
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT).

FIRST SESSION 1991 - 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 25, 1994

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. on Tuesday, January 25, 1994.

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P., (Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.),
J.P., (Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Affairs and
Minister for the Civil Service)

Hon. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.
(Hons.), (Minister of Foreign Affairs & Deputy Leader of
the House)

Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime
Minister, Minister of Home Affairs and Leader of the
House)

Hon. M. A. KING, Q.C., LL.B., (Attorney General,
Minister of Justice and Minister for CARICOM 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 Education)

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

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Leader of the
Opposition)

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

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

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

Hon. W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.B.M., J.P., (Minister
of Labour, Public Works, Community Development &
Sports)

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.-B. (Hons.), (Minister
of Finance)

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

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

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, J.P.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.

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

Mr. G. W. PAYNE

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the
Minutes and proceedings of this Honourable Chamber of a
meeting that took place on December 21, 1993 be taken as
read and be confirmed.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I am in
receipt of the Auditor General's Report for the year ending
March 31, 1992, also Accounts and Statements prepared by
the Accountant General for the month of October 1993.

On the last occasion the question of membership of
the Public Accounts Committee was raised by the
Honourable Leader of the Opposition and I indicated to him
that I would give some consideration to the matter. Well,
obviously the former Leader of the Opposition would vacate
that position as Chairman of the Public Accounts
Committee as a result of the change. Standing Order 69
indicates that the Speaker can nominate such a person and I
have submitted to the House that the Member who was
Chairman on the last Committee should be nominated

as such but there are still matters that would have to be done by the House as well because I can only nominate. Therefore that is the kind of ruling I would place on the matter.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I assume that every nomination requires approbation. That is what it is, a nomination. It is not that we are going to oppose it but I believe, Sir, with the will of the House I would imagine because it is only a nomination. According to Standing Order 60.9 the will of the House would have to be given in order to give necessary approbation to the nomination. Order 60.9 states:

"The Speaker may nominate another Member of the House to take the place of a Member of the Committee whose seat has become vacant or who has resigned from the Committee. Every nomination under this Standing Order shall be announced to the House at its next meeting."

Now, Sir, this does not mean that from the point I am taking that we are going to oppose the nomination but all I am suggesting, Sir, is that I believe that in order that it should be done in a proper way, I believe the will of the House should be obtained.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that is what I really said. I chose the Standing Order which was relevant to the matter but obviously the House will eventually determine their own position. It is only a nomination on my part, not a designation because I could not do any more than nominate.

PAPERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, by the command of the Cabinet I lay the Post Office Licence to Vendors of Postage Stamps (Amendment) Regulations, 1993.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay:

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 5) Order, 1993.

Reports on the Audit of the Accounts of the National Insurance Fund for the year ended 31st December, 1989 and 31st December, 1990.

The Report of the National Insurance Board on its operations under the Severance Payments Scheme for the period 1st January, 1992 to 31st December, 1992.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill to grant an additional sum of money out of the Consolidated Fund and to appropriate for the public service of Barbados for the year ending the 31st of March 1994 be read a first time.

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

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

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am going to ask that this item be deferred for the time being. I will also seek leave to revert to this Item later in the sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there is no objection then leave is granted.
12.30 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 10 — TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF A BILL TO GRANT AN ADDITIONAL SUM OF MONEY OUT OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO APPROPRIATE THE SAME FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1994

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a Bill to provide for the grant of \$24 250 283 out of the Consolidated Fund for expenditure during the balance of the fiscal year ending 31st March, 1994. The Addendum and Schedule set out the purposes for which the expenditure is being incurred in a large number of areas under the following:

GOVERNOR GENERAL	-	\$11500000
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE	-	\$33 386000
CABINET OFFICE	-	\$23 800000
MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE	-	\$1 848468
OMBUDSMAN	-	\$2995
AUDIT		\$28500
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS		\$607591
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FISHERIES		\$117025
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY		\$213279
ATTORNEY GENERAL	-	\$165411
MINISTRY OF HEALTH	-	\$10 895627
MINISTRY OF HOUSING, LANDS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE		\$3 834237
MINISTRY OF LABOUR, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND THE ENVIRONMENT		\$1 841464
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS, COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION	-	\$3 125000
MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND SPORTS	-	\$1 500000

Mr. Speaker, I should say from the outset that in respect of most, with very few exceptions, of these items equivalent savings have been found in the particular Department. So that the total programmed expenditure for this fiscal year should not exceed the limits which were established by the Ministry of Finance, except to say that there is some expenditure which will be located between the Ministry of the Environment and I think the Ministry of Culture with respect to the Sherbourne Centre for which this is additional expenditure which had not been programmed originally. Apart from that, some of the expenditure relates to developments which would have taken place during the course of the fiscal year particularly in respect to Personal Emoluments for staff to be involved in the Conference for Global Sustainable Development, the VAT Implementation Unit and the Tax Administration Management Programme. These are items of expenditure which came to the notice of the respective Ministries as the projects may have developed during the course of the year. In many other cases, as I have said, if not all the expenditure limit for the respective Ministries should not be exceeded. What I want to do now is to take the opportunity as is usually done when we have large supplementaries of this sort to give a background on the fiscal situation, on the National Debt and on the Balance of Payments.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the first nine months of the fiscal year 1993/94, the Central Government is expected to record

a deficit of \$33.2 million representing just over 1 per cent of nominal GDP at market prices. This is to be compared to the deficit of \$4.7 million for the same period of 1992/93 which represented just 0.2 per cent of nominal GDP at market prices. The higher deficit in 1993/94 is explained by higher current expenditure but also by increased capital investments. Despite the larger end of December deficit, the whole 1993/94 fiscal year the deficit target still remained at around $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1 per cent of nominal GDP which is what was anticipated. It is expected that the projected fourth quarter surplus result will secure the desired fiscal year position.

The Current Revenue for this review period is expected to be \$721.2 million, some \$10.4 million more than was collected in the first three quarters of 1992/93. The 1992/93 revenue results had derived principally from buoyant levy collections including stabilisation taxes on individuals and corporations and also a good public response to a land tax amnesty in the third quarter. However, in 1993/94 despite the fact that stabilisation taxes on individuals and corporations were eliminated and certain levy contributions were reduced, the revenue outturn improved due to enhanced taxes from goods and services particularly consumption taxes and also to higher import duties and earlier land tax payments.

In the review period, total expenditure is expected to be higher by \$33.1 million than for the same period in 1992/93. Wages and salaries moved from \$279 million to \$302 million as a result of an increase of 8 per cent in public sector emoluments. Current transfers were boosted to \$182 million from \$166.8 million as Government provided substantial financial support for the restructuring of the sugar sector and to the tourism promotion effort. Interest payments were moderately lower while use of goods and services were virtually unchanged. Capital investment grew by nearly \$6 million to \$62.7 million as Government's public works programme expanded.

With respect to the National Debt, Mr. Speaker, in the first nine months of 1993/94 the actual expenditure on debt servicing totalled \$266.2 million, an increase of 5.6 per cent over the corresponding period of 1992. Domestic interest payments at \$75.1 million were 12.7 per cent lower than a year ago due to a considerable decrease in Ways and Means Advances by the Central Bank to Central Government and lower interest rates on treasury bills.

Domestic amortisation increased by 79.5 per cent to \$64.1 million mainly due to redemption of debentures. Foreign interest payments fell by 13.7 per cent from a year ago to \$37.7 million while foreign amortisation increased by 3 per cent to a total of \$89.2 million.

12.40 p.m.

Finally, Sir, with regard to the balance of payments, for the first nine months of fiscal year 1993-94 the net international reserves of the Central Bank are expected to decline by \$37.1 million, in contrast to an increase of \$17.1 million for the same nine months of 1992-93. This performance, Mr. Speaker, reflects the recovery of imports and the loss of reserves, associated with increased payments on the services account.

It should be noted that on a calendar year basis, which is January to December, the net international reserves show a reserves gain of \$41.5 million compared to \$58.2 million in calendar 1992. The smaller NIR gain in 1993 again reflects the acceleration of imports in this year over 1992.

Mr. Speaker, that gives a background essentially to the fiscal position, which I think should help Members contribute to the overall initial debate on this matter. With that background, I want to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: beg to second the motion, Sir, and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, this omnibus Bill deals with a number of Government Departments for which supplementaries are being sought at this stage. I do not propose to cover the wide range of Heads that are covered under the Bill, but I do want to pay attention to one or two aspects, particularly that relating to the environment.

It is important, Sir, that we focus on this aspect of Government activity in view of the fact that the Government proposes to host a United Nations Sustainable Development Conference here in Barbados in about two months' time. We on this side are supportive of the hosting of the Conference, but we very much deplore the fact that for something as important as a Conference of that magnitude Government has not vouchsafed information to all sectors of the community, including the Opposition party, because nothing really has ever been brought to Parliament that has spelt out with any specificity what is involved in the conference in April and May of this year.

The Prime Minister at the Conference in Rio, almost in a knee jerk reaction, decided that we would host this Conference. I say this, Sir, because nothing had been heard in Barbados in any sector of the community about the hosting of this Conference until the news came out of Rio.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I do not know whether the Cabinet was informed or not, Sir, but we heard for the first time

when the Prime Minister was in Rio that Barbados would host a Conference far bigger than any this country had ever hosted before and one that would draw heavily on the human, financial and other resources of this country. As I say, Sir, we support the hosting of the Conference, but we would like to think that Parliament is given the role that constitutionally it must hold when decisions of such major import are being taken that Parliament would be brought up to date and informed about developments.

