

THE House of Assembly Debates (OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 12, 1993

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.20 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 1993.

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.R., (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. TATTT, B.A.(Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.(Hons.), (Minister of Health)
Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Works, Communications and Transportation and Leader of the House)
Hon. M. A. KING, Q.C., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs)
Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P., (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)
Hon. N. K. SIMMONS, (Minister of Justice and Public Safety)
Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN, B.Sc., (Econ.)
Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc., (Econ.)
Hon. C. V. WALKER, (Minister of Education)
Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. E. E. GREAVES, G.C.M., B.A., Ed.M., (Minister of Housing and Lands, Community Development and Culture)
Hon. W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.B.M. (Minister of Tourism and Sports)
Mr. C. LeR. TROTMAN, M. A.
Mr. R. L. MORRIS, B.A., Cert. Ed.
Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B., (Hons.), (Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.
Miss B. A. MILLER
Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW
Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.)
Mr. 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 Rev. Father Ivan Harewood

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session. Minutes of Tuesday, January 5, 1993.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of the meeting of January 5, 1993 of this Honourable House have been circulated and I move, Sir, that they be taken as read and confirmed.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements for the month of October 1992 as prepared by the Accountant General.

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PAPERS

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Financial Intermediaries (Fees) Regulations, 1992 and I am also commanded to lay the Report on the audit of the accounts of the Auditor-General's Department for the financial years 1990-91 and 1991-92.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Barbados Tourism Authority Bill, 1993.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Barbados Tourism Authority Bill, 1993 be now read a first time.

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

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

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill be now read a first time.

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

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

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express sorrow, sympathy and thanksgiving for the life and the contribution of Gershon Elon Shimron Greaves who left these mortal shores on December 12, 1992 having lived for some four score years. The late Elon Greaves lived at Well Road, Pie Corner, St. Lucy and was the father of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, Evelyn Greaves, Gold Crown of Merit, Minister of Housing and Lands, Community Development and Culture. It is this connection, Sir, that is the immediate cause why we in this House are recalling the life and contribution of Elon Greaves.

After leaving elementary school and being a very sound pupil and also after being an apprentice, Elon Greaves turned to agriculture and spent the greater part of his life in providing middle level leadership on the plantation in St. Lucy. There he was able to coordinate those activities which formed part of the farmer's calendar and which must be done systematically if good husbandry is to be followed and if the activity of agriculture is to result in the fruits of the land. He was well respected and he certainly was able to coordinate the activities leading to good produce from the land. After he retired from that calling, Sir, he turned to his own account as a peasant farmer and he was able to bring to that activity the vast knowledge and experience which he had gained on the plantation.

His life, Sir, is the epitome of innumerable solid lives of Barbadians across this country who by dint of hard work, by dint of lots of commonsense and by dint of attempting the possible have been able to create the national character of this country and to help us to achieve whatever we have been able to achieve with our very slender resources. He himself, Sir, would have lived through, as a child, the First World War. He would have been in his late twenties during the Second World War and he would have lived through the great depression of the 1930's. From all of that, Sir, he would certainly have known what struggle is and what the good old Bajan phrase "to cut and to contrive" means.

Sir, it is out of trying times and out of the tribulation, almost, that he was able to make a very significant contribution to the development of Barbados and to creating the kind of Barbados that we know. 12.30 p.m. Out of a little, Sir, he was able to provide for his family, a large family of some 16 children, including the Member for St. Lucy....

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I am not certain what is going on, I am being interrupted here, but certainly we know that through the genetic mechanisms some of his very outstanding qualities would have been passed on to his offspring, including the member for St. Lucy.

He has made a significant contribution, Sir, but how could it be otherwise with a name like those? Gershon, in biblical times, and I stand corrected, Sir, was the ancestor of the Levite clan and it should not be surprising therefore that the Greaves clan has resulted in these modern times. Shimron was a Canaanite

city, so we can see where there were the indications of greatness from long ago in the very names that were chosen. Elon, Sir, was a Hittite and also the son of Zebulon, as I understand it.

I think Barbados is very grateful for his contribution to the economic and social life and to the building up of the community of the North. He has continued, through his children, to make that kind of invaluable contribution to our life and to our times. We remember him with gratitude, Sir. His son, Evelyn, is a most outstanding citizen of Barbados - a teacher, scholar, trade unionist,

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parliamentarian, administrator and community leader. Among these many roles he has always performed with integrity and is a very good example of what, given the opportunities, we can all make of our lives.

We certainly cannot bring Elon back to life, Sir. He has gone where all of us must eventually go, yet we are grateful to honour him and to recognise him and we certainly hope that he will find his rest in Paradise. Our act here is to give support and sustenance, as far as possible, to his surviving relatives so that they can now re-order their lives and build upon the valuable things which their father held most dear.

On behalf of myself, Sir, my wife and family, on behalf of this side of the House, indeed on behalf of all members, I wish to express condolence to the surviving members of the family, in particular to the Member for St. Lucy, and I beg to move that the motion of condolence in the usual terms be passed and conveyed to the honourable member.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Right Honourable Prime Minister has captured wonderfully well the spirit of the life of Mr. Elon Greaves and I would wish simply to associate the Opposition with the very rich tribute which has been endowed upon him by the Prime Minister, as well as to convey our deepest sympathy to his immediate family.

I cannot say that I knew Mr. Greaves personally. He was a close friend of my father and mother and I am told that he was also the first cousin of my grandfather. Therefore I can claim kinship to him and to his descendants as well. I do not want on this occasion to enlarge him in death beyond what he was in life, but from all accounts it is very clear that Mr. Greaves was one of those who came out of the great tribulation, one of those persons who by dint of hard work, a sense of industry, a sense of purpose, laid the foundations and built the bedrock of a stable Barbados, sadly, Sir, part of a vanishing breed whom this House must honour as the occasion arises.

He built up a great reputation as being a man of great talent in all his various endeavours, without fail. The Prime Minister has spoken of his contribution to agriculture, to the community of Pie Corner and St. Lucy in general, and his contribution to putting family values at the very forefront of all his various considerations.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, want to identify not only the Opposition but myself personally and my family with the rich tribute which has been paid to Mr. Greaves and I wish, Sir, that his soul may truly rest in peace.

Mr. C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not seek to join the remarks on the occasion of the motion occasioned by the passing of Mr. Gershon Greaves.

My association with him goes back to 1971, which also represents the time at which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and I became close associates in the same organisation and where, because of that association within the Barbados Workers' Union, we would have occasion from time to time to visit in St. Lucy and where I would meet with the father of the member.

We have already spoken of what the member for St. Peter calls his great reputation - I would say his great reputation as a father - but I think we should go beyond that and say that I thought he was a good parent, a great parent and not just a father of many children. Whenever we in the Barbados Workers' Union have met him we always found within him a man who was able to give calm assurance, even in the face of the problems which sometimes we would find ourselves confronted with during the period between 1971 and the present. There was a certain equanimity about him which was always very pleasant to come into contact with, and we were able because of the tremendous experience which he had gotten from his very long and varied life to see and benefit from it in the same way that we were able to see and benefit from the general support which he was able to give to us I refer now not to material support but to the support which a parent having a number of children is able to give to a number of young persons, especially those associated with one of his own children, support in words and advice and in consolation from time to time, support which has stood us all in very good stead as we have endeavoured to do the job that we saw ourselves being called to do by the Barbados Workers' Union which was the organisation which had brought us together. 12.40 p.m.

The father has left in the son, the Member for St. Lucy, someone who has been able to benefit from those

qualities of which I have spoken. We are pleased at the way in which he was able to replicate those qualities in association with our organisation. I would want him to know that beyond the support which would come to him from members of both sides of this House that the general membership of the workers of Barbados and particularly of the Barbados Workers' Union would want to go out to him in support and in condolence at this time.

We know that he will find the strength, given the fact that we were almost sure at one stage that he would have been lost both to the Barbados Workers' Union and Parliament because we thought he was going to join the holy priesthood at one stage. At least that was the view of the previous General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has never denied having an interest in.

I think, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that coming from our direction, from the work that we have done together, the tremendous contribution which the Member for St Lucy has made to education and to workers and to the consciousness of workers regarding a number of important issues, not merely economic, but issues which are larger than economic which relate to issues of life and the quality of life... Within that contribution we would wish to believe that he was in fact paying by his service a tribute to the life of Gershon Greaves.

I would wish to identify with the mover of the Resolution and the person seconding from the Opposition and to wish the Member for St. Lucy peace and equanimity in this time of his loss.

Mr. SPEAKER: I should like to associate myself with the comments and contributions made on behalf of the Honourable Member's father. I would therefore like to extend my sincere condolences on behalf of my wife and family to the Honourable Member and I hope that this hour of bereavement will be a source of inspiration for him to continue what the deceased has instilled in him.

We shall stand for 1 minute in silence as a means of marking our respect and the passing of this Resolution.

Honourable Members stood in silence for 1 minute.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the traditions of this Honourable Chamber I rise to express my thanks and the thanks of my family to Honourable Members who have spoken during this Resolution and also to other Honourable Members who expressed their sympathy to us during the time of our bereavement. I wish to say that we sincerely appreciate the* very kind sentiments which have been expressed.

The RL Honourable Prime Minister did make a number of factual allusions to my father and I would not want to detain the House on this matter except to say that he came up in a very difficult time. Certainly all of us who lived at home knew what sacrifices were all about because we were quite a handful. Nevertheless we were able to overcome their struggle and all of the children are still alive in different parts of the world. We really appreciate the kind of guidance which our father provided for us during our childhood. For this we are grateful.

On behalf of the family I wish to express my thanks once more to all Honourable Members who have spoken and expressed their sentiments.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am giving notice that Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 48 asked by the Honourable Member for St. Peter is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

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

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the suspension of the Standing Orders, I would like to say that with the leave of the House I would wish the House to reconsider Private Members' Business. There is a Resolution standing in my name asking the House to note the Statement on Privatisation by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance. With the leave of the House I would wish to stand that debate today.

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

ORDER NO. 6 - TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE
RESOLVE ITSELF INTO A COMMITTEE OF
SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF
SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE
OF THIS ISLAND

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

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HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE - \$120 000

Head 15 - Cabinet Office - was called. 12.50 p.m.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, the amount of \$1 003 857 has been provided in the current financial year to cover expenses in connection with conferences and other business overseas. That amount, Sir, voted in the Estimates to cover official travel on Government business represented a reduction of \$396 143 on the 1991-92 allocation which is \$1.4 million. It was also about \$1 million less than the amount voted in the year 1990-91.

We have been making a very significant effort to reduce, over the past few years, the amount expended on travel on Government business. The demands, however, for attendance at meetings and conferences and other business overseas have caused the amount voted in this year's Estimates to be virtually exhausted. I believe there is some \$144.46 of the amount voted remaining unallocated at January 5, 1993. That is the uncommitted balance. That amount of \$144.46 is clearly not enough to make provision for the demands that will be put on this vote for the remainder of the year.. I think this is recognised. We are therefore seeking supplementary provision of some \$120 000 which should take us through the remainder of this financial year.

