer. It never was adequate and it is not meeting the required standards from a sanitation point of view. At first the European Investment Bank people were not in agreement with the selection of the site near Vacluse, because they thought it was a bit too rolling, that the design called for a sprawling abattoir and that the first cost was a bit too high. They have since redesigned the abattoir and it is now within the range acceptable to the EIB. But now the Ministry of Agriculture has a problem, in that the BAS and the farmers in Barbados are beginning to talk about species specific abattoirs. They now want an abattoir for pigs, one for sheep and one for cows, while the one which has been designed would carry 3 lines, one for each. So you now have a specific problem here between the Ministry of Agriculture and the farming community, who have waited until the Ministry has reached the stage where the redesigned abattoir is acceptable in price and siting to the EIB to say they are no longer interested in the abattoir as it is. At first they had a problem with the management of the abattoir, so quite likely the Ministry will have now to decide to put them right.

The livestock industry has been growing reasonably and there were 3 constraints to the development of livestock. One was the cost of feed. I will deal with that as it relates to this project. The Ministry of Agriculture tried to get the BAS to set up a commercial feed lot, for which it was intended to use all the local by-products - bagasse, molasses, chicken litter, wheat middlings and fish offal. They did a lot of work with a fish silage. As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Agriculture has an officer who did an extreme amount of work with fish silage for pigs.

Aside.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Any sugar that is not suitable for human consumption could be added to provide carbohydrates for the animals, but there has been a lot of work done on using local foodstuff. As a matter of fact, a lot of people now keeping sheep have been using bagasse, chicken litter and molasses as the complete feed for large herds of sheep. There are a few sheep farmers I know who have been using no commercial feeds as the protein from the chicken litter is extremely high, since

chickens only need to take about 20% of the protein of the feed. The other 80% is passed back out in the litter and this in turn goes towards the feeding of pigs, sheep and cows, so part of the money is to go towards the establishment of a feed lot at Greenland to show that you can have a commercial feed lot using local by-products in order to feed the animals.

As far as the pig industry is concerned, it has been established for a long time that we are self-sufficient in fresh pork but we still import about \$6 million for the processors. I still believe that we can move towards supplying the processors with 75% of the pork they need and reduce that to \$2 million. I am convinced that this could happen, because the parts which are imported by the processors are usually loins, trimmings for sausages, p:ernes and legs. When I did a study at the time for the pig industry, I worked out that the industry could technically grow to the stage where they supply all the legs needed by the processors. If they do that, all the other parts of the pigs could be used, because the processors would use all the piglets, because they use more piglets than leg, all the loins for bacon, because there is a large importation of loins, and all the other parts would go towards trimmings for all sausages. The constraint was the number of legs they could supply.

It was felt they could supply the processors with up to 75% of their requirements. They were doing extremely well. A strange thing was happening in Barbados. The pig industry, where people are specialising in backyard farming, despite what we might think, and it is a social thing which has to change must move to the bigger farms where one can have economies of scale.

Using Greenland as an area for the landless farmers - this is important - the ADC and Greenland had at one time 150 acres of improved grasslands that were allowed to be used by the landless farmers. When we took a census there were about 5 000 cows in the Greenland area, many of which belonged to people in St. Michael, who took them there as calves and never went back for them until they were ready to slaughter them. The problem therefore
2989

at Greenland was erosion caused because the cows overran the grasslands, because they were grazing. It was not possible to rotate the grasslands fast enough, so all the improved grasslands were completely lost. Unless there can be some control over the number of cows grazing in Greenland, I would say unless you can provide up to 800 acres of improved grasslands in the Scotland District, you would never be able to keep that grassland scheme going because of over grazing and the fact that you cannot rotate the pasture. You would have to do 1 or 2 things. You either have to restrict the population of cows in Greenland or you will have to move the entire Greenland area into grassland. By moving the entire Greenland area into grassland, you would therefore remove the possibility of the fruit crops we talked about. Greenland is ideally suited for fruit crops and more recently it has been doing extremely well in bananas. One or 2 years ago there was an experiment in planting bananas in Greenland and they did very well in the Scotland District 6.30 p.m.

There has to be some balance between the stray cattle and the fruit crop. Unless you restrict the cattle... I see the Minister is now back. There has been a dangerous trend developing in St. Andrew which is part of the indiscipline of the people. Within recent times, when animals were impounded, on more than one occasion the owners of those animals went with cutlasses and guns to reclaim their animals when they were impounded in the Greenland yard. They just loosed them and threatened to kill everybody there and the people working in Greenland were literally afraid to impound any animals any longer. That was one of the problems we had. We had to call the police on numerous occasions. So unless you bring a disciplined approach to Greenland, there will be a problem.

I think the plan about the restoration of the pens at Greenland is minor. The pens at Greenland are very inexpensive. They are just small huts for the animals to shelter when they are feeding. They are not elaborate. Most of the money is going towards providing harvesters and tillers for the cultivation of grasses there and the introduction of a feed lot to experiment with local feed for the animals so that it could then be commercialised and passed on to the private farmers.

I believe this project will go a long way towards solving that.

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North addressed 2 issues which were raised by Honourable Members on the other side, namely the question of the feed lot and that of the abattoir. I would just want to say by way of reiteration that we are at present engaging in ongoing discussions with the B AS over the question of the erection of an abattoir now that they have come up with this notion of species specific abattoirs instead of one abattoir. I believe and hope that early in the new financial year this matter will be resolved once and for all. I think we have reached

consensus with the European Investment Bank on the site at St. Thomas and the size of the abattoir and the only remaining matter to be resolved is with the BAS.