I am not going to join those who speak as though the Conference will not proceed efficiently. Indeed, I fervently hope that it does. I, as a Barbadian, proud of my land, would like to see Barbados properly showcase the Conference and that we host a conference that will make us as Barbadians proud of the way in which we handle the whole thing. But I do want to say that the Democratic Labour Party Government strikes me as the most anti-environment Government that you can think about. I say this against this background, Sir.

In 1983, I think it was, the Barbados Labour Party Government set up an Environment Department in the Ministry of Health and the following year, in 1984, the Government for the first time established a Ministry of the Environment. At that time the Government spelt out very clearly that the concerns about the environment were mounting, particularly because of the prevalent degradation of the soil and water resources of Barbados. The Government at the time immediately proceeded to get a number of studies done in relation to the environment, and based on those studies an Environmental Bill was drafted and we were getting ready to bring it before Parliament. The Government changed in 1986 before the Bill reached Parliament and it was scrapped by the new Government, and the Ministry of the Environment was dismantled.

It seems strange, Sir, in those circumstances to understand how the Government has suddenly jumped on the environment band wagon. The Environmental Bill that was drafted in 1985 and which the then Government very much intended to bring before Parliament was regulatory in nature. It set out a lot of regulations to govern the whole environmental business, and in addition to that it sought to spell out a number of policy areas we were going to advance to preserve our environment. All this was abandoned by the Democratic Labour Party Government when it got into Government. You will remember, Sir, as I said, there was a Ministry of the Environment established then, but what we have at the moment is a scattering of all matters relating to the environment over four Ministries. In the Ministry of Health there is an Environmental Engineering Unit; in the Ministry of Health there is the Sanitation Service Authority; in the Ministry of Agriculture we have a department dealing with pesticides and insecticides; in the Ministry of Public Works we have

the Barbados Water Authority and we have in the Ministry of the Environment, or Labour, I think it is – in fact, they change them so often, Sir, you cannot remember where Environment is attached at any given time – but all we know is that in the last seven years there have been five Ministers of the Environment. They just shift them all over the place, they are scattered.

The so-called Ministry of the Environment does not even have an executive role. When one listens from time to time to hear what the Ministry of the Environment is doing, we see that it perhaps perceives itself as having a role of education in relation to the environment. It does not have a co-ordinating role. To my certain knowledge, Sir, there is nobody in the Government who co-ordinates the diverse bits of activity that relate to the environment. I understand that for the Conference that is being held in a few weeks' time the Government has set up a National Committee and my enquiries have drawn the answer that the National Committee up to this date has not met. We are a few weeks away from a conference of this magnitude and I understand that up to this point the National Committee which was appointed some time last year has not met. What has in fact met are 1 or 2 subcommittees of the National Committee. We are beginning to feel that Government, in the planning for the Conference, like its attitude on environment generally, is demonstrating a level of ineptness which characterises so much of what it has done over the last few years.

12.50 p.m.

Now a few things about the Environment. Sustainable development is a concept that is perhaps a decade old. It arose out of a United Nations Conference on the Environment when this concept was articulated for the first time. It is put in many ways but if I may put it in a way that I prefer it be put, it is a way of running the business of the Environment like any good business, in making sure that in running that business you are creating economic wealth and that while you are creating economic wealth you do not destroy the basis of that wealth. That is the whole concept. There must be development in every country in the world; but the concept of sustainable development is to ensure that in creating economic wealth we do not destroy the basis on which we build economic wealth. Put another way, Sir, it has to be development operating in tandem, that is, economic development and social development, a thesis which I have for many years articulated in this Chamber.

We have a situation in this country where the water resources are being threatened. About 6 years ago, the Government had some research done on the position of the underground water in Barbados. PAHO was involved and the Government laboratory and I believe that the Environmental Engineering Unit of the Ministry of Health

was involved and there was some assistance from the British Geological Surveyor. They were charged with carrying out a study of ground water and the pollution risks that the ground water was encountering as a result of certain developments.

Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago, in the 1960's, a number of development zones were established to protect the water resources of Barbados. That means that wherever the water supply was, the Government would determine from the level of the water table...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The water zones were established to preserve the integrity of the water supply in Barbados. I want to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael West on this because it is not many years ago that the Government allowed the building of a massive slum in the Belle, providing a real threat to the water supply of Barbados, and the same Honourable Members spoke and took a position that was defending that particular development.

The study that was done about 6-7 years ago pointed out that there were a number of threats to the water supply in Barbados. The Honourable Member was the Minister of Health and the report was handed into the Ministry of Health. It said that in the area North-East of Bridgetown where a lot of housing development was taking place the sanitation system was largely unsewered, that it could create a problem and the Government should give it immediate attention.

It also raised the question, if my memory serves me right, that a number of nitrates which were coming from the insecticides and pesticides used in the whole agricultural community – things used in the fields – were going into the water supply of Barbados and in addition to those nitrates were many synthetic chemicals made in laboratories all over the world and much of it not used in first world countries. But they make it and dump it on Third World countries like Barbados. Those chemicals were seeping into the water supply of Barbados and that if the Government did not take urgent action that it could cause a serious threat to the ground water of Barbados.

It also mentioned at that time that the industrial waste was posing a threat to the coral formation in Barbados. That is an old one that I understand, and I am not arguing about it. The South Coast Sewerage Project has been sitting on the desks of various Ministers in the Administration for a long time and that is a fact. It came before Parliament, to my recollection, not more than 8 months ago.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West brought a Resolution before Parliament no more than

8 months ago relating to the arrangements with the Inter-American Development Bank and the plan to start work on the Sewerage Project in the South of Barbados. But we have some problems because while Nero is fiddling, Rome is burning and the situation is getting worse.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: He personalised that whole era. In the Constituency of St. George South where I have the honour to represent, the people cannot get water. The Mount Tenantry in St. George South, Upper Brighton in St. George – the people are having a rough time. I understand that the Government in giving approval for the construction of a number of golf courses, by that very action intends to put additional pressure on my constituents because if they cannot get water now before the golf courses start God help us when they start, particularly in the south • of the Island. But the Government is not too concerned about these things. I want Mr. Speaker... I don't know why they are heckling me, Sir. If they are uncomfortable with what I am saying...

Mr. SPEAKER: Now, the Honourable Member knows very well that I would not allow heckling. I have not heard the heckling, but if there is, I presume it is the wrong place to heckle any person. Not in here.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, I am hearing it because I don't have any wig covering my ears. I really can hear it.

Mr. Speaker, they are treating this thing with a great deal of levity as they always do serious matters. We have a situation with the Mangrove dump and the Government is treating the Mangrove Dump with a level of cavaliness and insensitivity as to make – you don't know these words. They are too big for you – us wonder whether the Government is serious about the whole question of the environment.

I passed the Mangrove area recently. I was on my way to St. Peter a morning, a little over a week ago, and the smell of the dump was so offensive that I wonder if the Government intends to welcome all the people at the Environmental Conference in a few weeks time with the perfumes that are emanating from that particular dump. I say this, Sir, not to be facetious because garbage has to be dumped somewhere in Barbados, but the Government has not, up to now, done what it is required to do and it has been advised to do which is to get into an arrangement to cover the top soil of the dump on a daily basis and apply a generous amount of deodorizer. I understand that in both areas, and I would like the Minister of Health not to sit down there and grin all the time but to get up and answer these things because this is constituting a major nuisance to

the people of the Arch Hall area and those who are on the leeward side of this particular dump. 1.00 p.m.

I am all too familiar with this attitude of the Government. For some years I have been seeing the Pulverization Plant and the dump at Workman's in St. George go through the same kind of negligence and insensitivity of Government. I have seen with my own eyes the size of the rodents that were leaving the Plant in Workman's, St. George in my constituency and heading for the homes of the people who live around the area.

I have witnessed other nuisances arising from these dumps. For instance, the smoke factor is another nuisance. I have mentioned smell. But what I am saying in essence is that this Government seems to be indifferent to these problems that are causing so great inconvenience to the people who live in this country and yet this same Government is the one who is going about the hosting of an environmental conference with a blithe disregard for the environmental problems that confront Barbados.

I want to say, Sir, in respect of the insecticides that are being used in agriculture – I have asked questions and I have not had any answers so I will ask the questions again because I do not intend to make any wild accusations. I understand that the pesticides and insecticides that are imported into Barbados are not subjected to the kind of investigation as to the dangers they pose because of the inadequate resources the Government has applied to them.

There are a number of things that are worth mentioning, Sir. Studies, particularly in the United States of America and Europe, have shown that these synthetic chemicals that are used for insecticides and pesticides defy proper scientific confrontation. In other words, we cannot seem to be able to do anything about them and they are being injected into the eco-system around us. They are affecting plants. There are a number of plants that we knew as children that were present in Barbados, a lot of them used for medicinal purposes, that can no longer be found in Barbados.

There are species of birds that we knew when we were boys that cannot any longer be found in Barbados, or very few. The peewhitler is one of them and they tell me of the gauling and one or two others. I am not too strong on the ornithology so I really do not know too much about that species of birds. It is common knowledge to everybody, except those on the Government side, that birds carry out a major role in the destruction of insects and pests. If the birds are destroyed, then there is no counter to the proliferation of certain insects and pests. In other words, there is a dialectical connection between all species in their life system. When we eat vegetables...

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am tired teaching these fellows, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue. Do not pay any attention to them.