I think on many occasions this House, and previous Houses, have been called upon to debate supplementary provision for conferences and delegations. I do not propose to take up the time of the House too much on this matter except to say it is important that we attend meetings and conferences on Government business and that costs have been rising. Bearing such in mind we seek to exercise as much prudence as possible in the expenditure of these funds.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I cannot give my support to this Resolution for several reasons. The first one is the reason for support advanced by the Right Honourable Prime Minister is one I simply do not believe. I do not believe it is important I do not believe there is anything to be gained from any additional travelling *fat* whatever reason by Members. Since the beginning of this financial year, April 1, 1992, the Government has spent the entire vote in excess of \$1 million and the people of Barbados have nothing to show for it This happens year in, year out. All we see is that economic activity in Barbados slows and every single major sector of our economy goes further into decline. I do not believe either when we are told, as we were just now, that this travel has to do exclusively with enhancing the Government's and people's business. I am concerned that too often the travel is

connected with business which has nothing to do with the people of Barbados. I am concerned with the persons with whom the Government sees fit to trade. In the Addendum it says that additional demands have been placed on the vote by Government's efforts to identify and explore avenues for enhancing economic activity and to seek to maintain Barbados' trading position vis-a-vis other countries. It simply is not true. There is nothing, not one single word or not one single sentence the Right Honourable Prime Minister or Minister of Finance could bring to suggest that the Government's economic activity has been enhanced by any travel over the past 8 or 9 months. As to the matter of identifying and exploring avenues for seeking* to maintain Barbados* trading position, there is deep concern in Barbados about some of the corporations, companies and agencies that the Government sees fit to do business with.

I have been reading in the newspaper about a certain company called P. S. International, for instance, a process supply company based in Indianapolis, Indiana in the United States of America, which the Government is doing business with in more than one concern. I am told this is the company the Government is doing business with in respect of the importation of Guatemalan sugar. I am told this is the company the Government is doing business with, and not only the Government but some statutory corporations and other corporations in Barbados including the Agro-business Company, a company which enjoys the worst possible reputation, a company which was found guilty of fraud in the United States of America, not once but on more than one occasion and a company that has been known to ship flour invoiced as sugar. There are questions to be asked and questions to be answered. I want to know what is the connection of the Government, that is Barbados* trading position vis-a-vis other countries. I want to know what is the connection with P. S. International. I want to know what is the connection with a company registered in Barbados known as Sea Freight Agencies (Barbados) Limited with a registered office at the James Port Building at Hincks Street in Bridgetown. I want to know what is the connection of a company known as HTNK with its registered office in Ruby, St. Philip in this country. I want to know what is the connection with another company known as P. Security Aluminum Windows and Doors Company Limited. What is the connection with the National Insurance Company? If you go to the Corporate Registry, Mr. Chairman, and you do an investigation, you will see that P. Security Aluminum Windows and Doors Company Limited, Company No. 4501, derivation of name comes from the principal overseas suppliers and consultants. Who are these people? 1.00 p.m.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: On a point of order, Sir. I have nothing against the Honourable Member raising these matters but at the appropriate time. They seem to be absolutely and completely irrelevant to Conferences and Delegations vote and I am submitting, Sir, that the Honourable Member is out of order on the grounds that it is absolutely irrelevant We are dealing with Conferences and Delegations vote here.

Miss B. A. MILLER: What I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, is which Members of the Government travelled abroad using this Conferences and Delegations vote?

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: On a point of order, Sir. I made the submission to Your Honour, Mr. Chairman, and I am seeking your ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: As I understand it, the Honourable Member is seeking by way of the Addendum to ask about trading relationships. I think that I have given enough latitude as far as that is concerned. Since there is a precise method by which questions are asked in the Chamber, I would advise the Honourable Member not to expand outside the realm of the Resolution that is before the Committee.

Miss B. A. MILLER: I have no such intention, Mr. Chairman. You do not have to worry on that score. There are other reasons why I cannot support this Resolution and perhaps the most important reason of all, Sir, is that I do not understand the Government's priorities. How can supplementing the Travelling and Conferences and Delegations Vote come before the Welfare vote? This is not the only vote that is busted. This is not the only vote for which supplementary is sought. I want to know why at a time in Barbados when more and more people are falling out of work on a daily basis and when the rate of unemployment is escalating on a daily basis - I have telephone calls to my office this morning even before I came here, Sir. They want to know how can I help them to get a job - and at a time when through no fault or habit of their own find that they have to fall back on the welfare services for the basic necessities of life, how does that take priority over this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Can I say to the Honourable Member that we are dealing with Head 15 of the Estimates and I would like her to confine her remarks to the activities around the particular Head that we are discussing.

Miss B. A. MILLER: It is impossible for me, Sir, to address this matter without addressing the matter of priority. What I am suggesting to the House, Sir, is that this supplementary cannot take priority over other supplementaries which are imminent and desperately needed.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member knows that the Rules say that you cannot anticipate any legislation. The Honourable Member cannot say that she is discussing supplementaries which are imminent. There is only one supplementary before the House. Let the Honourable Member stay within that particular supplementary. I have no quarrel with the Honourable Member ranging far and wide within the Rules, but she cannot talk about supplementaries to come. If we start doing that, Sir, we will be here until tomorrow.

Miss B. A. MILLER: Where are you planning to travel? What is your problem?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am going to Moscow, Sir. I am going to Moscow where the Honourable Member went.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order.

Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am concerned and I am entitled to this concern. There are people in my constituency in the City of Bridgetown and people all over Barbados who cannot have recourse to the welfare services because there is no money. The Legal Aid Fund is busted, Sir. There are women in Barbados under threat and hiding. There are children in Barbados today who are not the recipients of maintenance as they ought to be because there is no money left in the Legal Aid Fund which assists mothers in their quest for maintenance for these children. Everyday you can read something in the newspaper and you can hear complaints about the dearth of services. I am surprised to hear the Honourable Minister of Health. Only this morning I read in the newspaper about the lack of certain sanitation services. Garbage is now piling up. It has now become a feature again in the newspapers that there is a pile of garbage here and a pile of garbage there. Say what you can do about the one in Passage Road in the City.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member will conclude in two minutes.

Miss B. A. MILLER: I am saying, Sir, that none of these matters can have a lower priority than Conferences and Delegations. That is the most important reason why I will not vote to support this Resolution, Sir.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I very deeply regret that the Government has brought this Resolution at this time. This House has almost every year in its existence been called upon to supplement the vote for conferences. I want to state at the very outset, Mr. Speaker, that 10 years ago more money was spent on Conferences and Delegations than is anticipated by this vote. 1.10 p.m.
The essential point, Mr. Speaker, in all of this is that the country is in the throes of an austerity programme

within which the Government has made very much of the need for control of expenditure, and indeed the Government of Barbados had been put to the necessity, as part of its stabilisation programme, of sending home large numbers of people in order to restore balance to the external position of this country. I believe that for this Parliament to spend money on travel at a time when we are sending home Barbadians is to cause the public to believe that this * House is making sport. This comes like an act of provocation, that Parliament cannot be serious in agreeing to a policy that says people must go home and that the expenditure on the employment of people and the delivery of services must be curtailed, but that we as a Parliament must agree to an increase in Government expenditure on Conferences and Delegations. I do not believe the people of Barbados will hold us guiltless if we show what I can only describe as this weird sense of priorities in agreeing to this increased allocation over and beyond what was initially budgeted at this time. The Government would really have to show a stronger argument to explain why it is able to control expenditure on other equally essential votes and is unable to control this. I am not at all prepared to buy the argument that this increased vote - and I am reading from the Addendum, Sir - is required to assist the Government in identifying and exploring avenues for enhancing economic activity "and to seek to maintain Barbados' trading position vis-a-vis other countries".

I want particularly to speak to the latter matter, this business about maintaining Barbados' trading position vis-a-vis other countries. We are being asked to supplement this vote to provide money so that Government can undertake activity to maintain Barbados' trading position vis-a-vis other countries. I am totally dissatisfied, Mr. Chairman, with the manner in which the Government has gone about this business of appointing people to positions with a view to enhancing Barbados' trading position vis-a-vis other countries. I do not believe that persons who are members of political institutions should be discriminated against when their parties are in office and should not be allowed to hold office by reason of the fact that they are members of the ruling party, but there is such a thing as appointing people over and beyond their level of competence.

I do not believe the Government of Barbados can be serious at this juncture in our economic development, when it is necessary for Barbados to enhance its economic activity and to maintain and enhance our trading position vis-a-vis other countries, in the nature of the appointments it has made of late at the level of Ambassador, both responsible for trade. I do not believe the best interests of Barbados can properly be served by having the persons who have been designated as Ambassadors responsible for trade, who are persons whose record in the private sector has nothing whatsoever to suggest that they can lead any onslaught in the area of expanding our trade opportunities in this country. Indeed, Sir, my fear is that they will bring to the public service the same kind of lack of success they have always shown in the private sector.

It grieves me very greatly, Sir, that during this period of austerity when substantial adjustments have had to be made in how we do business in this country the Government has not seen the need to create opportunities for young people, even if they are Dems, who can bring vigour and imagination to bear in helping this country to deal with long standing and serious problems. I cannot support this Resolution if any of this money has to be spent to support the travelling of those two so called Ambassadors responsible for trade, because those two persons, in my view, are the wrong people, dealing with the wrong thing at the wrong time.

I believe that trade matters in this country have to be at the centre of our economic policy. To that extent, Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party has now made trade an aspect of our Economic Affairs Ministry, as it should be. Trade is the lifeblood of small economies and it is not a place, in my humble assessment, to promote people merely because of long standing relationships with a particular institution. I am not saying that those gentlemen should not work, Sir, but not at the level of Ambassadors responsible for trade at this time in our country's history.

Barbados has to go through a process of trade reform. Fundamental decisions have to be taken in relation to how we are going to relate to the expanded North American Free Trade Area; in regard to the Caricom trade regime; about our future relationships with the new market economies of Eastern Europe and to the wider European Community; in all aspects of trade in the near future, and I believe it is a retrograde step for persons with no track record in this area, no proven competence in any of their private endeavours, to be put in a position where they now have to bring to bear in the public sector their lack of success in the private sector. Therefore, to the extent that we are being called upon as a Parliament to vote funds to support the activities of these gentlemen - and I have nothing personal against them, Sir - who apparently must carry the burden of maintaining Barbados' trading position, I cannot support this.

Generally speaking, Sir, I believe that small economies will be penny wise and pound foolish in believing

that their members of Cabinet and Public Officers should not travel. They must, but Government has set standards in this country, it has caused the public to believe that the sacrifice must be shared by all, and in my judgment this vote is telling the people of Barbados that the rest of Barbados must carry the sacrifice at this stage but, by some logic best known to the Government, members of the Government will be free from those sacrifices. It is on that precise ground, Sir, together with my complete dissatisfaction with the way in which the Government is developing trade policy, as well as with the way in which the Government has manned the chambers of trade, I will have no option but to vote against the Resolution.

Mr. C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. Chairman, I believe that, especially in these times, we have as often as we can, and we should always be careful not to throw out the baby when we are throwing out the bath water. A number of issues are given particular passing interpretation when in fact there is need for a much more careful, very often non-political, but statesmanlike approach to those same matters.

In the instant case before us I find myself in a particular area where, as I would expect any other institution to want to do, I want to reduce as much as possible the amount of travel I would do or that my organisation outside of this House would want to do. At the same time I would wish to see the Barbados Workers' Union institution and its colleagues, its officers, travel less. I am very aware that if the Barbados Workers' Union or the Caribbean Congress of Labour or any other of those institutions I can speak for, attempt to travel less in critical areas, then we run the very great risk of failing to survive at the level at which we want to survive. Sometimes the travel we have to do may not even have to do with the additional gains we can get but rather, it has very much to do today with how much of the erosion we are able to stop. 1.20 p.m.