A number of questions were asked, but before I attempt to answer, I believe that in my opening presentation I might have misled some Honourable Members into believing that the majority of the funding would be going towards the repairs to pens at Greenland. Some money will be spent on Greenland but let me start by breaking it down into 3 components:

(i) Investment. Investment would relate to refurbishing of buildings, purchase of new vehicles and equipment and the establishment of new pastures. This would include the whole question of communal grazing and soon.

(ii) Credit to livestock farmers. We spoke of the provision of credit both through the BAS and through the Central Bank acting as the facilitator.

(iii) Technical assistance and management. There is going to be 1 project manager and 2 consultants, marketing and grading and packaging of meat and the whole question of information transfer technology. The Honourable Member for St. Peter raised a relevant issue, probably the only relevant issue that he raised, in relation to the size of the loan and the overall cost of the project. Let me give you the breakdown. The overall project cost is estimated at 4.487 million ECU'S. The proposal before the Honourable House is for the approval of the loan of 1.4 million. We will be receiving from the EEC a grant of 1.075 ECUs and the Government of Barbados will contribute the remaining 2.012 million ECUs. I hope that clarifies the matter and shows the magnitude of the project.

In relation to some specific questions, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South spoke of the research to deal with cost. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North in his intervention touched on that briefly and I should want to add my voice to that aspect of it. Through the use and the assistance of the consultants, ways will be found to use agricultural by-products for feeding of the animals. This will be an intensive feeding programme as opposed to the traditional grazing programme. I said that in the opening remarks. Some emphasis will be placed on the whole question of research. The ultimate long term objective of this would be to reduce the import bill of grain and traditional grain feed.

2990

The question of the ADC lands is a matter on which I will be shortly issuing a policy statement and, indeed, on the BMC also. I do not think that every time I get up here I have to enunciate Government's land use policy. We have said in clear and unequivocal terms what Government's land use policy is, that we intend to retain at least 45 000 acres in sugar and non-sugar agriculture. We have also said that out of that 45 000 acres it is our intention to return the production of sugar to at least 75 000 to 80 000 tonnes and this would mean probably retaining about 27 000 acres in sugar agriculture.

We have also spoken about our continuing emphasis on cotton. Because the farmers have not taken up the baton and run with it that does not mean we will not continue. We are committed to a vibrant cotton industry. We recognise the returns that are to be made from cotton production, and we will pursue cotton production. I do not believe that every time I talk, I must talk about a land use policy. We have clearly enunciated a land use policy. I do not know that there are any other matters that have been raised on that side that I would have to respond to at this stage.

I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church South raised the question of the activity at the Central Livestock Station and the whole question of impounding animals. This is another matter we are pursuing actively in the Ministry. We recognise the problems involved at Greenland where we are going to have to set up some type of structure. We believe we have enough buildings at the CLS to use for a pound there. Within the next 3 to 4 months I think this would be very much on stream. The legislation is there. It is just a matter of putting the structures in place. 6.40 p.m. With these few remarks and clarifications, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: It is now time Sir, for us to take our leave of this Honourable Chamber. I am

moving that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday February 23, 1993.

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

»

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, February 23, 1993 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 6.42 p.m.

2991

CONTENTS

MINUTES Hon. P. M. GREAVES	2953
---	------

Confirmation of the Minutes of Meeting of Tuesday, 26th January, 1993.

PAPERS

Hon. B. M. TAITT.....	2953
1. The Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) Regulations, 1993.	
2. The Drug Abuse (Notification of Addicts) Regulations, 1993.	

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS.....	2953
-------------------------	------

The Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year 1990-91.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND.....	2954
Question re supply of sugar. Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE.....	2954
Question re the state of repair of St. Matthews Primary School.	

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS Hon. P. M. GREAVES.....	2955
Suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44.	

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS ORDER NO. 7 - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

1992-93, NO. 4.....	2955
Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford, 2955, 2956; Mr. H. deB. Forde, 2956, 2964, 2965, 2966; Hon. P. M. Greaves, 2958, 2962, 2963, 2965; Hon. C. V. Walker, 2958; Hon. H. B. St. John, 2959, 2965; Mr. L. R. Tull, 2960, 2962.	

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY \$13 000.00.....

Hon. N. K. Simmons, 2967, 2968; Mr. H. deB. Forde, 2967.

ORDER NO. 4 - BILL TO AMEND THE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES ACT, 1990.....

Hon. W. O. Franklin, 2969, 2977; Mr. R. C. Eastmond, 2971; Hon. H. B. St. John, 2973; Mr. O. S. Arthur, 2974, Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford, 2977.

ORDER NO. 8 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF 1 400 000 EUROPEAN CURRENCY UNITS.....

Hon. D. W. Bowen, 2978, 2989; Hon. H. B. St. John, 2978; Mr. O. S. Arthur, 2980; Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford, 2983; Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, 2984; Mr. R. C. Eastmond, 2986; Hon. W. O. Franklin, 2988.

SUSPENSION.....	2965
-----------------	------

ADJOURNMENT.....	
Hon. P. M. Greaves, 2990.	

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ARTHUR, Mr. O. S. (St. Peter) BOWEN, Hon. D. W. (St. Michael South Central) BRATHWAITE, Mr. L. L. (St. Michael North 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. P. M. (St. Michael North) SANDIFORD, Rt Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South) ST. JOHN, Hon. H. B. (Christ Church South) SIMMONS, Hon. N. K. (St. James South) TAITT, Hon. B. M. (St. Michael West) TULL, Mr. L. R. (St. George South) WALKER, Hon. C. V. (St. George North)

.2990