Mr. L. R. TULL: But I cannot help but hearing them, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has complained of not being able to make his contribution in the normal quiet manner that is supposed to exist in the Chamber. I am asking Members not to raise their voices that loudly. Will the Honourable Member continue.

I also take it that the Honourable Member is speaking first on behalf of the Opposition as well, unlimited time. That is what it is.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Does that mean that I can talk all day, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Unlimited time.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, my reading has told me that there are 68 pesticide ingredients that cause cancer which are used in Barbados. My reading tells me also that there are over 500 chemical substances that are used in sprays, dust, aerosols, all these things that we use on a daily basis, that go into the human body and are residual, residual in the sense that they remain there. There are endless studies on this. Therefore, while the other side may think that these things are laughable, right-thinking people reflect on the fact that in recent times in Barbados we have noticed that the health profile of Barbadians has changed and that a number of illnesses and diseases that were not wreaking havoc on Barbadian people in the past, are now doing so, and a lot of answers cannot be found, so we have to search. When we search and we see the wide proliferation of pesticides, insecticides, and what research has been done on them and the effects we have seen they have had in other countries, we will know that the Government of Barbados has to get a little bit more serious than just hosting a conference for 10 days or so, clapping themselves on the back and saying, "well done", and think we go no further.

Sir, I will give you an example of what we are experiencing. We have increasing premedial larceny in Barbados. All over St. George where I come from they carry away the people's crops all the time.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I will teach you how the environment ties in with this because you do not seem to be too bright. The people carry away these crops. The crops are sprayed the very day they are stolen. They are sprayed during the day and they are stolen at night. The people who steal them put them on the market the following day. People go and buy them the following day and put them in their pots the very day or the day after. All I am saying is that this is a very real risk that is caused to unsuspecting people in this country doing something that they are doing innocently and above board so there is a threat to the health of Barbadians. These insecticides are poisonous, and they are biologically potent. But they are put in the hands of farmers across Barbados who use them indiscriminately because we believe in a culture that says that more is better. They feel that the more you apply the better it is going to work. We have all this happening at the time when the Government has starved the Agricultural Extension Services of money. The Agricultural Extension Officers are not going to the fields to advise farmers any more because they are not getting paid their travelling allowance.
1.10 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The Prime Minister says he passed two today. They must have been going to lunch. But they are not going advising farmers any more because they say the Government is not paying them their travelling allowance.

I hope that in the fullness of time what I am saying would be answered by the Government, by persons standing on their feet. But we have this situation where the Agricultural Extension Services have been severely limited by a number of factors. One is that the Government is not paying travelling allowance and the other is the fact that the Government has cut back on the vote for extension services in agriculture.

I want finally, Sir, to finish this whole concern of mine about the question of the environment by dealing with the marine waters. Some years ago, when the Barbados Labour Party was the Government, we discovered that the number of sea eggs that were being produced on the reefs of Barbados was falling. Investigation pointed to the fact that industrial waste and other effluents that were going into the sea were largely responsible for the damage that was done to the life of the sea eggs. At the time we took a decision that there should not be a reaping season for one year in order to allow the sea eggs to regenerate. This was met with a great deal of hostility and criticism by the Democratic Labour Party. They were hostile to the idea that we said there was to be a two-year season where the sea eggs could regenerate.

The evidence however, Sir, is that all across the Caribbean there are tens of thousands of meters of coral reef that are being destroyed annually as a result of these substances that are being injected into the ocean. The time really is upon us when the Government must move with a certain speed to make sure that that kind of problem is brought under control.

As I said at the beginning the whole business of sustainable development is to ensure that economic development comes about, but not at the price of the destruction of the very base on which economic development rests. If we want to see agriculture prosper again we have to deal with the problems that I have been stating in relation to agriculture. If we want to see the fishing industry prosper we have to address the problems that caused erosion of our coral reefs, the effect of fishing, erosion of beaches, even something as mundane as the smells that are prevalent on many of the beaches where visitors to Barbados frequent. We have to deal with these things as a matter of urgency.

If at the end of this Conference that is coming up, Sir, which I fervently hope – and I repeat it, Sir, in case I am misunderstood – will be a highly successful Conference for the benefit of Barbados and Barbadians, if at the end of it it would have served as a catalyst for the Government to launch a major attack on the problems that cause this ongoing degradation of our soil and water resources, then it would be of great utility.

It is also important to say finally, Sir, that the Government would do us a powerful service if it would establish a Ministry of the Environment and put together all these various units from the Ministry of Public Works where the Water Authority is, the Ministry of Health where the Environmental Engineering Unit is and the Sanitation Service Authority are located; whichever Ministry is now responsible for the National Conservation Commission. I hear another Ministry is responsible for the coastal survey. All these are scattered all over the place. I think in the interest of efficiency and economy the Government could, for a change, listen to the words of the Opposition and do something about it.

I want to make one final passing comment, Sir, and I am finished with the environment because I propose only to speak on that. But I notice that Immigration is part of this omnibus Resolution. I may not speak again in this debate and therefore I would like the Minister who is responsible for Immigration to tell the House a few things about how Matthieson got out of the island and if he had a Passport issued by the Immigration Department in Barbados. I want to know how this man was able to leave Barbados at a time when his Passport was held by the Supreme Court and when there were specific instructions

for him not to leave the jurisdiction. The Government could answer these things and save themselves and Barbadians a lot of unnecessary rumour-mongering. Let the Government come up front and tell us what is going on. Whether they do or not is a matter for them. But if they do not this issue will continue to be debated and discussed by Barbadians and no less by the Members of the Opposition Party, Sir.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker this Bill seeks the sum of \$24 million. Approximately \$7 million fall within my shadow portfolio and therefore I felt that it is only reasonable for one to expect me to make my input in this debate.

I am going to deal specifically with two areas. The area of housing as well as the area of public transport. I want to start off with the question of housing. It seems to me that Government has no proper clearly spelt out policy in respect of housing. The *ad hoc* statements which are interpreted as policy statements do not augur well for a country that is hosting the Sustainable Development Conference and which ought to understand clearly what housing means to the objectives of that Conference.

Recently, immediately after Christmas, a statement was made by the Minister responsible for Housing asking for increased rents from the persons renting the National Housing Corporation units. I deplored the call for increased rents then and I stand by that position today. I say I stand by that position today because Government is not clear, Government has not said unequivocally that it will withdraw the rent increase proposals. I call on the Minister responsible as well as the entire Cabinet to come out and make a clear statement to Barbadians in respect of the increase of house rents. I am calling on the Government to state clearly that it has no intention of supporting the Minister's announcement in respect of house rents.
1.20 p.m.

I say this because the reasons that were given for increases are not valid enough reasons. The National Housing Corporation could not be starved for money. What the National Housing Corporation is starved for is proper management. Mr. Speaker, any time you have a corporation or business that continues to fail and cannot function it is the people at the top you have to look at, only management not the people at the bottom rung of the ladder. It is the people at the top. I think it is time for people to come square with this situation and identify where the problems are that are causing this country a lot of problems.

I am saying that the Government need not increase or call on persons living in the housing areas for increased rents at this time, because the National Housing

Corporation has at its disposal the wherewithal to get money. If you were to look at Cane Garden in St. Thomas you will find there are Government houses there. And I said this before and I am going to repeat it. There are some 50 houses that are at ring beam level. Why should Government waste people's time trying to find money to complete those houses to sell? I say that is an ill-advised policy and I am calling on the Government to take the advice I have given them and to have a valuation of the structures that are there at Cane Garden and put them on sale as is, without spending one further cent. The Government would be able to get some money and the National Housing Corporation would be put in funds. I said that before and I understand the Government is prepared to take that lead.

I will go a little bit further. That would mean that that and all the other housing estates out there where the National Housing Corporation has land could follow suit. I understand there are some 600 persons renting Government spots and are in arrears and not paying for them. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the National Housing Corporation owes it to us to get behind those persons to pay their rents. I am going to tell them one way how they can do it, employ rent collectors who will go out on a weekly basis and collect from the persons and do not rely on people to come into the Corporation to pay any money.

I am saying also that rather than the Government hound down the people in the housing estates for rent that the Government could introduce a service whereby the rent collectors would go weekly to the homes of tenants and collect the rents. Mr. Speaker, the reason I am saying this is that I have observed over the last couple of years where the National Housing Corporation fell down. There are some rent collecting offices erected in some of these housing estates and the National Housing Corporation depends on persons to come to the rent collecting offices to pay. Now what happens if rain falls on a particular day, nobody is going to leave his house to bother about going to pay rent. That means that by the next week the rent would have accumulated and that is why the arrears continue to build up. I am saying that the Government can take some advice on this, have rent collectors who will go around to each and every unit barring those that are Government deducted and collect the rent so that the tenants will see the presence of the rent collector and pay their rents.

Now I also want to say that the Government must understand that there should be a systematic debushing and maintenance programme of all their estates. We are talking about environmental matters. It is a disgrace to Barbados when you go into housing areas and see areas full of bush causing mosquitoes and people suffering by catching dengue fever. Mr. Speaker, it does not say much for

Barbados and I am going to call on the Government to understand that people live in the housing areas and they deserve better. Paint the houses. Why are you collecting rents and asking for increased rents when you are not painting the houses, when you are not treating the houses for termites, when you are not looking after the plumbing aspects? You are not looking after other matters relating to the asbestos roofs and people are suffering ill-health.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying this. If you do those things then you are justified in asking for increased rents. The Government must understand and I have heard this policy – let me warn the Government now. This policy which I have heard is that if you have arrears the Government is not going to repair your house. It is a policy of sheer madness because, Mr. Speaker, if the National Housing Corporation fails to repair a house, let us say there was a defective board in the floor, and one of the occupants or anyone at all visiting that house sustains an injury it is the National Housing Corporation that stands liable. That is the law. Do not question that. Owner's liability. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, National Housing Corporation should be insured against such incidents.