It would be silly for us in Barbados and in the Caribbean to believe that we can continue to enjoy the kind of support and assistance as a people that we used to enjoy once. A lot of us have taken far too lightly and carelessly the fact that the rest of the world is looking in other directions rather than to the Caribbean. The last time there was any particular interest in the region was when Grenada had a different kind of government and people started to feel that they had to support the area either in trade or in finance.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that there is no longer any threat of communism, now that there is a break-up of the former communist bloc with little states further dividing themselves into mini-states, a lot of the trading support which used to come in our direction is going towards Central and Eastern Europe. I have been recognising it and I have been trying not only at the level of trade union support but where I can speak - and I believe that all of us try to speak for the country when we travel - to make other people recognise it. If as small, emerging countries we are neglected by those people who can trade with us and support us financially and with technical assistance, if they begin to see Central and Eastern Europe as the beginning and the end of the world, then what they will be faced with is a number of small deteriorating countries in the Caribbean and small deteriorating economies in Africa. If Latin America gets left out of the picture as well, what we will have would be the emergence of a kind of poverty which is at the centre of the destruction of the democracies that we all aim for and would like to develop.

We have been seeing that this kind of approach has characterised the administration that was the American Administration in the fast-move track towards NAFTA, a movement which we were satisfied would have left the Caribbean high and dry. Efforts have been made for us to see the extent by which we would be able by lobbying and by negotiating, not from home but by being able to meet people at their place of business, to bring additional support for Barbados and for the Caribbean.

I cannot deny that we have a very grave concern and that we ought to have a very grave concern for the level of welfare and the level of education. I do not believe that I am second to anybody in my tremendous concern for the level at which we are able to deal with the question of unemployment. However, I think that we are missing the point. If we realise that if we are going to be able to address those issues, then we can only address them if we are able to make the Barbados economy look more buoyant.

I do not believe that anybody outside of the Caribbean is going to sit down and get a position paper and decide to remember Barbados because that person had a beautiful vacation in Barbados or because that person remembers that Barbados has a beautiful climate or that we have a good government, be it a Democratic Labour Party government or a Barbados Labour Party government. What is going to condition those minds in the final analysis is the extent of the lobbying that has to take place, the degree of negotiations that has to take place.

I would love to be able to believe that it would not be necessary for us to increase votes. If it is necessary in the interest of the welfare of the country for us to do that, I do not think that we should narrowly reduce it to a partisan basis. I take the point of the Member for St. Peter and while I give him his right to have a view

about people who serve in the public service at that kind of level, he must have a right to speak his mind on that. Even if he is right, Sir, I do not believe that, if he believes in the principle of bringing business to Barbados by going to the people who can bring business to Barbados, he is right in saying that if the individual does not meet with his judgment that that means that the system or that the principle is wrong. I believe we should be supporting the principle of trying to bring business to Barbados and on those grounds, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to support this Resolution.

Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I find myself in exactly the same position as the Honourable Member for the City and the Honourable Member for St Peter.

No-one who has had any experience of Government can fail to recognise that it is necessary for a government, particularly one in these parts of the world, to expend money periodically on the provision of air transport, hotel expenses and similar matters for promoting the interests of the Government

The problem that we have with this Resolution is that the Addendum which accompanies it indicates very clearly to us that there is a sphere of activity which Government seeks to use this money on, in which there is a profound division of opinion between the Government and the Opposition as to how to promote the interests of Barbados.

We sat in this House, Sir, and we commented recently on new structures which were being created by the Government to do precisely the same thing that this Resolution calls for. Today, we were given notice of a Bill to create a new structure also or replacement structure to promote tourism activity via a new institutional arrangement. We fail to understand how the Government on the one hand can bring measures before this House which seek to create independent institutions to promote this activity and at the same time seek to increase the vote of the Central Government to do exactly the same thing.

That is one of the problems that we have.

You have just combined the Industrial Development Corporation and Export Development Corporation into one body, allegedly on the grounds that there would be a saving of costs. That is what you said quite recently. Today, you gave us notice of the Bill to create Tourism Development Authority allegedly, no doubt, on the grounds that you wish to rationalise and redirect the efforts of the Board of Tourism within the context of an overall Government policy for a new thrust in tourism promotion.

Both of those bodies have independent funding voted by Parliament. As a matter of fact, recently there have been public statements to the effect that funding for tourism promotion has been increased substantially by \$8 million as part of the kick-start of the economy in that very important area.

Now, Sir, I find it exceedingly difficult to understand how Government can at the same time have another policy of appointing specific individuals in central government bodies under the title of Trade Commissioners to do precisely the same function. How are you carrying on your activity? Are you saying you wish to do it through these independent authorities or you are going to do it at central government level? 1.30 p.m.

I listened with great interest to the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East Central. Of course, he has made a number of points about the need for us in the Caribbean today to have another lode at our role in international trade and in the context of the developments which have taken place in Eastern Europe and North America. Barbados as an individual country can do little to influence the impact of that. If this was a vote for increasing money for the Caribbean Economic Community to this exercise, I would be the first to vote *for* it because I am firmly of the opinion that we are wasting our time when we think that as an individual country we can have that influence the Honourable Member has correctly identified which it is necessary to have. *Do not let us fool ourselves. We must understand how we are going to operate today. You cannot on the one hand, even at the level of Barbados, have this confusion.*

The name of that Bill was the Barbados Investment and Development Bill, 1992. That merged the two Corporations. I just want to mention this to show the confusion because it is very important we understand what is happening. Trade Commissioners created in the manner in which they have been created and financed in the manner in which they are financed, will create nothing but profound conflict with the other institutions you have created.

You cannot have, on the one hand, Trade Commissioners appointed as pure political appointments

because they do not come through the Public Service Commission. They are temporary appointments created, no doubt, by the power granted under the Constitution to the Prime Minister to create temporary offices and financed out of central Government. Their loyalty must be to the political directorate that created them. That is the position. Their mandate is going to cut across the mandate which you have invested in these other bodies which were created for the specific purpose of relieving that sphere of activity in which they function from the red tape of governmental bureaucracy. You are going to run into real trouble in this direction. That is why we say that given the Addendum that accompanies this Resolution we cannot possibly support it. The Government must think out, once again, its position very clearly. Of course, at this particular period of time, as Members of Parliament our constituents day in and day out are bringing to our attention the deplorable conditions which they are suffering because the Government has found itself in a position in which it has to constrain the amount of expenditure it is spending in order to comply with the International Monetary Fund programme it has agreed to.

Only this morning, Sir, I passed and stopped in the Oistin Fish Market and people are telling me that things are so bad that there is not enough disinfectant to disinfect the area.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should conclude in one minute.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. If there is such a shortage of funds within Government's coffers that there is a denial of a legitimate expenditure on that small thing, how can I be expected to support a resolution which has as its objects the incurring of expenditure when there is already a vote for other institutions to do precisely the same thing? A denial of a vote for this money can have absolutely no effect upon Barbados' economic activity. There are other bodies fully funded exactly for the same purpose and would do it better.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have listened attentively to the debate so far. I would like to say that although I take what my colleague from St. Michael Central had to say as very sensible and learned, I have to differ today with his speech because I have a fundamental view about the idea of overseas travel. Let us start up front. I am not a person who likes travelling, first and foremost. When I entered Government as a Minister - and I will go back before that - between 1981 and 1986 I was in the Opposition then, and my colleagues and myself spent a lot of time going at the Government at that time, now the Opposition, for what we considered as inordinate overseas travelling. When I became a Minister in 1986, I suddenly realised, I never knew it before, that there seemed to be a sort of idea or impression that you were not a Minister unless you went overseas. I got the impression, I am not saying I got it from my colleagues, because it is the entire system that seems to suggest that you have to go overseas.

I believe as a Minister, Mr. Chairman, that one's full duties are to tackle the problems in one's country. I also agree that in any country its Ministers need to travel overseas every now and then. They have to. There is no question about it. You need to have contact with the outside world, share and exchange views. But it seemed to have become an obsession where even the civil servants believe it was necessary to go overseas.

There was some more, Mr. Chairman. The Prime Minister of the day, the late E. W. Barrow, on several occasions I would hear him say "Is this visit going to bring in one more industry? Is this visit going to help us to reap another hole of yams?" - things of that nature. I got the impression that regardless of what went before 1986 that here was a Prime Minister and a Minister of Finance who thought that whatever was happening before it was time to be more frugal and thrifty with these overseas visits. 1.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I find it extremely hard to agree to a Resolution calling for an increase in funds for persons, Ministers or maybe civil servants or other people to travel overseas at a time when there is so much suffering in this country and at a time when the subsidy to Agriculture has been removed and the subsidy to Housing has been removed. I find it extremely difficult to do this as opposed to something else:

Mr. Chairman, my view is this. I have listened to the introduction to this Resolution and I was told and

I agree that there has been a reduction in the amount of money spent on this Conferences and Delegations vote over the past two years or so. I believe in the situation that exists in this country today that a Resolution like this one is out of place. There are many reasons. I can go ahead, Mr. Chairman, and speak about the trade part of it, but I believe there will be time. There are going to be occasions in here when we will be able to debate the trade part of it. I do not believe that today is the day to go into the trade side of it

Mr. Chairman, I just would like to say that I am not saying that Ministers or high Government officials should not be able to go overseas. I am not saying that But I am saying that in a situation where persons are suffering, and I mean really suffering because they come to me every day, that I cannot agree to vote for a resolution that says to increase the amount of money in order to allow persons to go overseas. I cannot agree to this Resolution at a time like this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, one can almost anticipate the way how a debate of this kind will go. We are politicians so we know what the Opposition will say. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has made the point that the Conferences and Delegations Vote today is less than what it was 10 years ago.

Aside.

Hon. M. A. KING: What one recognises in the course of this debate, Mr. Chairman, is that the debate seems to be tied to a criticism of personalities appointed as Trade Commissioners. That seems to be the way how the debate is structured. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has made the point that there are institutions like the Barbados Investment Development Corporation and the new proposed Barbados Tourism Authority which are engaged in industrial development and in promoting the country overseas and the tourism institution is engaged in the promotion of tourism which is specifically designed for the purpose of promoting these areas of Barbados.

Now the fact that there is a new authority to promote industrial development and that there will be a new tourism • authority is nothing new. Those institutions have existed long ago. They have existed when the Honourable Members on the other side formed the Government and when the vote for conferences and delegations was higher than it is today. The fact that those institutions exist did not prevent money being allocated for conferences and delegations to support Government in representing its interest abroad. When one considers, Mr. Chairman, that we are a country which depends largely and structures its development on tourism and on promotion of trade and industry and on the promotion of the financial services, it must be important that if one is to be successful in promoting these areas of development that it is essential for travel by Government officials to promote these areas of activity. If one takes the financial services centre, for instance, there are management conferences which it is terribly important that senior officials in Government attend. The point has been made that it is more important that senior Government Ministers attend these conferences. The debate seems to be developing on the basis that it is only Government Ministers who travel. Everybody knows that is far from the truth.

Aside.

Hon. M. A. KING: I am saying that impression is being created. You do not have to make the specific charge that only Government Ministers travel. That is the impression which everybody would want created in the minds of the public and it is an easy impression to create that it is the Government Ministers who are spending the public's money in travelling and on conferences and delegations. That impression was created by the Honourable Member.

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Chairman, I never at any time said that only Ministers travel. In fact, I was specific when I was speaking to say on about 3 or 4 occasions senior Government officers, other officials and Ministers. If the Honourable Member got that impression, I am very sorry. 1.50p.m.

Hon. M.A. KING: Mr. Chairman, just for the record I want to say that I never said that the Honourable

Member for St. Philip South said only Government Ministers travel. I am talking about impressions, because we know that politicians make the point that sometimes impressions are more important than facts, so I think we have to deal with the impression which is being created.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am hearing very loud asides.

Hon. M. A. KING: For a country which has structured its development in these critical areas, it is important that the Government's position in travelling to promote these areas be provided for.

The other point I want to make is this. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South again has created the impression that by appointing Trade Commissioners there is likely to be a conflict between....

Aside.

Hon. M. A. KING: ...that there will in fact be...