Mr. Speaker, there are some owners in the housing areas where some septic tanks are left open and I would like the Government to understand that it is still the responsibility of the landlord to make sure that open septic tanks are ...

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I thought I misunderstood the law.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what has the Honourable Member risen?

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: A point of order. I am sorry. I think I heard the Speaker indicate that it is the owner's liability. I just want to indicate as I understand it, that it is the occupier's liability unless the law has changed recently. It is not the owner's liability. When you rent a house it is not the owner's liability, it is the occupier's liability as I understand the law to be. So I do not want you to continue to mislead yourself.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that lawyers and judges differ on opinions. I am sure that on this occasion I will have to err with myself.

Mr. Speaker, seriously, I think that Honourable Members on that side understand what I am saying. How could you ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. I am hoping to get some quiet. I think you can continue.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, what I would like the National Housing Corporation and the Government to understand is that any landlord owes it to himself to keep his property in a good state of repair. That is the responsibility of the landlord. That is why I said that it is a matter of policy when it is told to the tenants that because they are in arrears with their rent that they will be denied any repair to their home. I am only saying to the Government that it is wrong. I am calling on the Government and whoever made that announcement and issued that directive to withdraw it. It is wrong.
1.30 p.m.

Sir, I am going to say this. The Government cannot build all the houses that are required for renting. In the light of this, Government should make sure that incentives or encouragement is given to persons who are willing to build houses to rent. That is part of Government's policy. Let the private sector support the public sector. That is what it should be. But what has happened? Government has removed the incentives for this sort of participation by private developers. Government has withdrawn the allowances that were given to people who built houses to even rent. You cannot even claim for any repairs that are done to your house. That was an allowance that was given and it is now being withdrawn. I am saying that is wrong and the time has come that Government should recognise that this has been a disincentive. There are lots of persons out there who would like to build houses to rent to assist the Government, but that has been one of the problems. I want the Government to understand that there is nothing wrong in trying to encourage people. On the one hand you are encouraging people to help the housing situation, but where are the incentives? These are disincentives I say and, therefore, I am asking the Government to look at this particular question.

Now I turn to the question of public transport. There is in this Bill a sum of \$1.4 million to subsidize the Transport Board. Mr. Speaker, when the Estimates were laid in here last year, the sum of \$100 was included in the Estimates. I immediately inquired of the Government whether it was going to privatise or not. I brought Parliamentary Questions in here as early as October 1992 asking the Government to say whether it was going to privatise by January 31st and, if not, by the 31st March, 1993. The question was not answered. I am saying that the public deserves better treatment.

Sir, I am calling on the Government to make a clear statement to say whether or not it is going to privatise the Transport Board. Do not let us go on guessing and asking questions. I know there are certain signs which tells me

that the Government has no intention whatsoever of privatising the Transport Board. I want this to come from the Government. Be bold enough to come and make this statement. I do not mind if you come and say that you are going to do it. After all, everybody has now grown accustomed to hearing the Government coming and repeating some of the things that I have advocated. I am saying that there are people who are interested in knowing what is the future of the public transport. If this cloud continues to hang over the workers of the Transport Board and the traveling public, then we have a very serious problem. The Government must be bold enough to come out and say. I have on the Order Paper one such question. I want to know if the Transport Board was making money. The Minister and the Government have not answered me that question. Why should I be asked today to vote \$1.4 million when I have asked since last year November a question if the Transport Board is making money? The Government has not even treated me with the common courtesy of saying "yes" or "no". Yet, you are coming for \$1.4 million. Mr. Speaker, that cannot be right. It cannot be fair to us. If the Government has answered the question, then at least we would know what to expect. But here now even when I recalled in a debate early last year that an Honourable Member said that they have now cleared all the bills and that everything was clear and pure. One would have expected if one interpreted that statement that all is well with the Transport Board and that the arrears have been paid up and they are starting with a clean slate.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. I am calling on the Government to be frank with the public of Barbados and tell us what is the true position with the Transport Board. Let us know what is the true position. We know that it has problems with financing. But let us know the true position so that we could best make recommendations to bail it out and assist in the proper running of the Transport Board. There are some problems that I know will cause the Transport Board headaches. They have to properly route the buses. They have got some Mercedes up there that are no-go. They are not best suited for Barbados' transport. I can tell the Prime Minister, if he is listening, the Leyland buses are the best short mode of transport for the Transport Board.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that some of the lucrative routes have already been given away by this administration. Since you have given away some of the lucrative routes, you must be prepared to ask for a subsidy or to subsidize the Transport Board. I am going to tell the Government what it can do. Look at some of those routes that you have given away and try and find buses of the size that can negotiate the areas. We know that you cannot put an Omnibus in some areas. But I am asking the Government to consider smaller buses operated by the Transport Board to put on those routes and you will bring in the money.

Do not waste anymore time. I am not going for any report. Do not let anyone conduct any study and recommend to you that you must replace the ZRs and the minibuses for whatever reason by 80 larger Omnibuses. That is sheer madness and do not take any advice from them at all. If you take the advice, it will show that you are confusing your policy because the Government has gone ahead and gotten rid of some of these routes and now the first report of the study is out.

Mr. Speaker, what we are being told about the Transport Board by anyone conducting a study in Barbados today is what we know. Studies on top of studies were done over twenty years. That is nothing new. It is cold soup being warmed up. It is a waste of money in conducting a report. All you have to do is to go back to those old reports. Several reports are there with the same thing. The study is going to rehash everything that was in those reports. We have got to understand where we are going.

Sir, I am going to say this to the Government. If the Board cannot make money or break even and it cannot run efficiently, get rid of the directors. No hold bars on this because those are the ones that are responsible for the unsuccessfulness of the Corporation. Get the politics out of it. We have to learn to manage the Transport Board efficiently. I am hearing all this talk that someone is competing. Competition is good. As soon as there is competition, those who are responsible for studying the report must look and see how best Government can find a bus that is competitive and look at the routes that used to be lucrative that have been given away.
1.40 p.m.

I am calling on the Government once again to look at the setting up a Public Transport Authority, but, as I said, in that Authority the Government must be prepared to take advice and understand that the regulatory functions should be left to this Authority.

I am also calling on the Government not to get involved in certain things. The Ministry must have, or should have, less direct influence on the Authority. Right now there is too much interference by the Ministry responsible for Transport in the day-to-day affairs of the Transport Board. Let the Transport Board do its job and let the Ministry take a back seat. As long as this interference continues, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to get out of this serious problem.

I am worried, because this has cost all of us in here, and the public at large, large sums of money that could be used in other areas. I am not satisfied that I have to come here to support a Resolution for \$1.4 million for the Transport Board and at the same time the Minister who

introduced this Bill did not say -- and I hope it is not too late -- what is the present financial status of the Transport Board. We need to know that. We have to know it! The public demands that. Do not come here for a subsidy. We were told that as the subsidy was reduced year after year there would come a time when the Transport Board will be operating on its own, without a subsidy, and even making money. Have we reached that stage? Must I be asking that question, Mr. Speaker? That information should have been available. I can say I glean from these figures that the answer is no.

I also want to know if the \$1.4 million is taking into consideration all of the outstanding commitments, like National Insurance, severance and the like. -I have had this experience before where a Resolution was brought in here seeking a sum of money for the Transport Board, but a couple weeks later it was followed by another Resolution seeking additional sums, and that was not all. I want to know the true position. Nothing short of this information will satisfy me or the public of Barbados. The Government knows it. Let them understand it. The Transport Board should supply this information.

I am going to say this to the Government. Be very careful. The Transport Board's records leaves a lot to be desired. All is not well. You cannot even keep a tab on the number of miles travelled, because some of the speedometers are not working. Let me understand what we are doing. We have problems here, and it is no sense somebody running down public transport, because I have called on the Government to retain some of the buses. That is the call from the Barbados Labour Party. We do not believe that any full scale or wholesale disposal of the Transport Board will find favour with us. We do not believe that is right. We understand the Government might want to dispose of some of the non-profit-making routes, but I am saying that the Government owes this country something to make sure that public transport is not entirely put in the hands of the private sector.

I am going to say something to you. A couple of days ago there was a problem in neighbouring Jamaica where, because a Minister made a statement which the private operators felt was unsavoury, they decided to put the country in complete disarray. They withdrew their services. I am going to say this to the Government. Please take stock. When you go out there and give a complete monopoly to the private concessionaires, this is what could happen and bring about a crisis. The public transport strike in Jamaica a couple of days ago brought Jamaica to its knees and there is a lesson for us. So I am going to say to the Government, you may privatise, but hands off the Transport Board. Look at the problems, iron them out and make sure that you can correct and make the Transport Board a viable, efficient, well-operated organisation. That is what I want.

The time has come when we have to understand that when we think we are propping up these institutions, because we have to find a job for someone who is favourable to our political cause, those days are over. It is costing us, the taxpayers, a lot of money and a lot of headaches, Mr. Speaker.

I would have thought that when I saw this Bill that Transport Board would not have been mentioned. I am afraid it is mentioned here. I want the Government to look at the suitability of the buses, look and see that they are unsuitable for some routes and make sure you address that particular problem. Look at the types of buses and the routing, which means that you must look at the timetabling and the scheduling. All those things must be looked at. You must look at the proper maintenance of your buses. You have three depots now and you have technical people, but you have to look at the whole problem. There are many defects which have been identified and it is best for us to seek the best technical and engineering advice in order to deal with them.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about public service vehicles and we cannot take this

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one minute to wind up.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: aspect of the Transport Board lightly.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I hope I will get the Government to come out and make the statement. I promised the residents of Thornbury Hill and the surrounding areas that I will draw to the Government's attention their plight. It is not sufficient for the Minister to say that he is siding with them, I want the Government to declare and say that they will not give any permission for the reopening of the chemical plant at Thornbury Hill. No wishy washy statement will do. I am supporting the residents of Thornbury Hill, and the Barbados Labour Party joins with me and all right thinking persons in supporting them in their motion and their request. I hope the Government will come out clearly and say no so that the residents will know from the Government once and for all what the position is. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that with that the Government will take stock and issue the appropriate statement at the right time.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, this Bill....

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the Honourable Member likely to go beyond 2 o'clock?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, definitely.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: In the circumstances it may not be worthwhile to begin at six minutes to 2 o'clock.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will take my full half hour.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I think, Mr. Speaker, it will be appropriate at this point to take lunch.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to move that the sitting be suspended until 3 o'clock.

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, this Bill gives me an opportunity to deal with a variety of matters and the speech I am going to make is not necessarily connected by any common theme.

I understand that part of the reason for this supplementary is to assist with ensuring arrangements are made for the Global Conference in April and May and to ensure that Barbados' image at that Conference is kept to a reasonable standard. At the same time, I think there is some evidence of shoddy planning for that conference. It appears that the decision to have the conference was taken without a great degree of thought and the conference has virtually been foisted on Barbados and we are now scrambling to put all the logistics in place to make sure that it is a reasonable success.

If that information that I have is correct, then I do not think we should be amazed at present events because the Centre itself for which we are called on in this Bill to vote money was conceived in haste and confusion. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that there was a dichotomy of opinion on the Front Bench of the Government when we first voted money for Sherbourne as to the proper purpose to which those facilities would have been put.

On this side, I think I have a duty to say that we are concerned that the Opposition will be expected to play a supportive role during the conference and to act in the national interest while at the same time as we have those expectations the Government on its side has not condescended to share with the Opposition information

about the Conference. I have to say that we think it is time a full statement be made from that side explaining the ramifications, purpose and implications in such a conference, not only to Parliament but to the public at large.

Now, Sir, I wish to give an assurance that in my political career I do not believe I have done any act of which I have been ashamed of in almost 18 years in Parliament. I do not intend in the future to do any act for which any opprobrium can be levelled against me; but I want to make it clear today that unless the situation of the Mangrove Dump in St. Thomas is satisfactorily resolved speedily, I will give the Government an assurance that I will lead demonstrations of the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts at the Global Conference this year to demonstrate the absolute disgust of my constituents with the nuisance with which they have been asked to put up for the last 6 years.

I want it clearly understood, Mr. Speaker, I am not mincing my words. I am not being unpatriotic. I am not short of nationalistic fervour; but at the same time I have to bring home to the authorities in Government in this country that there are people in the Constituency of St. Thomas who are suffering. Not just now. They have been suffering for 6 years. I have tried to dramatise it already by participating in a demonstration at the site. I will dramatise it if necessary at Sherbourne on an occasion during the conference unless steps are taken by this Government to resolve the problems at the Mangrove Dump. Let that be clearly understood.

Sir, on February 26, I would have been in Parliament for 18 years. There is no event in my parliamentary career that has caused me more emotional distress and has evoked in me a greater sense of helplessness, not hopelessness, than the problem at Mangrove. You have heard me in here, Mr. Speaker, ask questions, bring resolutions and the matter persists. Sir, if you do not travel Highway 2A frequently I understand that you yourself would not have any appreciation of what the people down wind of that plant are experiencing.

I have to give a short history. They will say that the site was acquired by the Barbados Labour Party in 1985. That is true. The site was not opened for use as a landfill until 1987. Ever since then, that dump has been run and managed by the Sanitation Service Authority under the aegis of the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Labour Party. Ever since 1987, there have been problems ever so often during a year. The most persistent problem is one of offensive smells but each year we have also had fires at the site of the dump. The fires can be anticipated from about May throughout what the old people call "the hot weather season", from May to about September.

There was one dump that was filled to capacity. It overflowed and they had to find an alternative. I spoke against that site and then I was persuaded that there was no other site immediately available and I understood the position of Government but when the new site was opened 2 years ago the Minister of Health at the time gave the country the assurance – and was seen on television the Saturday night – that their problems of *malodorous effluvia* would cease. Those were not his words. That is my paraphrasing of his speech. He gave the assurance that the problems would cease, in good faith. I am not saying otherwise. The Minister himself wrote me as to what they were doing. I went and had a look. I had a tour of the site. They put down all kinds of pipes and covered with clay, brick and so on and they tried to provide a service, I think the phrase is, of "state of the art" dimensions in the expectation that the problem would cease.

3.10 p.m.

Now, even though in our system of ministerial responsibility the Minister has to take responsibility and so on, when that second site was opened I was satisfied that the Ministry was serious and all they were saying was said *bona fide*. The problem has not been so much the Minister as the officials in the Sanitation Service Authority who have the day-to-day responsibility for running the dump. There is great inefficiency and ignorance within that Department that precludes proper management of the dump.

I cannot believe that we can have a facility that for now 6 years has caused continuous annoyance and inconvenience and we are unable to solve the problem. I do not believe that we are so backward as a people. We have sent people from the Sanitation Service Authority abroad on courses and yet we cannot get it managed. You may well agree with me that the inability to manage even a dump is a measure of the total incompetence of the whole Government. With that I would not quarrel. But, Sir, it is a question for great concern.

I have never appealed to the Prime Minister in regard to this matter and I am going to appeal to the Prime Minister today to call in the officials of the Sanitation Service Authority ...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Ministers cannot get them to function. I want the Prime Minister now to step in. One of the functionaries in that Authority knows the Prime Minister well. One of the operatives at the Authority is close to the Prime Minister. I believe that particular operative has some solutions for the problem because when he has been given responsibility to deal with the dump

we have not been heard to complain. But, on the other hand, I am equally satisfied –

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I did not give you notice of any names so I cannot call the name. You must read the spin from the fingers.

On the other hand, Sir, I am equally satisfied that the Manager of the Sanitation Service Authority is a thorough-going incompetent and should be dismissed. Pay him off his severance benefits. Any head of a department who is unable to run a simple dump for 6 years, who has caused physical hurt to my constituents of Arch Hall particularly, and Bennetts to a lesser extent, does not deserve to remain in the position of manager. Transfer him to another department. It is too harsh to say "fire him". I am not in that. Put him somewhere else but he cannot run the Sanitation Service Authority. Sir, if he cannot run a dump the question arises what can he run? But I am appealing to the Prime Minister today for the first time in this matter to try and find out why they have not been able to solve the problem at Mangrove.

It is not only an inconvenience and a nuisance for my constituents. When that dump is acting up and the smells are blowing west, you can smell the foulness of the dump as far down as Sunset Crest and Sunset Ridge. I can speak to the Prime Minister personally about people from Sunset Ridge. I would not call their names in here, eminent people, who have complained to me about the smells reaching as far down as Sunset Ridge in the tourist belt. These are no exaggerations. The present Minister of Health himself knows that within the last two weeks that dump has been acting up and smelling bad.

Sir, it is not a problem that anyone has exaggerated. Some of my constituents have suffered respiratory problems and have had to attend for medical assistance. I went so far, because I was so disgusted by the situation, as to file criminal cases against the Sanitation Service Authority. We thought we had made a point in filing the cases and the residents asked me to withdraw them. Do not worry to prosecute them. I withdrew them. I have a civil case drafted, 4 pages, in which I want damages under Rylands and Fletcher from the Sanitation Service Authority. I have been asked to hold that. I am entitled to nuisance damages and Rylands and Fletcher. The people of St. Thomas have tried to be as reasonable as possible in this matter but I fear we are not being met half way by the Sanitation Service Authority.

You know, Sir, one year, I think it might have been year before the last, that dump burnt for 10 days. It was a national issue and the then Board of the Sanitation Service

Authority never so much as went up there to see what was happening. You hear me, Sir? The members of the Board cared so much about the dump burning for 10 days and the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts being smoked out, that not one of them, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, none of the Board members, went up there to see what the problem was. Now, what are we left to infer? That they do not care about the people. I say today that this is the last time I am speaking in here about the dump. From hereon now it is "ruption". From here on it is "mas" outside.

Sir, what they need? That area needs, in addition to the other thing that the Honourable Member for St. George South mentioned, and I thank him for putting it in the records of this House, the daily covering, and so on, the place needs to be properly policed. I will give an example. There was a time about 1988/89 when I convened a meeting of the residents in a church hall in Arch Hall one night. We invited the then Minister. He could not come. He sent a number of officials, including the Manager of the Sanitation Service Authority and people from the Environmental Health Unit to the meeting. It was quite lively, if I use a neutral word. But as a result of that meeting we took certain decisions as a group, one of which was that the Sanitation Service Authority would put in almost continuous security in the shape of security guards policing, not only the immediate site of the landfill, but the approaches to it because what happens – and I want to be fair to the Sanitation Authority – is that sometimes people instead of going into the dump and discharging their refuse they will stop the truck up the hill, go into the grass-plot and dump fish offal, chicken offal and whatever about the place and after two or three days the thing smells to high heaven. But you can control that because if you had security guards on a 24-hour basis policing the area, you would be able to intercept persons who were bent on illegal dumping.