Aside.

Hon. M. A. KING: Just a minute. Give me a chance.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All honourable members will have the opportunity to speak if they so desire. We will not have this shouting across the Chamber.

Hon. M. A. KING: Honourable members on the other side are making the point that there is in fact conflict between the Trade Commissioners and Executive Ministries. Mr. Chairman, I should like to deny that allegation categorically. The institutions of Trade Commissioner and those established for promoting trade and industry and tourism are not necessarily mutually exclusive, Mr. Chairman. They are not independent republics, we are functioning for one Government, and the work of the Trade Commissioners is designed to complement and to assist the work of tourism promotion and promotion of trade and industry.

Let me make the point, Mr. Chairman, that the Trade Commissioner who is presently under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is part of the Foreign Exchange Committee, which is very active in trying to coordinate the work of the agencies engaged in earning foreign exchange, and what that Trade Commissioner clearly understands is that any promotion work which is being done has to be done certainly in consultation with, and with the support of, the Executive Ministries which are responsible for development in this area. If there is a tourism project, if there is an industrial development project, if there is a cultural project which is aimed at earning foreign exchange for the country being developed, the Executive Ministries which are responsible for those areas have to be totally and completely involved in the development of those, programmes.

We know that there is a tendency among Government Departments to be fighting for turf. It is a tendency which gained ascendancy in your time and which highly manifested itself at that time, but I think we over here understand what needs to be done and the appropriate direction which needs to be given to all the Ministries and to all the agencies which are engaged in promotion and development, so I think that suggestions that there is conflict between Trade Commissioners and the agencies which are there for the promotion of trade and development are overstated.

The other point which has been made by honourable members on the other side is that we have our priorities wrong and that there are a whole lot of other areas which are crying out for attention. Disinfectant in Oistin's fish market is a red herring.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Can we have some order please?

Hon. M. A. KING: The statement by the honourable member is a red herring being drawn across the trail, because there is no question of priority in terms of this as well as disinfectant. We know that the provision of appropriate and adequate health standards for the fish market at Oistin and for everywhere else is very important. It is not a question of comparing the importance of the two. One does not have any greater

priority over the other, they are all equally important and have to be given equal attention, so do not let us get down into terms of saying that the money needs to be spent on this or on that, because the moment you start to try to allocate priorities to the exclusion of other things, you are going to run into no end of trouble. We have to look at the thing, as a former member of this House used to say, we have to adopt a holistic approach to the whole matter of Government and recognise that the promotion of the country's interests overseas is as important for the development of the country as anything else.

One has to recognise as well that the promotion of Barbados' interests overseas is not necessarily confined to dealing with specific areas of trade promotion. There are other obligations in the international area which the country has, which may or may not be directly related to trade or tourism, but which the country's reputation abroad demands that we be part of. The whole image and perception in the international community which is had of Barbados may be governed and dictated by those considerations.

I think in looking at this Resolution one has to recognise that our Government, Mr. Chairman, has made a deliberately conscious effort to minimise the expenses on Conferences and Delegations and that is demonstrated by the level of the vote which has been appropriated in the Estimates for this year, which has been considerably reduced over previous years. I think one has to look at the matter in that context and recognise that the Resolution is the kind of Resolution which should adequately be supported, and I have no difficulty, Mr. Chairman, in supporting this Resolution.

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly. 2.00 p.m.

SUSPENSION

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I move that this sitting be suspended until 3 p.m. this day.

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

The question was put and agreed to in the affirmative without division.

RESUMPTION

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Committee of Supply is resumed.

The question that Head 15 stand part was put a/id. agreed to in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. B. M. TAUT seconded by Hon. M. A. KING, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDDFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that this Bill be now read a first time.

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

The question was put and agreed to in the affirmative without division.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. L. E. SAND/FORD seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter- Question No. 48.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Question No. 48.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the Reply to Question No. 48 is as follows:

At 31 August, 1992 the Transport Board owed the National Insurance Department \$17 531 820.07 *for* statutory contributions to the National Insurance Scheme. The sum of \$15 549 924 has been paid to the Director of National Insurance. The outstanding balance will be paid from the Transport Board's operating incomes.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Will the Minister please state what proportion, if any, of this unpaid and overdue balance owed at 31 August was incurred after 28 May, 1986?

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I cannot give that answer. I do not have that information with me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Any other supplementaries? End of question time.

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has a Ministerial Statement to make at this time. I am asking that we revert to the order of business so that the appropriate item can be made.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has indicated that the Minister of Agriculture requires to make a statement and he is requesting the House to revert to Statement by Ministers. If there is no objection permission will be granted.

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: Mr. Speaker, as a result of the projected shortfall in sugar production for 1992, the Cabinet of Barbados decided on December 27, 1991 that sugar should be imported by the Barbados Marketing Corporation to meet a deficit on the domestic market. It was further agreed that a cess should be imposed on all sugar imported to meet this deficit on the local market and that the proceeds of this cess should be credited to the Sinking Fund so that Government could meet its obligations as a guarantor of Sugar Bonds and interest.

Pursuant to that decision, the Barbados Marketing Corporation utilised \$500 000 provided by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs as well as its own funds held in a Royal Bank of Canada account to commence its importation of sugar.

The following sums were realised from the sale of sugar 1992

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

\$ 210 589.16

1 142 545.54 781 720.81

2 055 178.37 1 264 375.35

604 426.87

936 847.46

1 060 862.00

1 071 592.90

987 935.61

\$10 116074.07

This sum of \$10 116 074, together with the \$500 000 as start up funds, made a total realised of \$10 616 074.07.

Out of these proceeds and start-up capital, the Barbados Marketing Corporation incurred expenses, exclusive of bank charges, which came to \$7 103 018.21. The supplier, P. S. International, received \$4 853 581.90; Sea Freight Agencies received \$1 525 398.47; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs was repaid \$500 000; the Industrial Development Corporation was paid \$41 056.40 for rental of the Sugar Bond; salaries and wages in the sum of \$73 557.10 were paid and legal expenses of \$35 000 were disbursed. These constitute the major expenses related to the sale of sugar and the other expenses are related to the marketing and storage. Bank charges for the Letter of Credit and other associated trade costs came to \$67 194.27.

When all out-goings are deducted the Barbados Marketing Corporation realised the sum of \$3 590 942.32 which has been applied as follows:-

Government of Barbados Cess of \$440 per tonne for 6 127.30 tonnes	\$2 696 012.00
Balance in Account after distribution * 394 930.32	
Fixed Deposit BNB	<u>500000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$3 590 942.32

So far, of the amount collected as a cess up to December 29, 1992, the amount of \$1 095 397.40 has been used to redeem sugar bond series H, K, L, M, N, O, P and Q and pay interest. The remaining funds, less additional start-up funds of \$145 083.73 to be repaid to the Barbados Marketing Corporation's account, are deposited with the Barbados National Bank. The BMC is still holding a quantity of sugar that is to be sold. It is anticipated that a further sum of \$1 703 988 will be realised for the Sugar Cess Fund consequent on the sale of the remainder of the 6 127 tonnes of sugar imported by the BMC to November, 1992, together with any further imports.

This information is being supplied to this Honourable House in response to the distortion of public information relative to Government's policy on sugar importation. The Government has on previous occasions provided information on its sugar importation policy and is of the view that this policy was in the best interest of the people of Barbados.

There has been nothing irregular about the use of the proceeds of the sale of sugar and the distribution. As far as the record shows it reflects Cabinet's decision and has been monitored by the Ministry of Finance accordingly.

The misuse of information and contrived obfuscation concerning the Government's sugar importation policy has had a traumatic effect on the psyche of a section of the Barbadian public and is consistent with previous irresponsible attempts to call into question, without any shred of factual material, policies that the Government of Barbados has pursued in the interest of the people of Barbados.

The real issue of significance and national relevance is the low levels of sugar production in Barbados which have forced the Government to import sugar from other sources. We now need to spend our energy, not on fanciful stories and rumours, but on important reforms of the sugar sector so that Barbados can meet its international quota provision and manufacturing of by-products as well as serve the needs of our people. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: End of Statements.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to move that the item "Notices" be reverted to. The Honourable Member has just moved that the item "Ministerial Statements" be re-opened. I beg to move that the item "Notices" be the next order of the day.»

Mr. SPEAKER: The Standing Orders do not provide for that particular order of notices. I think there is a proper way.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no statement, reply or debate on a statement. The question of giving notices of questions must be done, as the Honourable Member knows.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. I simply move after the conclusion of that particular item... This is a unique position. I am entitled to raise new matters. Your Honour very properly said the item was concluded. As I understand it, that particular item was concluded. I beg to move, and I ask that the item "Notices" be reopened. That is all I am asking. The Standing Orders are suspended.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not that Standing Order.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: What is the Chair saying? Am I not entitled to be heard?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think I understand what the Honourable Member wants to say. The Chair usually receives in advance whether Notices of Questions are to be given. Those Notices of Questions are usually given in a particular way. I do not have before me any notice or any other matter to suggest that Notices of Questions can be given at this time. 3.25 p.m.

Hon. H. B. SL JOHN: Sir, with respect, there was nothing before you to say that Ministerial Statements were going to be dealt with today. There was absolutely nothing. But the Honourable Member as a Member of the House quite properly moved that Government Statements be now taken. Your Honour gave him permission and that became the instant order of the day. All I am saying is, Sir, that I am requesting that the item "Notices" be the instant order of the day. When that item is called, I will then make my next move as the Honourable Member made his.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the procedure. What I want to say is this. I have to clear up the other point. When the Honourable Leader of the House asked to have that item restored, the House not the Chair gave permission that that statement be read. I would like the Clerk to just clarify the position. The Honourable Member knows the Standing Orders pretty well. I admire Members for seeking at times to try to add new dimensions to the delivery of work in Parliament, but I must at all times stay with the standard position. So that is out of the question.

THE EVIDENCE BILL, 1992

Order No. 3 was called - to move the second reading of the Evidence Bill, 1992

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, in moving the second reading of the Evidence Bill, 1992, this Bill as is clear from a perusal of it provides a comprehensive statement of the laws of evidence. It is a complete restatement of the law of evidence. The present law of evidence, Mr. Speaker, is largely embodied in the common law and to a limited extent in statute. That part of the Evidence Act which is embodied in the statute is contained in the existing Evidence Act, Chapter 121 of the Laws of Barbados which came into force in 1905 some 87 years ago. The original Evidence Act, Mr. Speaker, has been amended piecemeal over the years. But what is significant about it is that the amendments which have taken place have not kept pace with the technological advances of the 20th century nor indeed have they kept pace with reform of the law of evidence in other parts of the Commonwealth. In some areas, some very substantial reforms have been done.

As laymen, a number of people here have spoken of the hearsay rule. It is one of the important rules of the law of evidence and it is important to note that the hearsay rule and the many exceptions which are contained in the law of evidence of the hearsay rule are not embodied in any statute but are derived from the common law and the application of the hearsay rule to date in Barbados continues to be governed by the common law. There are other important rules of evidence which are not encapsulated in statute, for instance, like those relating to professional privilege, the admissibility of confessions in criminal trials and the admissibility of evidence of conduct and character of the accused person in criminal trials. All of these are very significant areas of the law of evidence which continue to be governed by the common law. The Bill which is before us, Mr. Speaker, will substantially reform the law which relates to evidence as it is now and a lot of that law which was originally found in the common law will now be embodied in this statute. This Bill is based on an Australian model. It follows the usual course of a trial and it starts systematically with a statement of the rules governing the competence and compellability of witnesses giving sworn and unsworn evidence and the manner of giving evidence at the trial. The Bill also contains a very comprehensive statement of the rules governing the admissibility of evidence in general and, in particular, rules which relate to the relevance of evidence such as the hearsay rule and the exceptions

thereto are comprehensively covered in this Bill.