3.20 p.m.

You know, Sir, that we left the meeting, they speedily put in the guard system I give them that and the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts had no complaint for about 6 months. When they found that it was working well and it was not smelling and burning up and so on, they withdrew the security guard. So we went back to a state of...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Right. Do as you like. That was shortsighted nonsense.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But the Government has to find the money. The Government has been throwing away money in Sherbourne. The Government has not been

buying their own capital equipment for use on the dump. They prefer to pay a firm a million dollars. If you do not have equipment, okay. But I do not know how much it would cost to put in a rotating system of security guards but it cannot be \$300 000 a year. Find the money.

What I am saying is the system has worked in the past. It can work Minister of Health but you have to find some money. The Prime Minister has gone out now but I want to beg him to give you the money. I am going to beg the Prime Minister to give the Ministry of Health the additional funds to pay for continuous rotation of security guards. I have made my position clear on the dump and I wish to move on to a couple of things in the time that is left. Twice in this House within the last 18 months I have called on the Government, and been supported by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, to contend with the International Monetary Fund that it is absolutely essential that some money be put into the NCC to ensure that the environment of this country is kept tidy and as far as possible disease free.

I pointed out — I think it was during the last Budget Speech — that if we are going to say that we are a country offering tourism services and welcome visitors from outside to Barbados then it behoves us — just as you would in your own house in respect of visitors coming to you — to keep the house of Barbados clean and tidy. I pointed out last year that if this were not done, if money was not spent in terms of maintaining proper hygiene in Barbados that we would suffer precisely from mosquitoes. I used that example during the debate in here. What happened? We have more mosquitoes now than we ever had before. It gave me dengue fever in November. I have not even recovered. All down in Old Year's I was still having the effects of it.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Who said so? Me? Not me? The Minister of Foreign Affairs is the Minister of Foreign so I would expect anything strange from him.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We will talk about that later on. I see \$1 million in this supplementary for the NCC. It seems to me to be too little and too late but at least I hope the Members of Cabinet will now persuade the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister to let this be an ongoing thing. Do not let us try and just clean up Barbados because some foreign people are coming here between April and May because all of us have to live here after that. When the foreigners go back in the middle of May 250 000 Barbadians still have to live here and we want a clean environment. I think it is money well spent in the

interest of sanitation and hygiene if Government can keep people at the NCC employed to debush and keep the drains clear and so on, on a year round basis and no *ad hoc* business.

I am not supporting any resolution that is in here just on an *ad hoc* basis to make Barbados look pretty for a few foreign people coming from outside. I am not in that. I hope it is going to be a permanent feature from here on in of Government's Estimates and Budgets.

Sir, the third aspect of my speech that I wish to address is that area of the Bill dealing with the Judiciary and so on. As long as I have been shadowing this Ministry the Ministry of Justice and whatever it is called, I have tried not to personalize the matter of the Judiciary. But I have to draw to the House's attention that there is a situation with one judge which is shocking, disgraceful and shameful. Those who have responsibility, on that side should look at the matter dispassionately and deal with it.

It does not enhance the independence of the Judiciary which is a fundamental precept in our system to have a judge acting for 5 years and being denied the perquisites of office which people who have come after him get by reason of substantive possession.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not know if it is deliberate worthlessness or not, Sir. I think it is something of which we cannot be proud.

We have had in this country a tradition of judicial officer against whom little adverse could be said. That has been our tradition. We cannot now dilute or devalue the Judiciary by seeming to make others permanent while we ask somebody to do a job on a temporary basis, and he has been doing it satisfactorily. I do not know of any complaints and I do not think it would be proper for me to mention any. But as far as I know there has been no quarrel, no complaint with the performance of duty and yet this person cannot get a permanent appointment. Why can they not appoint him on contract? If you do not want to put him in the establishment as in the Estimates and so on he can be a contracted person for 3, 4 years whatever. But I think it is unfair, it is discriminatory and it is...

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not know any more about it. I just feel that as a matter of principal looking at the thing dispassionately we have this disparity among the judges and it is not fair that one person should be asked to act almost inevitably like he is in Hollywood discharging the functions like the others but not getting some of the benefits to which they are entitled.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Right. Therefore put him on contract. It is a question of age. He has been there. You know. You have kept him on. That is just like Grosvenor. It came after our time.

The Attorney-General is not here. I wanted to address some remarks about the Magistracy but when we get into Committee I will raise them, Sir. I am very, very concerned about what is happening in the Judiciary as I have outlined. I think it is a scar on the Judiciary. It is a block and it is something that we should seek to rectify. It probably is an oversight and nobody has addressed his attention to it. If somebody has been very blind for 5 years then I think it is time they take off the blinkers and do what is right.

I see here in these pages that some of this money is going towards the payment of increased utilities. I hope that the Prime Minister of Barbados now understands, by this Bill that he has brought here, how the cost of utilities has escalated in Barbados for the average man in the street: He has come here for us to vote money to pay for utilities between now and the end of the year for virtually every Government Department because it says in the note, because of the escalation in the cost of utilities. I want him to understand how the cost of utilities, and I know I am speaking for you, has affected your pocket and mine.
3.30 p.m.

It has caught up with them, Sir. They run the various Government Departments and they have to come in here now in January 1994 for more money to pay for the telephones, the lights and the water. That is what is happening out there to the man in the street. They are suffering under the burden of increased costs in utilities imposed by that heartless, anti-worker and wicked Government. Heartless Government, Sir. I withdraw wicked.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They do not price utilities. But they do not send anybody into the utilities hearings to appear on behalf of the people. When we were in Government the Attorney General used to go down and contest at the hearing. The Government has now withdrawn and the utilities can do as they like. They have no opposition. Mr. McClean is doing a professional job.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I have gone past my time. I will have an opportunity to speak to individual heads. I wanted to draw attention to those matter which are really eating out at my insides. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I propose to spend my half hour on the two main subjects which were addressed by Honourable Members here today, mainly by the Member for St. George South and the Member for St. Thomas. I have taken quite a few notes and I intend to address most of the points raised by them.

Indeed, Sir, after I have addressed a few specifically I would like to state what is and what the future holds for the whole area of solid waste and garbage as we know it in little Barbados.

First of all the question of the pulverisation plant which resides in the constituency of the Member for St. George South, separated by 9 feet from St. George North. The pulverisation plant is to go back into operation to pulverise the garbage which we hope will help to relieve the pile up of garbage which goes to Mangrove.

Aside.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: It is in his constituency but believe it or not any smell that comes from there would come into St. George North.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I would like to make is the question of the South Coast Sewerage Project. It is intended that that project starts in this year of 1994. Already the Ministry of Housing and Lands has started its work on easements and acquisitions so action should be speeded up. The critical time period in any given year will be the beginning of the Financial Year which is just a matter of weeks away.

The Member for St. Thomas, Arch Hall and Bennetts, and the operations which started there in October 1986. You know I should know because they closed the other one right above my house which you know still smokes occasionally, so I suffered from that one way before now and still on occasions when the smoke comes, because you know my house is the first house below it.

I cannot therefore say, Mr. Speaker, that I am not aware of the problems being faced by the people in Bennetts and Arch Hall. Indeed, because of the proximity, I know many of them on a personal basis and I was up there up to last Saturday morning because to be truthful when I was going across Highway 2A to check, I could detect a smell so I said I wanted to go on the site and see where it was coming from. There was indeed this fire which had occurred and had been burns i i l or a couple

days. Sir, I will admit the garbage is unsightly now. It can now be seen from Highway 2A.

Mr. Speaker, that is only part of the story because during the past 5 to 6 months the Sanitation Department has been trying to cover the garbage on a daily basis. They have stationed an open truck, which is commonly referred to as a front end loader, there on a daily basis to cover the garbage as it is placed there.

Now one may argue and one may say, well maybe we do not have enough top soil in Barbados to continue to cover these land fills. Maybe it is the thickness of the layout. I do not know that. The technicians will have to tell me if there is a problem with that.

Mr. Speaker, the recent fire which I said continued for a duration of 2 days but during those 2 days that was enough to create a problem. As I drove by on Saturday I could see where the fire overlapped the hedges. Guys were there with hoses still trying to put it out because the crazy thing about this kind of garbage is that once it starts to bum it seeps and it goes down and down and maybe we will always have problems and it will never stop burning. Literally that is what is said, that landfills never stop burning.

The problem mentioned by the Member for St. Thomas about illegal dumping. Mr. Speaker, the problem of illegal dumping of material and I know there is some validity in the employment of guards but because of the terrain, because of the lack of lighting throughout the whole area, I do not know if some of those guards will want to stand up at night when some of those trucks are coming down. They may be fearful for their lives because some of the people who set about to do illegal dumping, whether it is at Mangrove, Waterford Bottom, or any other place, once they have decided they are dumping, they dump. Maybe we need a little more than security guards.

The other problem which a serious attempt has been made to solve, Mr. Speaker, is the whole question of the leachate from the old landfill which was used but the new landfill which is being constructed with its clay and its pipes intended to take off that leachate so that it does not get into the other area mentioned by the Member for St. George South or into the water system. It is intended to take off that leaching so that it does not get into the other area mentioned by the Member for St. George South into the water system. No matter what we try to do some will eventually and I am a little concerned about that. Some seepage will get into the system no matter where we have the dump because of the small terrain in the country.

3.40 p.m.