Provision is also made in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, for the admissibility of confessions in criminal trials and rules governing the exclusion and admissibility of evidence of judgments and convictions as well as evidence of conduct and character. The Bill also contains, Mr. Speaker, a statement of the circumstances in which evidence may be excluded by reason of privilege. In addition, there are other aspects of proof which are dealt with including the proof of fact by documentary evidence, the proof of certain matters by affidavit evidence, the question of judicial notice and the standards of proof to be met in civil and criminal proceedings. All of these areas which are vital and important areas of the laws of evidence have previously been areas of the law which are derived from the common law and not from statute.

I wish to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that in the present form in which this Bill stands it will not completely replace the existing Evidence Act, Chapter 121. At the end of the Bill at Clause 150, there are a number of sections which are being deleted and there are some sections of the existing Evidence Act which will continue to remain in force. Whilst I am on that, Mr. Speaker, I ought to indicate to this House at this time that when we come into Committee there will be a short amendment which I am going to propose in relation to those sections of the Evidence Act to be deleted, because there are going to be more sections deleted than are presently indicated in the Act. The present Bill, as circulated, provides for the deletion of sections 4, 6, 16 and 13 of Cap. 121, so that the other provisions of Cap. 121 would still remain in force. During Committee I am going to move an amendment to that so that the sections which will now be deleted from the existing Evidence Act would be 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 33 and 34, so that there will not in fact be a very substantial part of the Evidence Act, Cap. 121 which will remain. 3.35 p.m.

The purpose of allowing part of the existing legislation to remain is that there are further adjustments which are going to be necessary to the laws of evidence in the special areas which remain, particularly in relation to areas like matrimonial causes and matters of that kind, and a comprehensive review of the law in these other areas will be done before those provisions are embodied in the complete codification of the law of evidence. The old Cap. 121 will be renamed The Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act whilst this Act will be called The Evidence Act.

It must be noted, Mr. Speaker, that by virtue of clause 151 of this Bill the provisions of the new Evidence Act when passed will not apply to or in relation to a hearing which may have commenced prior to the date of the commencement of the new Evidence Act. The Old Evidence Act will continue to apply in relation to proceedings predating the commencement of this Evidence Act. The common law rules of evidence, together with the provisions of the Evidence Act, Cap. 121 as it now stands, will continue to govern the trial of proceedings commenced before this Evidence Act is passed.

Let me now turn, Mr. Speaker, to some of the more important reforms which have been introduced in this Bill. I will deal with them fairly summarily, because there is an extensive explanatory memorandum which was circulated with the Bill and gives a detailed clause by clause explanation of the reforms which are introduced. To deal with some of the more important reforms in this Bill, these include the codification of the common law relating to evidence by children between 7 and 14 years of age and the introduction of a new rule regulating the reception of the evidence of children under 7 and children between 7 and 14 years of age who might not be competent to know the nature and consequences of giving false evidence knowing that it is wrong, and who, nonetheless, are sufficiently intelligent to understand that they should tell the truth. That is covered by clause 15 of the Bill.

Another important change is that there will be a new rule governing the circumstances in which a person who is being prosecuted for a related offence may, with the leave of the court, give evidence as a witness for the prosecution. This is covered by clause 18 of the new Bill.

Another important provision, Mr. Speaker, is the abolition of the common law rule which provides that the spouse of an accused person is not competent as a witness for the prosecution and the introduction of a new rule which would enable the de facto spouse, the parent or child of an accused, though competent to object to being compelled to give evidence as a witness for the prosecution, to give evidence. In determining whether the witness should be required to give evidence, the court is required to take into account matters including whether in giving the evidence the witness would have to disclose matters which were received by the witness in confidence from the accused. This aspect of the Bill is governed by clause 19 in subclauses (2), (6), (7) and (8).

A further provision, Mr. Speaker, is the introduction of a new rule which would operate to render a de facto spouse, a parent or child of an accused person, compellable as a witness to disclose any

communication between that person and the accused, subject to the witness* right to object, and the court's duty is to determine whether the witness should be required to give the evidence in question. There is also a requirement in the Bill that all oral evidence be given on oath or affirmation and that no person may act as an interpreter in any proceedings unless that person has sworn an oath or made an affirmation in the appropriate form.

There is in the Bill a comprehensive restatement of the main rule of evidence governing the admissibility of evidence generally. That main rule is the question of whether evidence which is being introduced in the court is relevant to the proceedings before the court or not.

There is, Mr. Speaker, a systematic arrangement of the exclusionary rules, those rules which govern the circumstances in which evidence, though relevant, can be excluded or admitted in civil or criminal proceedings and include, for instance, the hearsay rule and the exceptions thereto, the opinion rule, the rule as to the admissibility of opinion evidence and the exceptions thereto, and the rule governing the circumstances in which admissions or confessions are admissible as exceptions to the hearsay and opinion rules. 3.45 p.m.

The Bill also provides for circumstances in which evidence of a decision in legal or administrative proceedings may be admitted and used as an exception to the hearsay and opinion rules for the exclusion of tendency and conduct evidence and for circumstances in which evidence of character may be admitted in evidence as an exception to the hearsay, opinion and tendency rules.

The Bill also introduces a new procedure to remove the requirement for parties in court proceedings to prove matters of law such as the coming into operation in whole or in part of statutory instruments required to be published in the Official Gazette. A Judge is empowered to take judicial notice of such matters and of matters of common knowledge in any manner as he thinks fit.

The present position is that in order to prove the contents of a statutory instrument in Court the instrument itself has to be formally produced through a witness or be admitted by consent of the parties. The Court is not in the present state of the law empowered to take judicial notice of the fact that subsidiary legislation has been passed.

Courts are permitted to take judicial notice of what is described as the public general statutes, that is, Acts of Parliament. You do not have to prove those specifically in Parliament. But a Judge may take judicial notice of any Act of Parliament which has been passed by this Legislature but not so of the subsidiary legislation, the Orders, Regulations and Proclamations which have been made by virtue of the provisions of Acts of Parliament. What this new provision of the Evidence Act will now do is to mandate provision for proof of statutory instruments in Court.

When the Act comes into force, it will also abolish the principles and rules of the Common Law governing the truth of the contents of documents and introduce new rules in relation thereto.

Honourable Members will remember that sometime, not very long ago, there was a Resolution in this House which sought funds in relation to a matter which was before the Courts which the Government decided to settle because of the death of certain witnesses, because certain witnesses were otherwise unavailable and because, generally, a lot of the evidence contained in documents could not be proved in Court because of the state of the law. When this Bill comes into force, it will permit evidence of the contents of documents which could not previously have been proven before the Court except with the consent of the parties to be introduced by clauses 121-124.

There are also new rules governing the facilitation of proof of a document or thing produced wholly or in part by a device or process and, in particular, of rules governing the reception of evidence relating to posting and postal articles and the sending of telecommunication messages. This is encapsulated in clauses 125-132.

Your Honour will note that, in the interpretation clause of the Bill, a document is defined as anything on which there is writing* a map, plan, drawing or photograph as well as anything from which sounds or visual images are capable, with or without the aid of a device, of being reproduced and also includes a part of a document as so defined and a copied reproduction or duplicate of a document or part thereof. This will enable the use of modern technology to factor in and be introduced into the Courts to supply evidence where under the existing law it cannot be done except with the specific consent of all parties to the proceedings.

I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, that there is a very comprehensive explanatory memorandum provided

with the legislation which, if Honourable Members take the trouble to read it, they will find fully explains the Bill.

Against that background, I therefore move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I observe that there are only 8 members in the Chamber which would make it impossible to have a second reading passed.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: My understanding was that there was some arrangement with us whereby nothing further would be done on the Bill today. If that is true, Sir, I would wish for that undertaking to be honoured.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I have no objection whatsoever, Sir, to its being held over. If in fact it would help to make the Bill any better, I have no objection to its being held over.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed.

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

The question was put and agreed to in the affirmative without division. 3.55 p.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

*

ORDER NO. 3 - RESOLUTION THAT THIS HOUSE TAKE NOTE OF THE MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON NOVEMBER 10, 1992 SETTING OUT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON PRIVATISATION

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on November 10, 1992 the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance made a Ministerial Statement entitled "The Privatisation Programme" which, to this date, represents the only attempt by the Government to provide a comprehensive statement on one of the more important policies of our time. I thank the Minister of State for that statement. Having said that, Sir, I also want to go on to state at the very outset of my presentation that I share some of the goals and objectives of privatisation. It is my belief that there can be no permanent or long-term solution to the control of the fiscal deficit unless there is concern with the question of transfers of state corporations, particularly losses and its effects. I therefore share some of the fiscal goals of privatisation.

It is also true, Sir, that in some countries privatisation has served as a very important means by which persons who have never before had access to shares have been put in a position to share, but there are very many unsatisfactory aspects of Government's policy and programme of privatisation, which deserve serious consideration in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I will begin by making what I regard as perhaps the most important criticism I have of Government's privatisation programme to date. This House, in all matters pertaining to Government's economic policy and programmes, has not only to be supreme, but it must appear to be supreme. This House must always be in a position where it must give approval for all Government expenditure. No expenditure by any Government of Barbados should take place unless Parliament approves it. No Government of Barbados should ever be in a position "to raise a tax unless Parliament approves it. No Government of Barbados should ever be in a position where it seeks to raise a loan unless Parliament approves it.

We have a situation in this country where, if the Government of Barbados wants to sell a public convenience, it has to bring a Resolution to this House. I therefore must start by saying that the manner in which the Government of Barbados has gone about disposing of millions of dollars worth of public property is totally offensive. The assets being sold are not assets belonging to members of the Democratic Labour Party Cabinet. They are not assets of private individuals. They are assets owned by the public of Barbados. We have always to be jealous of the rights and role of Parliament. Parliament must, I insist, be put in a position where it is not only in control of the processes of sale of Government property, but must be seen to be in control. In that respect each and every one of the assets or enterprises being sold in the name of the Government of Barbados should be disposed of after legislation brought to this House and thereby first receive the approval of this House. If we allow these indiscretions to take place, very soon we are going to hear that people want to impose taxes in this country or to spend Government's money or to raise loans in the name of the people of Barbados, all without reference to Parliament. I find it extremely obnoxious that the Government can believe it can sell millions and millions of dollars of public property without Parliament being called into the act and treated not just with courtesy, but being fully informed of every facet and arrangement entered into between the Government of Barbados and any private enterprise or entity for the sale of public property.

Therefore, while I thank the Minister of State for the statement he made to the House, I have to say that it does not go far enough. We simply do not know the arrangements the Government has entered into with persons who have bought shares of the Barbados External Communications Company Ltd, the Barbados Telephone Co. Ltd., nor in the Barbados Mills Group. I am not about to guess what those things were sold for. I am not about to guess the terms of their sale. I believe the Government has a responsibility to make a statement on the floor of this Parliament setting out very clearly every facet of the sales of each of these particular enterprises.

For the future, I believe we must insist of Government that Heywoods Holiday Resorts must not be sold unless Parliament approves it. The Arawak Cement Plant must not be sold unless Parliament approves it. The Barbados National Oil Co. must not be sold unless Parliament approves it. Each proposal should be brought to this House separately. We should be told all of the terms. We should be told the price of all the respective tenders so that the sale of public property should be totally and completely above board. Parliament should insist on not less than this.

Secondly, Sir, I am struck by the drastic variance between the Democratic Labour Party's stated policy on privatisation and their practice. So drastic is the variance between the statement of policy and the practice that one can say the Democratic Labour Party has been involved in a massive deception and has absolutely no mandate for what it is doing.

As part of its 1991 election campaign the Democratic Labour Party published a manifesto. This manifesto spoke to the potential of a Democratic Labour Party Government of the future indulging itself in the disposal of public assets. On page 10 of the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto - this document is already a document of the House - this statement was made:-

"Because the DLP is committed to the tenets of social and economic democracy, the Party is unswervingly committed to widening the ownership base of our real productive assets. Accordingly, a DLP Government policy on DIVESTMENT will seek to avoid a further concentration of the society's wealth, and seek to promote the wider public interest. A DLP Government proposes to divest itself of specific directly productive assets along the following lines: 18 per cent of all divested assets will be offered to the following agencies and organisations - (1) 20 per cent to the National Insurance Board, (2) 20 per cent to the Co-operatives sector, (3) 20 per cent to workers' organisations and (4) 20 per cent to specified established social organisations. The remaining 20 per cent will be put up for sale to the public." 4.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in which the public of Barbados was asked to vote for a policy which committed the Democratic Labour Party, as a political institution, to the pursuit of a strategy of privatisation which will have at its core the use of privatisation as a means of bringing people in the co-operative sector, in the workers' movement and in specified social institutions into the ownership of shares in enterprises presently owned by the Government

Now I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is a high level of cynicism in this country with the political process because people are sick and tired of being taken for a ride in the manner in which the people of Barbados have been taken for a ride in this particular instance. The Democratic Labour Party has to stop pretending that it owns, lock and key, all of the rights of a socially progressive institution that looks out for the workers and the co-operatives sector, by way of statement only, when in point of fact their record in dealing with the needs of the co-operative sector and workers is so drastically at variance with what has

been pledged.

The Democratic Labour Party's programme on privatisation is, as I said, a direct contradiction of what it pledged itself to in their Manifesto. Therefore, we have to enquire of Government what circumstances have now caused it to pledge itself to a process of privatisation and end up performing something so much in contrast and so different. As you know, Sir, all of the enterprises to which the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance alluded, such as the Barbados External Telecommunications Limited, the Barbados Telephone Company Limited and the Barbados Mills group have been sold without even a pretence at trying to involve these various interest groups in their purchase. Equally, the manner in which the Government of Barbados is going about or purports to want to go about the sale of Heywoods would seem to suggest that it wants Heywoods to be sold to a foreign entity in a manner that entirely bypasses the workers, co-operative societies, social organisations and the National Insurance Board. Therefore, early in this debate we have to get Government very clearly to state if it views privatisation in the constructive way in which other countries have viewed it, that is, as a means of broadening the base of ownership in this country, which I can support, or if it purely views privatisation as a way of getting quick revenue and quick foreign exchange in response to pressing fiscal and foreign exchange problems.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot in all conscience support the wholesale divestment of public enterprises and Government property if at the end of the day we do not build a property-owning democracy in Barbados. As I said earlier, Sir, one of the grounds on which I can support privatisation is that it has served some other country for the important purpose of enabling people who have never owned anything before to begin to own something. The evidence to date would seem to substantiate that the Democratic Labour Party is not going to use privatisation for that particular purpose.

If I may go further, Sir, Parliament has the responsibility to take this matter seriously if only because in the targets agreed by the International Monetary Fund and the Government of Barbados it would seem clear that the Government has worked out an exact programme with the International Monetary Fund for the divestment of its assets and has in place a schedule for the amounts to be realised from divestment I believe this House is as entitled to be told about the Government's schedule for privatisation and the amounts Government wants to sell its assets for as is the International Monetary Fund.

Sir, let me read Table 4 of the IMF Report which I have already made a document of this House. This Table deals with the limits imposed by the IMF on the net disbursements of medium and long term external loans by the Government. It says at Note 3, Sir, that the limits on the net disbursements of long term loans to the Government will be adjusted upward to 50 per cent of any shortfall in foreign currency divestment from the amount programmed for 1992-93, namely U.S. \$6.5 million by June 30, 1992, U.S. \$17.5 million by September 1992, U.S. \$33.5 million by December 31, 1992 and U.S. \$33.5 million by March 31, 1993.

Mr. Speaker, it really must be obnoxious for the Government of Barbados to sit down and work out an entire programme for the sale of public property with an international institution, put it in the form of a schedule, agree in advance what those assets are worth and not take this Parliament into its confidence. I believe, therefore, that is wrong and offensive to the best workings of this Parliament. The Government has a responsibility to tell us what precisely is the schedule for divestment that it has worked out with the International Monetary Fund, what values are attached to the enterprises in the programme and the extent to which the market has caused divergence between the programme with the International Monetary Fund and the actual out-turn.

Sir, we are being told that part of the difficulty in the general relationship between the Government and the International Monetary Fund is that the divestment programme is not on track. Indeed, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance in a previous presentation to this House, cited the need to expand the limits for local borrowing precisely because revenues expected from divestment had not been realised. I think, Sir, that this House is entitled to a full account of what Government has agreed to with the International Monetary Fund and where the programme has gone off track. The end of the day it really has to be said that the Government of Barbados is treating the divestment of its assets like a fire sale. It is a bargain basement kind of *tire* sale where valuable and, very often, profitable public property is being sold by the Government of Barbados purely because of fiscal and debt service

consideration. There seems to be nothing else that is informing the policy of the Government of Barbados except in getting its hands quickly on foreign exchange from the sale of these assets so as to be able to meet debt service payments. 4.15 p.m.

I have seen the memorandum of information that was circulated as part of the preparation for- the sale of Heywoods. It is absolutely clear, from that memorandum, that the consideration which is uppermost in the mind of the Government of Barbados is to get access to foreign * exchange from the sale of Heywoods as quickly as possible. It is a fire sale, Sir, and all kinds of other considerations which should be taken into account have not been taken into account.

We have also seen a situation where the urgency surrounding the sale of these assets has been such that the Government of Barbados, in the process of seeking to dispose of an asset as large as Heywoods, put out the notice of invitation to tender late in December and expected serious people to respond by 6th January. That has to be a fire sale, Mr. Speaker, showing that the Government is in urgent need of foreign exchange to service debt and is taking valuable assets of this country, in a hurry and in haste, trying to get them sold as quickly as possible to get access to the foreign exchange. In the process a lot of very important issues are being ignored and papered over.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I fundamentally am at variance with what I understand to have been a condition of the quick sale of BET, namely that the BET would have been given a 20 year licence to operate in this country. If those are the facts, I believe the Government has not gone as far as it should into its relationship with the BET. Perhaps I am wrong on the facts, Sir, but if I am wrong it is precisely because this Government has not had the courtesy to bring to this House all the terms and conditions surrounding the sale of its assets. There is a document which was prepared under the auspices of the IADB and cited the fact that one of the constraints to the fullest development of Barbados as an offshore service economy, and one of the constraints to the fullest development of the information processing industry in this country, was our high cost of telecommunications services.

Mr. Speaker, I am shaken that the Government can have access to that report which recognises that, in the most dynamic sector of this economy, the information processing industry, it is being advised that the high cost of telecommunications has become a constraint to the expansion of that sector and to the competitiveness of this country, and that the Government can go through a process of selling additional shares to BET without having that matter addressed as a fundamental issue. That is why I am saying that, because of the fire sale mentality with which this thing is being approached, a lot of very important issues are being blurred. The BET sale should never have been concluded unless the whole question of the competitiveness of all those information processing sectors that depend upon a telecommunications service had been resolved to this country's satisfaction.

At Heywoods, Sir, I suspect that some very important problems will emerge because, as you should know, Sir, the Heywoods Hotel has been operating under the auspices of a management contract between the Government and the Wyndham Hotel Company, which became effective on 1st January, 1989. Under that management contract the Company has before it a situation where the General Manager is entitled to a basic fee of 3% of the gross revenues, plus an incentive fee of 15% of adjusted gross operating costs.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has obviously shown itself in a great hurry to want to sell Heywoods in the quickest possible period. The question that arises is that, in the process of seeking to sell Heywoods, the Government is obviously going to have to break the management contract with Wyndham. In the process of breaking that management contract with Wyndham a lot of costs are going to be incurred by the Government which could very well affect the net receipts from the sale of Heywoods. This evening I therefore have to ask the Government to tell us what it expects to be the net proceeds of the sale of Heywoods after this obviously important settlement has been reached with Wyndham in the order of at least 3% of gross operating revenues and 15% of gross profit.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, there are a large number of controversial issues that remain to be resolved as a result of the fire sale way in which the Government has approached the disposal of its shares. Today the Government has used the proceeds from privatisation purely for the purpose of debt service. On that hangs a tale, Sir, but the truth is that if the Government of Barbados is going to sell assets, the sale of those assets should be accomplished in such a way that there is something left behind from the disposal. A year ago I urged upon Government that it should put some of the proceeds from the sale of its public assets into a capital development fund. It should not just use the proceeds from the sale of assets to pay debt. The people of Barbados must have, in the future, evidence to show that there was once a Heywoods Hotel owned by Government and that Government once owned shares in BET and the Barbados Hilton. That can be

accomplished if the proceeds from the sale of one set of assets are used for further capital development of this country.

I am staggered that there seems to be no intention by Government to use part of the proceeds from the sale of these assets to build capital in this country. It is a misuse of the scarce foreign exchange resources to which Government has access for these assets just to be used *for* the purpose of servicing debt. If Government has plans for the establishment of a capital development fund, I believe it is incumbent upon them to tell us what those plans are.

I also want to say that, foremost among any plans for the establishment of a capital development fund, should be for the Government to earmark part of the proceeds from the sale of its assets for the specific use of persons formerly employed in those institutions to have access to funds for training and to have seed capital for possible reinvestment of their own. I believe there is nothing more insensitive and more unconscionable than for Government to lay off, or cause large numbers of persons to be laid off, from state enterprises, while Government gets the proceeds from the sale of those enterprises, and it does not ask nor answer the question as to how those persons laid off from those enterprises are going to live in this economy where, both the public sector and the private sector are contracting.

We hear all the while that a rationale in favour of privatisation is that state enterprises will contract and persons will go into the private sector where they will be more efficiently employed. That is not going to happen naturally and I am calling upon the Government of Barbados to allocate part of the proceeds of any funds realised from the divestment programme for the specific use of persons made redundant from state enterprises. Such funds should be allowed to be used to retrain those persons and earmark for them thereby a source of seed capital if they want to start a business. 4.25 p.m.

Right now, in Barbados, we have a large number of persons who have been laid off from the Arawak Cement Company. There are persons who will face the possibility of being laid off from Heywoods. There are persons who will face the possibility of being laid off from the BNOC and other places that the Government will privatise. They will go out into an economy that is contracting day by day.

Government should set up a capital development fund and some of those funds should be used to service debt and some for capital investment in the country. If the Government is to have a conscience in this matter, part of the proceeds of the capital development fund to be established by Government should be used specifically for the benefit of persons made redundant as part of the privatisation exercise. Such persons should have grants for retraining and access to soft funds so that if they want to set up an alternative business they can do so.

I am staggered, Mr. Speaker, at the attitude of the workers' unions in this country in this matter. We are not hearing from the unions any innovative ideas as to how persons made redundant as part of the privatisation effort should be reabsorbed. I support privatisation but only if we are going to carry through each and every aspect of the process. Privatisation leads to redundancies because when you start with state enterprises that were bloated and have to be sold, very often you have to put them into the condition for sale. You have to "slenderise", as my colleague says.