The other point that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the Vector Control Division of the Ministry of Health

does bate that particular landfill on a regular basis. The number of rats has increased. I have not heard from any of your people and you know that I know quite a few of them. I have not heard the complaints that they had as many rats as years ago, so there has been some improvement in that area.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, is that we are into this area of landfills where we are talking about life spans of five years. In 1985 it was projected that the new one would last from 1986 to 1991. That was filled up in 1990 in four years, one year off our projected time. We are now considering that the new one will last another 4 to 5 years. Mr. Speaker, then one has to ask what happens next? Now we have had only recently the problem of the fire at the plant in Christ Church. We have heard the Member for St. Michael South East state emphatically that he will support the people up there for not having the plant reopened. I have read that there was some discussion about possibly putting the plant on another site and nobody wanted it in St. Lucy. Nobody wanted it in St. Philip, Christ Church, St. George or St. Michael. The same problem we have with that, Mr. Speaker, is coming forward with the landfills. We will have to find a site. Mr. Speaker, while all of this was going on the Government was not just sitting down and not trying to come up with some solution to the problem. Indeed, the Inter-American Development Bank had given a Japanese grant of some US\$1.5 million with the Barbados Government making a contribution of \$230 000 to pay the consultants to try to make some recommendations as to what they see as the future for landfills and solid waste disposal in Barbados. The contract was awarded and the people have just submitted their report. I am going to give this Honourable House the preliminary information of that report before I have even finalised it and submitted it to Cabinet, because I think that it is relevant to the discussion we are having here today.

Mr. Speaker, this is what the proposal is saying. The proposal is calling for a sanitary landfill, believe it or not and I want the Member for St. Thomas to hear this, on the same site because they do not foresee that anybody else will accept another one at their site. But we will have to look for a site of 108 acres and it will last for 22 years they say. If we install it, this should last for 22 years from 1997 to 2018. The question is: After 2018 and look around at the 2018ers, will we find another 108 acre site? The alternative is in the area of possible incineration. Incineration – grand idea! The slight problem, as it is seen so far, is the projected cost and the anticipated cost of about US\$40 a tonne of garbage just to do the incineration. That has nothing to do with equipment or people. Well, if we deal with approximately 400 tonnes a day and multiply \$40 by 400, you will find that will bring us in the vicinity of US\$16 000 a day. Forty dollars is the quotation. With approximately 360 days in the given year, that will run

you about US\$4.8 million for the year or in round figures about \$9 000' to \$10 000. I am using the cost based on what was given to me.

Now the question is we have to look at the capacity. I do not know because I have not yet looked at it and the experts have not looked at it. I am now asking them to say what capacity they can provide within an incinerator. I am just giving you the total figure of just using it. But I do not know if they can provide one that can handle 400 tonnes a day. As I said, the alternative will be that on a cycle you will have to be looking at someplace to create 108 acres, as they are suggesting, to handle the amount of garbage that they have projected with a 40 feet pile up in the air. Therefore, what I am really doing is preparing the community that something has to be done somewhere. If one is not on and the other is not on and we cannot go other than St. Thomas...what?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of elucidation, Sir. I did not make this very clear when I spoke. But now that the Minister is speaking, let me just assure him that this side is determined that that site at Mangrove will have to come to an end in the event of a Labour Party Government. That will have to cease. Those people have put up with too much, Sir.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: I will have to sell you my house. In all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to give Parliament the benefit of that information for consideration. You can think about it because, as I said, I have not even at this stage done an analysis of the report. I have just read the report and looked at some of the decisions inside to do some quick calculations within my head knowing what I know about the particular dump.
3.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I would like therefore that just as we have to consider sites in terms of the McBride incident, or any industrial plant, like most other countries we have a problem. If one would have gone around the New York area, around what was then Idlewilde, now Kennedy Airport, many years ago, that whole area is a land refill/reclaimed area. The Honourable Member would know, because he used to frequent it. It was all birds and garbage for about 15 years, but the thing about that is there were no houses so it really did not bother anyone, other than those who might have been passing on the then Belt Parkway. But we do not have that luxury in Barbados, Mr. Speaker. We have no great open area, so wherever we go, if we have to go, at any time when we go we will be near to somebody. That is the problem. So we have to face this not as you on that side and we on this side, because neither you on that side nor we on this side could create 10 thousand additional hectares of land overnight to add to the size of Barbados and thereby give us a plan. So we have to be mature about this.

Aside.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: But wherever he has land there are houses all around it and on it.

Aside.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I will give this Honourable House the promise that I will in due course, when I would have had time to study the report and would have received further comparison and analysis, the comparison between incineration and the landfill, given the factors in terms of the volume, *et cetera*, advise Honourable Members. I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, if and when we get around to Estimates and I am still here holding this portfolio, will remind me and ask me about it.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I am getting into this debate primarily because of the position taken by the initial speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George South, followed by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, who raised questions concerning the Conference which is to be held in Barbados from April 26 to May 6 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, from April 26 to May 6 of this year there will be a Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados. I think it is important that the House fully understand that this is a United Nations Conference, this is a conference of the United Nations, it is not a conference that Barbados is staging. The Honourable Member who spoke first for the Opposition raised a question as to how come Parliament had not been as yet informed about the Conference. To the extent that that is relevant, let me say that the Honourable Member, in this Bill for additional appropriations, would not have found any reference to the Global Conference because within a very short time, maybe as early as next week, this Honourable House will be asked to address the issue of such funds as will be required to assist in the staging of that Conference here in Barbados.

I do not propose now to go into great detail, but it is proposed on that occasion when such a Resolution or other legislation should come to this Honourable House to go into great detail about what is required for the conference. To the extent that there is reference in these Estimates...

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. I do not want to interrupt the Minister, but perhaps he could address his attention to page 4 of the Explanatory Notes, because there is money here now, today, for the same

thing, paying civil servants and other things. Conference Secretariat to Global Conference and so on.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I did not intend to suggest that the Honourable Members did not have a basis for raising the issue. That is not my intent. My intent is to make the point that we intend, in answer to the question raised by the Honourable Member, to discuss fully and completely all the issues surrounding the Global Conference when we came for the funding, which we shall come for, in addition to whatever is here. There is a necessity to come to this Honourable House for funds related to the Conference *per se*, and it was felt that we would wish and the House would wish to have a full debate discussing the Conference in its entirety.

Nonetheless, I wish to put on record that it is not true that there is any National Committee that has not met. There is a certain silliness in any concept that there could have been a National Committee established for the co-ordination of this United Nations Conference and that it would not have met. I was a little disappointed, to go no higher, that the Honourable Member for St. George South would allow to fall from his mouth words to suggest that any Government of Barbados would establish a National Committee to deal with a Conference of such magnitude and that that Committee would not have met. In truth, what the Cabinet agreed to very early after the United Nations had passed the relevant Resolution agreeing that the Global Conference would be held in Barbados was the creation of a Secretariat for the Conference. That Secretariat is in the form of a Minister, who at the time it was established was in the Prime Minister's Office and what the Minister of State and who now holds the portfolio of Minister responsible for the Environment, among other subjects. That Minister has had executive responsibility for the planning of the co-ordination of the Conference from the very beginning. The Minister has a Secretariat, working alongside his Ministry, which was established back in 1993. That Secretariat is headed by the Minister himself and there are a number of senior officers, including the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry responsible for the Environment, that have responsibility for specific areas. There is a Conference Co-ordinator, a Technical Co-ordinator, a Foreign Relations Co-ordinator, an Accommodations Co-ordinator, a Transport Co-ordinator, a Public Relations Officer and a Conference Officer. That is without prejudice to, but in assistance with, the United Nations Preparatory Secretariat of the United Nations itself, which is an ongoing United Nations body that is preparing for this conference. This secretariat from Barbados is working in close co-operation with the Secretariat of the United Nations that is doing the preparation for the Conference.

It is not a CARI-COM conference hosted by Barbados, it is not a Barbados conference called by the- Prime

Minister, it is a United Nations Conference and the United Nations is making the preparations for the Conference itself. Barbados is making the preparations for the holding and the hosting of the Conference.

4.00 p.m.

To that extent, all of the agencies in Barbados have been brought into operation since it is a United Nations Conference. There is a subcommittee of the Cabinet which is responsible for overseeing the preparations, of which the Minister of Foreign Affairs is the Chairman. That Subcommittee is separate and apart from but is working with the Secretariat. There is a massive number of people and organisations that have been involved in the preparation of the Conference and I can speak, for example, of our having had a briefing meeting for all of the Heads of diplomatic missions in Barbados, all the Heads of international organisations functioning in Barbados and all of the Non-Governmental Organisations which are functioning in Barbados. All of these have had separate meetings at which the Minister of Foreign Affairs has briefed the various sectors as to what arrangements have been made so far.

I can speak to this, Mr. Speaker, because I myself participated with the Minister responsible for the Environment in the briefing sessions for the Heads of Missions or the Heads of international organisations. I have put the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Barbados on the alert that the number one priority in that Ministry, both in Barbados and in our far-flung missions overseas...

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: We are running a much more competent operation than you did, but don't let us get into that. I am hoping that the Opposition will not resort to its usual practice of running down and pulling down and tearing down. I hope the other Members of the Opposition will not fall prey to the unstudied blandishments of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who is not always known to speak before thought but when he does speak before thought can mislead armies.

So, Sir, enough has been said by the substantive Minister responsible for the actual planning. But let me say that the arrangements leading up to, the Conference include a meeting of an Eminent Persons *Group* that is scheduled to meet in Barbados prior to the actual Conference and a number of high-level, high-powered persons will be coming into Barbados to attend that Conference.