Given that that is part of the process, it is a...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is going into overtime but I will give him an opportunity to conclude.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I just started. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Government of Barbados that there is a particularly Barbadian aspect to the role of state enterprises that must not be ignored. Barbados does not have a local government system. The Democratic Labour Party must be aware that, when local government was abolished in this country, a number of state enterprises were created for the specific purpose of providing services that were formerly supplied by local government and which in a lot of other countries are supplied by state, urban or other such local governmental operations.

The Sanitation Service Authority is a clear case of a state enterprise that was created as a consequence of the Democratic Labour Party Government's decision to abolish local government in this country. I am not in support of any form of privatisation in this country which will entail the Government of Barbados walking away from its social and economic responsibilities. I am not in support of any process of privatisation which will lead to the dismantlement of those enterprises which were created after the abolition of local government and have a responsibility to supply services at the local level. It is, therefore, very important that this Government tell us precisely its policy in relation to a number of institutions. We have heard from time to time conflicting statements by Government as regards the future of the

Transport Board. If you read the Democratic Labour Party manifesto you get the impression that the Transport Board was one of those institutions that Government would not pass over to the private sector. I read at page 10:

"At another level services such as TRANSPORT, if left entirely to private initiative, are likely to result in inadequate provision on long haul and sparsely populated routes, consequently impacting adversely upon the development of a balanced residential and industrial landscape."

Mr. Speaker, that leaves the implication to be drawn that the Government of the day, the Democratic Labour Party Government in 1991, was not in support of a process of privatisation *for* the Transport Board. I have heard this Minister on the HOOT of this House say that the Transport Board is one of the entities to be privatised. In other countries, the sanitation services have been privatised, but I am reminding the Government of Barbados that some of our state enterprises perform the role of local government in other countries. The Government of Barbados cannot and should not sell those enterprises without satisfying itself of its capacity to provide services at the local level.

Mr. Speaker, my time has elapsed, but I want to conclude in this fashion. Privatisation is now topical and no Government of Barbados should ever subscribe to a policy which says that the Government now and in the future should not be involved in economic activity, if the involvement of the Government in such economic activity can be shown to be in the public interest. The Government of Barbados has in the past used its involvement in state enterprises at a commercial level as a catalyst for economic change in this country. Although privatisation may be in vogue now and there might be pressure upon the Government of Barbados to want to sell everything commercial in sight, I believe the Government of this country has a responsibility to state that, if it is in the national interest that it should become involved in the immediate future in the ownership of commercial enterprises, they would exercise that right to the fullest

I am obliged to you, Sir.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I beg to second the Resolution and reserve my right to speak.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that further consideration of this Resolution be postponed at this stage.

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: I beg to second that.

The question was put and agreed to in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that this sitting be suspended until 3.00 p.m. on Thursday, January 14, 1993.

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly. 4.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 3 - THE EVIDENCE BILL, 1993

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that the Evidence Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I should like to second the motion made by the Attorney General. I believe the Attorney General will indicate, if the House agrees that it be so referred, the proposed composition of the Select Committee.

The question was put and agreed to in the affirmative without division.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that the following persons from this side constitute our representation on the Select Committee:

The Honourable Members for Christ Church West Central, for St. Michael North, for St. Michael West, for Christ Church East, for St. John, for St. Lucy and for St. Michael North * East who will be Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I propose that the following members from this side of the House be members of that Committee:

The Honourable Members for St. Thomas, for St. George South, for St. Joseph and for Christ Church West.

The question was put and agreed to in the affirmative without division.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chairman of Committees will fix the date for the first meeting of that Committee.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am seeking permission of this Chamber to revert to the order of business as set out in the Order Paper, specifically to Government Notices under that item, and Papers as well as to Oral Replies, Questions and Statements by Ministers.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there is no objection, leave is granted.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

The Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order, 1993,
The Exchange Control (Fees) (Amendment) Order, 1992.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Question No. 19 is ready.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is expedient for me, at this early stage of calendar year 1993, to review with Honourable Members some of the economic issues facing our country, as well as to indicate some steps which we are taking and will take to deal with those issues. The international economic recession and its negative impact on growth, the balance of payments and employment continue to be the major cause *for* concern. Most countries have had to adopt defensive measures to deal with the situation, including currency devaluation. Here in Barbados we have also had, as you are aware, to adopt defensive measures, but we have opted for a comprehensive economic adjustment programme that aimed, first of all, to restore financial

stability, and secondly to improve conditions for the resumption of sustainable economic growth. This well-crafted economic adjustment and recovery programme is part of my Government's medium term economic strategy based on -

1. fiscal monetary, incomes and external debt management policies; and
 2. structural reforms in the areas of taxation, the trade and tariff system and the financial sector;
- to maintain the current exchange rate parity, protect Barbados' external position, improve external competitiveness, remove disincentives to export activity, and encourage the efficient allocation of resources.

It is the inescapable responsibility of each one of us to use our best endeavours to achieve our ultimate national goal of rejuvenating our productive sectors and laying the foundations for the return of sustainable economic growth.

The first step in rectifying the economic situation was to stabilise the balance of payments by reducing Government spending, cutting the size of the fiscal deficit and reducing disposable income. It was anticipated that these measures coupled with a tight incomes and wages policy would not only reduce the aggregate demand for imports to a level that could be supported by the net foreign exchange inflows, but would also result in a greater level of competitiveness in Barbados' exports in regional and international markets.

The second step involved in the programme represented a conscious effort to reform Government's operations so as to improve incentives for private investment in exports of goods and services, including tax reform, trade reform, public enterprise restructuring, the reform of labour market conditions, new initiatives for export, reforms in international business and tourism, and reforms in the financial and agricultural sectors.

In other words, recognising the need to effect stabilisation of the economy and restore growth based on competitive exports of goods and services, my Government decided to adopt an adjustment programme to reduce aggregate demand while keeping the existing fixed exchange rate parity intact. Permit me to outline briefly the major specific objectives of that programme.

Firstly, in keeping with fiscal prudence, the fiscal deficit should be reduced from 7.8 per cent of the GDP to 1.0 per cent of the GDP in fiscal 1991-92, and then to 0 per cent in fiscal year 1992-93. This was to be achieved through a combination of measures which included a reduction in current and capital expenditure and raising of additional revenue. Secondly, we sought to rebuild the gross liquid reserves from a low of 1½ weeks worth of imports at end-September 1991 to a level of 3 months of imports by the mid-1990's. Thirdly, it was anticipated that with a combination of fiscal and monetary policy adjustments, stability and equilibrium could be returned to the country's balance of payments situation and the public finances.

Finally, as an overall national objective, Government sought to maintain the country's current exchange rate parity to the United States dollar.

Having completed some 18 months of that economic adjustment programme, I believe that we are now in a position to assess and analyse more clearly what exactly we have been able to achieve thus far.

3.20 p.m.

Let us examine the picture.

During the period of Government's economic stabilisation programme, we have been able to achieve the following successes:-

- (1) We have been able to control the fiscal deficit
- (2) Having set for ourselves a target of a balanced budget in fiscal year 1992/93, based on the provisional figures, it appears that we are on course to achieve that commitment.
- (3) We have been able to meet all of our foreign and domestic debt obligations.
- (4) We have been able to rebuild our foreign exchange reserves to around 2½ months' worth of imports, up from the 1½ weeks' worth at the end of September, 1991.
- (5) We have to date met all of the major targets established by the Government and the International Monetary Fund as progress indicators under our economic stabilisation programme. From all indications, we will also meet those targets set for the last quarter which ended on December 31, 1992.

(6) We have been able to maintain the existing fixed exchange rate parity of the Barbados dollar vis-a-vis the US dollar.

These are all major achievements in our efforts to tackle deep-seated problems in our economy. But we have not just stopped there. During 1992 my Government entered upon a medium to long term economic strategy geared towards strengthening the incentives for private investment, particularly in the export of goods and services. The strategy included:-

(1) A reform of the direct tax system in July of 1992 to bring about a degree of simplicity, equity and fairness to that system while lowering the general rate of taxation on the general public through a reduction in payroll levies, and an elimination of the individual stabilisation tax. This will ensure that the workers of Barbados be given higher take home pay and increase their disposable income.

(2) In the area of institutional reform we have effectively merged the former IDC and EPC into a single organisation styled the Barbados Investment Promotion Corporation mandated to promote industrial investment and to enhance export promotion services.

(3) We have initiated work on the reorganisation of the sugar agriculture sector with the placing of the BSIL into receivership and the appointment of receivers to oversee the restructuring process in the initial stages.

(4) We have strengthened the Board of Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and we have implemented a new \$9 million programme for the improved marketing of tourism. In addition, we have laid in Parliament the Barbados Tourism Authority Bill to establish new arrangements for the development of tourism in Barbados.

(5) In 1992 we established a Privatisation Unit whose responsibility is to implement the Government's privatisation and divestment policies.

(6) We have established an International Business and Financial Services Unit in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

In the privatisation programme, it is envisaged that such enterprises as the Pine Hill Dairy, Heywoods Hotel, the Barbados National Oil Company, the National Petroleum Corporation and the Arawak Cement Plant will be placed on the local and international markets for potential investors, while some 20% of shares in some of the other public enterprises will be made available to the staff of the respective enterprises in the first instance, or to other buyers.

My Government is proceeding with its plans to privatise the Transport Board. Under the proposed arrangements action will be taken to put the following measures in place:-

(a) Steps will be taken to invite expressions of interest from private entrepreneurs to operate on the routes currently served by the Transport Board, excluding designated long haul and cross-country routes.

(b) Routes being privatised will be organised into zones.

(c) The Transport Board will continue to operate the school service, by-pass, cross-country and designated long haul routes and such other routes as become necessary.

(d) Appropriate legislation will be enacted for the establishment of a Public Transport Commission.

(e) The Ministry of Public Works, Communications and Transportation will obtain the services of a valuer to carry out a valuation of the rolling stock and equipment owned by the Transport Board.

(f) A budget will be prepared showing the projected financial position of the Transport Board for the next fiscal year, based on the reduction of its operations.

(g) The Ministry of Public Works, Communications and Transportation will use the services of the Privatisation Unit in the privatisation of the Board's activities.

It is therefore obvious, from what I have outlined, that the year just passed was one of tremendous work for my Government. We had, at the start of the year, set ourselves a heavy agenda and I am happy to report to this Honourable House and the people of Barbados that we have either completed or have begun to work on many, if not all, of the programmes and policies which we had earmarked for implementation. What I can say with confidence is that we are currently on the road which leads to the structural adjustment phase of the recovery programme.

But there were not all bright spots in 1992. Real economic output continued to decline due primarily to the

sluggish recovery in the world economy and to the continuation of tight fiscal and monetary policies under the stabilisation programme.

Unemployment continues to be a source for worry, rising to a level of just under 23% by the last quarter of 1992, despite the fact that the number and rate of persons losing their jobs slowed in the latter half of 1992 in response to a conscious effort on the part of the Government to lessen monetary and fiscal tightness in the economy through a reduction in general interest rates across the board and a removal of the companies stabilisation tax.

At the end of March this year, Barbados would have effectively completed the final phase of its 18 months economic adjustment programme entered into with the assistance of the IMF. Provided that we satisfy the last performance criteria test and meet all of our obligations under that programme, which I am confident we will, that Fund programme will officially end some time in May, 1993.

I know, Sir, that there has been speculation in some quarters as to how we will traverse that situation. Let me clarify the position. Our experiences with the Fund to date have taken place on a frank, professional and very co-operative basis. However, my Government has no plans to enter into a successor IMF-supported economic adjustment programme, barring any unforeseen circumstances. Similarly, I do not envisage that Barbados will enter into any extended Fund facility programme. 3.30 p.m.

What I can say is that we value very highly the surveillance activities of the Fund and the consultations with us on our external payments position, current account balances, capital flows, the management of our international reserves and our exchange rate system. We also value highly consultations with the Fund on those aspects of our domestic policies such as Government spending and aggregate demand management which intersect with the external position. Furthermore, we welcome the technical assistance support of the Fund. For these and other reasons, we will continue to work closely with the Fund as we aim to keep an appropriate and prudent macro-economic framework in place. We will therefore be seeking, within the framework of the Fund's

Articles of Agreement, special regular and periodic consultations that will meet our special circumstances.

In addition to our relationship with the IMF, we will be continuing discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank with a view to attracting resources to assist us in the development and implementation of the structural adjustment and sectoral reform programmes. It is anticipated, that by March of this year, we will have made significant progress along that path.

The other point which I wish to make in this respect has to do with the issue of the 8 per cent reduction in the emoluments of public servants which will come to an end at the close of the current stabilisation programme in March. Put another way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Government by way of the Public Service Reduction of Emoluments Act, 1991 has no legal authority to continue with that reduction beyond March 31, 1993.

However, it must be noted that it is certainly my Government's intention to continue to seek to ensure that the level of our wages and salaries does not explode beyond that which is reasonable and thus force us back into a similar situation as we were in before. We need to be very careful at this stage. To this end we will continue to pursue with vigour a strong incomes policy, the underlying feature of which is a wages and incomes freeze in both the public and private sectors, relaxed only where any increases are linked to productivity and profit sharing.

You are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that an incomes policy is one of the 3 types of macro-economic policy interventions used by Governments in their efforts to achieve stabilisation of the economy. It is usual to hear much of fiscal and monetary policy, but from time to time an incomes policy becomes necessary to complement the work of these two. The rationale for an incomes policy is inherent in the argument that there is a stable relationship over time between the prices of particular goods and the unit costs of producing each of these goods. Consequently, if wage rates rise no faster than the productivity of labour, unit labour costs will not rise and therefore prices of goods will not rise.

In a small economy like Barbados, discipline is required on all sides if the country is to attain sustainable growth while the inflation rate is contained at an acceptable level. Since labour costs form a large percentage of the operating costs of our industries, in order to be competitive there is need to contain wages at a reasonable level so as to maintain the overall costs of production which will allow the exports of Barbados a fair share in the regional and international markets. Similarly, in the tourism sector, the ability to offer an attractively priced product is also dependent on having appropriate wage levels which will work to keep operating costs and therefore hotel rooms at competitive prices vis-a-vis our regional neighbours. We must continue to give our visitors value for money. Within this context, it is absolutely vital that the

wages and incomes freeze be continued, and that prices also should be moderated. Government, the private sector and the unions all share major responsibilities in this regard.

In terms of our programme for 1993, my Government intends to set about working speedily on the implementation of a number of policies which will be used as the foundation for our improvement in the domestic conditions of the local economy and for increasing economic activity in the country.

One broad policy area relates to public sector reform, which is being undertaken at two levels. Firstly, steps are being taken to improve the institutional structure and decision-making capacity of the Central Government. Secondly, a number of state enterprises are being privatised and those remaining under Government's control are being made more efficient. The intention is that budgetary support for these enterprises will be substantially reduced or eliminated wherever possible.

These enterprises are being classified into three broad categories as follows:-

- (1) those where . benefits can be derived from foreign or local private sector participation or from complete divestment;
- (2) those that can become commercially viable after a rehabilitation or restructuring exercise; and
- (3) those that should be closed because there is no real prospect of commercial viability and their operations cannot be justified by social considerations.

At present the Government is studying a number of reports which have been prepared by the Inter-American Development Bank assisted by the Inter-American Centre of Tax Administrators on the institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Inland Revenue Department, the Customs Department, the Land Tax Department, the Auditor General's Department and the Accountant General's Department.

In addition, there will be changes in the budgetary system through the implementation of programme budgeting, the use of value for money audits and improved expenditure management. It is expected that these projects will be started during the second half of fiscal year 1993/94 and more details will be made available in due course.

In July 1992, Mien I presented proposals for the reform of the direct tax system, I promised that, following very shortly afterwards, my Government would move to effect a similar reform exercise of the indirect tax system as part of an overall programme for economic restructuring.

To this end, my Government commissioned a study on a "Reform of 'the Indirect Tax System" which was undertaken by Mr. John Bristow and Mr. Brian Wiirts of the IMF Fiscal Affairs Department. This Report was circulated to the social partners and other interested parties whose views and recommendations were solicited and received. 3.40 p.m.

Having studied all of the possible policy options, recommendations and, indeed, concerns associated with the proposed reforms, the Cabinet of Barbados has decided that a value added tax, based on the major features of an invoice-based credit regime, and a rate structure and administrative structure, will be introduced to replace the current indirect tax regime. It is envisaged that this new value added tax regime will continue the trend set by Government's direct tax reform, to broaden the tax base, remove disincentives to export and simplify the tax system, while at the same time bringing greater equity, fairness and harmonization to the tax regime. The Cabinet has also approved recommendations for the establishment of a Value Added Tax Implementation Unit to be situated in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs with exclusive responsibility for the implementation of the new VAT.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the scope and comprehensive nature of the VAT, it is anticipated that it will take about two years for the new VAT regime to become fully operational. Given the need for specific tax reform measures to be implemented before that time, in keeping with the Government's programme for adjustment, the Cabinet has also decided that in the interim certain measures should be implemented to assist the productive sectors of the economy in their effort to return to a path of growth.

Therefore, with effect from January 1, 1993 the stamp duty on materials for manufacturing as provided for under Section 45 of the Stamp Duty Act, Cap. 91, and consumption taxes applicable to equipment and machinery for manufacturing, as provided for under Section 30 of the Consumption Tax Act, Cap. 63, will be waived.

In addition, with respect to tourism, stamp duty on items approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs for use in the Hotels Refurbishment Programme, as provided for under section 45 of the Stamp Duty Act, Cap. 91, will be waived. So too will all toiletries purchased by hotels be free of stamp duty in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these measures represent an integral element of Government's reform of the

indirect taxation system and its efforts to institute far-reaching trade reform strategies.

Moreover, they represent an effort by Government to lessen the impact on the manufacturing sector of trade liberalisation within the context of our commitment to CARICOM on proposed changes to the existing rates of the Common External Tariff, which we propose to implement by April 1, 1993. By virtue of these changes to the indirect taxation system, it is projected that Government will incur a revenue loss of \$13.0 million in a full fiscal year and, as a result, it has taken the decision to recover those losses through the implementation of specific measures which will come into effect as of January 15, 1993.

It is proposed that consumption tax on gasoline which accrues to Government be increased by 25 per cent by Order under Section 6 (2) of the Consumption Tax Act, Cap. 63. Additionally, it is proposed that the consumption tax on diesel be increased by 15 per cent, also by Order under section 6 (2) of the Consumption Tax Act, Cap. 63.

In other words, the consumption tax on gasoline should go from 71.581 cents per litre to 89.476 cents per litre, while the consumption tax on diesel should go from 64.849 cents per litre to 74.576 cents per litre.

It must be noted, however, that these increases do not relate to and will not affect the cost of industrial use of gasoline and diesel.

In addition, as a complement to these measures and as part of Government's medium term strategy to promote greater economic activity, other structural reforms will be implemented during the year to strengthen the economy.

At the last sitting of this Honourable House, the first reading of the Barbados Tourism Authority Bill was undertaken, and it is expected that debate and passing of that Bill will be done very shortly. The new Act will contain a set of new initiatives to promote, protect and further enhance the Barbados tourism product.

Over and above this, my Government will embark on a new marketing thrust to promote Barbados in some of its major markets. Following upon the \$9.0 million which was provided for the Board of Tourism in the current financial year for marketing in the United States market, an additional \$9.0 million will be provided for similar efforts in the United Kingdom, European and other markets.

In the area of agriculture, my Government is moving swiftly to complete the process of reform which was started in 1992.

Our objective is to oversee the establishment of a viable management system for the highly indebted sugar estates and factories, so as to ensure that an appropriate framework be created for profitable commercial farming. 3.50 p.m.

As a result, Government has established 2 companies to oversee the management of the industry. The first of these is the Agricultural Credit Trust (ACT) which is a financial institution whose assets will be the debt owed to the BNB by BSIL and the highly indebted plantations, and the other is the Agricultural Management Company (AMC) which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Agricultural Credit Trust, and whose objectives will be to maximise the returns from operating the sugar factories and estates.

Over and above this, discussions are ongoing for a restructuring of the operations of the Barbados National Bank which are, indeed, intimately inter-connected to the reforms in the sugar industry, but which will extend to other areas as we seek to ensure a higher level of viability in the Bank and to carry on with reforms started in the financial sector with the enactment of the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act. During the year Government will be looking at reviewing the scope of the regulatory and prudential rules, developing secondary markets for securities bonds, while generally improving the quality and quantity of financial information flowing to the public.

Already the International Business and Financial Services Unit has been established within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and discussions will commence shortly with a view to concluding a number of double taxation treaties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as can be seen, these new initiatives which extend across a number of areas of activities, particularly in the productive area, are geared towards more clearly defining the focus of Government in promoting growth and increased productivity in the local economy, while at the same time increasing employment opportunities. All of us must recognise that the onus to rebuild our

economy rests on all of us. My Government has recognised this and has accepted its responsibility in this regard by devising and implementing a comprehensive strategy of reform and restructuring of the Barbados economy.

But these policies alone will not succeed in achieving our objectives of economic growth, increased employment and higher standards of living.

This is why the Government continues to be committed on behalf of the people to working together with the Unions and with business in a renewed spirit of consensus and national resolve. Our collective mission in 1993 and beyond is to create a new era of social and economic stability and prosperity in Barbados.

Join us in this resolve.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a matter of privilege, as you know there is no recognised procedure in the rules of this House for debating a Ministerial Statement except by noting the speech. The Opposition proposes to give notice of a Resolution so as to have the Minister's Statement debated as soon as possible.

The Honourable Member for St Peter, the Shadow Minister of Finance has already handed in notice of the Resolution to the Clerk and I should wish that the matter be dealt with this afternoon.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have no more business. We had wanted to commence a debate on the Barbados Tourism Authority Bill but we have decided to leave it until next Tuesday so we have no further business to transact I therefore move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday...

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, before the Honourable Member moves the adjournment I ask that we recommit and go back to Private Members' Notices. We should like to give notice of a Resolution.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Once there is no objection.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Private Members' Business.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg leave to give notice of the following Resolution:

WHEREAS it is in the interest of this House that the Statement of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to this House on January 14, 1993 be fully debated:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this House note the Statement of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs delivered on January 14, 1993.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, January 19, 1993 at 12 o'clock noon.

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: In speaking on that Resolution, Sir, it is important that the business of the House be so organised that we give urgent attention to the really substantial matters that are confronting this country. Because of that, it is important when the House resumes on Tuesday that rather than merely words, we wish to have a substantive debate on the economy. The Minister's Statement and the Resolution just moved by the Honourable Member for St. Peter will provide this House with such an opportunity.

I hope that the Leader of the House will take into account that the Opposition would wish to proceed

with Private Members' Business at the usual time, Sir. I hope that the Leader of the House will take into account as well that if the Government wishes the public to have the benefit of a critical analysis of the economy, Government will make it possible by coming in their numbers and agreeing to an extension of time, that we can have a full debate on the Statement just made by the Minister. The public would want to know, for instance, why gasoline should be over \$7 per gallon so we would want to debate along those lines. On the substantive matters before the House, we would want to have the debate go on and I hope, therefore, that we will be able to proceed with the debate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I get the point. 4.00 p.m.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: We would want to have the debate to go on, Sir. I hope therefore we shall be able to proceed with the debate.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, January 19, 1993 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 4.02 p.m.

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