There will also be a meeting of the Non-Governmental Organisations. We will have an NGO Forum. The NGO Forum will meet just before the

Conference and is scheduled to continue during the same times as the Conference which will allow for interaction between the actual Conference and the. NGO forum which will run parallel to the main conference. The forum will include workshops, lectures and seminars and this will begin on April 20 and run until May 6 and will be at the Barbados Community College where there will be a Village of Hope. The Community College will be given over to what has been described as a Village of Hope run exclusively by the Non-Governmental Organisations. They have their own Secretariat. They have their own arrangements.

At the same time, there will be a technology exhibition to be held at Terminal II Grantley Adams International Airport. It will be a showcase of commercially available technologies and services relevant to sustainable development. I can say to this Honourable House that based on some of the ideas which I have heard from such persons as Colin Hudson and other people, the ideas which they have if they come to fruition, and I have no reason to doubt that they will, it will be a fantastic show.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the Eminent Persons Group will comprise persons of a certain level. I can give this House the assurance that when we come for the supplementary which will be required to stage the conference we will give a full and complete detailed picture of what has happened so far. Suffice it to say that the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Islands and Developing States will be the largest meeting of its kind hosted by a state the size of Barbados.

We in this country have to feel honoured that the international community has accepted our offer to host the Conference. I think, Mr. Speaker, that it is a time when both Opposition and Government will wish together with all the people of Barbados to show to the rest of the world that we are capable of doing that which we have set out through the offer to do. To the extent that there are any shortcomings, if there are any as they must be, I am hoping and expect that Honourable Members on that side who with few exceptions have held ministerial responsibility in this country and who understand what this conference will mean to Barbados not only in 1994 but in the future to use their good offices without prejudice to their right to criticise the Government to ensure that no *wrong signals* are sent either within Barbados or outside in relation to this Conference. This is a conference which is not a Democratic Labour Party conference. It is a conference which is a United Nations Conference being held in the country which we have the honour to represent at very high levels.

On the question of my colleague from St. Thomas — you notice how I put that, Sir — who has indicated that

unless certain . domestic issues are settled he would feel bound to mount a sustainable demonstration outside the Conference, I understand the passion with which he speaks as representative but I also know that notwithstanding *whatever* relationships might exist between him and the Minister of Health in the matter of the Mangrove issue that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will pull his weight as a citizen of the country in high standing and will not seek through that medium to do anything foolish.

I believe there are areas which have not yet come home to the people of Barbados in relation to this Conference. The massive amount of arrangements which must be done, the security of all the persons who will be coming in, the legal entanglements of providing immunity for a large quantity of people who will be attending a U.N. Conference and who will therefore be entitled to immunity from the time they arrive until they leave, the whole question of transporting people from point A to point B, the feeding of thousands — and here I would issue an early indication to all those small farmers and others who provide for people in Barbados that they can carefully and successfully think of an additional 6 000 across the board to be fed during the Conference.

I say an additional 6 000, Sir, and for anyone who thinks that is a fantastic number one only has to look at what happens to tourism numbers on the occasion of a test match in Barbados. On the occasion of a test match in Barbados the figures have consistently been up by 5 000 during the time of the test match in Barbados. During the period just before the Conference on Sustainable Development there will be in fact a test match in Barbados and so the numbers coming into Barbados during that time will be very swollen and I think that those who produce food and services should pay attention to their planning. It is not only the Government that has to plan for this conference, the entire community has to address its mind to the frame that we will be functioning in during the month of April.

From the second half of April to the second half of May the country is going to be transformed into something it has not been before and so, Mr. Speaker, while it is true that we will be able to point to the odd problem here or there where something did not go well I think that Honourable Members should take leadership roles in assisting the community to focus way beyond anything we ' have been able to focus on up to now.
4.10 p.m.

This Conference, Sir, is going to require expenditure on the part of the people of Barbados. When all is said and done we probably will expend an additional Bds\$5 million in connection with the Conference. But the benefits

which will accrue will far outweigh any straight investment of \$5 million which the country can make. The \$5 million is my figure based on an overall picture of the differences and changes which may have to be made in terms of purchase of equipment.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It will never be like CARIFESTA. We are taking steps to ensure that none of what went on in CARIFESTA will go on now. I do not wish, Mr. Speaker, to draw on any of the CARIFESTA experiences in this regard. I shall not be drawn into even discussing them.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It is like Jerusalem. Nobody knows where it is. Where is the City? You mean the 4 tents? The 4 tents that cost a quarter million dollars to dismantle? Mr. Speaker, I said I would not discuss CARIFESTA. Let us move on.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, what I am hoping for then is that we will be able to have a much fuller and better information when we come.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No. I am saying that as a rounded figure but there is going to be, for example, about US\$1.4 million the difference which we will have to pay between the amount we will have to pay to the UN but we will come to that. We will not anticipate debate. We will come to the House. What we can promise this House is that there will be a high measure of transparency in the preparation of the Conference. There is a high measure of transparency in the funds which are expended on the Conference and this House will be kept fully *au fait* with everything which the Government is doing.

One of the points that has to be made is that the much maligned Sherbourne, especially by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas on previous occasions...

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. Did I say anything about Sherbourne today, Sir?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. At least he said he would picket in front of it.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: With the people from St. Thomas but I did not criticize Sherbourne today. That is marked for Estimates time, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The much maligned Sherbourne, Sir, is in fact developing into a show-piece of which Barbados will be proud, not only for this Conference, but for time to come. Sir, if it has not been done, Honourable Members of the Opposition can make arrangements with the Minister responsible for Culture to go and see what is happening up there.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Sherbourne? When the Minister comes in he will give you details because he is coming for some money for equipment. The contracts have been issued. The contracts for Sherbourne are public knowledge. They are available. All. The Chinese have had one. Nehaul Construction won two. The contracts are available for all, especially the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: He is not down here. We are discussing down here and if the Honourable Member wishes to know he can ask a Parliamentary Question and get the details but I am sure that when the Minister comes in here in the next week or two that all the questions you have will be answered.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Honourable Members would be satisfied that the planning for the Global Conference is not anywhere near the disaster which the Honourable Member when he first opened his mouth suggested. On the contrary, a large number of people have been involved and are involved in seeking to ensure that this Conference will be the major success that Barbados says, and has continued to say, that it is capable of bringing together.

I want to dwell, for a minute, on the question of the environment and the establishing of a Ministry of the Environment. I think the Honourable Member for St. George South ought to have given the House as much detail as he could. The Ministry of Tourism and the Environment that was established was the prerogative of the Prime Minister of the day but when that Ministry was established it did not remove most of the items which were identified as being in other Ministries from those Ministries. Water remained where it was. Health remained where it was and the mere use of language to say that there is a Ministry of the Environment does not by itself ensure that there is proper management of the environment.

In a country the size of Barbados we have to take the trouble to ensure that we do not allow ourselves to be driven by concepts that apply to countries that are 6 000 times our size. This concept of having a Minister of the Environment and thereby solving all problems is

a misrepresentation and a misunderstanding of what sustainable development is about. Sustainable development has, in fact, been going on in Barbados. For a country that has been able to be 20th in a scale with 184 countries competing for a quality of life index where Barbados has been placed at No. 20, while we cannot rest on our laurels, Barbados as a country, has nothing to be ashamed of in relation to its capacity up until now for sustainable development. Therefore we must not sell ourselves short when we look at our achievements. Some of the most efficient agencies in Barbados have included those areas relating to the environment.

There is a man in Barbados, whose name I will not call, but he is well known as he has functioned in the area of environmental development for well nigh 30 years of public service, who in 1964 designed a technique for the disposal of solid waste in the same lands surrounding the Belle that the Honourable Member mentioned. I speak of a Mr. Archer. I do not speak of him disparagingly. The design which he had for a particular system of disposal of solid waste is one that has been revered around the world as unique and is a perfect example of Sustainable Development in a Small Island State.

The decision to have water zones in Barbados, that decision taken long before any of us had the responsibility, was again an important internationally recognized example of decisions for sustainable development by people who had the responsibility to make those decisions. These are not matters that ought to be thrown aside because of new-fangled concepts that are spoken of in different words now. The people who helped Barbados to come to where it is over the last 300 years, but in particular during the last 50 years, all of those people have contributed significantly to sustainable development in Barbados and we must not confuse ourselves because of the word "environment".
4.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados has the most potable water.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The best. Sir, it is potable water of the highest calibre.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I had a little difficulty whether it is most or best but I think that all of us suffer that. We have to check because it is not something that comes up often. But the point I want to make, Sir, within the context of WHO and PAHO is that it has been established that they need something like \$280 billion for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean to bring them to a standard of living that would be acceptable over a 14-year

period. One of the things we have been able to observe in relation to the rest of Latin America is that Barbados is literally leagues ahead in relation to where we are in our environmental development.

We have to make sure that in our sustainable development for the Twenty-first Century that the concepts are not removed from what is possible in Barbados. When we come to speak next week or week after about the Conference I hope I will have an opportunity to speak.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the extra moment.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in light of the contribution made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs I should like to make a contribution to this debate. It has already been pointed out that the Barbados Labour Party fully support the proposed Conference on Sustainable Development in Barbados. We take note of the call by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for this matter to be treated as a national matter. Clearly a Conference of this scale, a Conference dealing with this subject is a Conference that can redound to the benefit of Barbados and one envisages that the benefits to be realized from having the need for a focus on sustainable development brought to bear in our small society will be benefits that will be large and important for many years to come.

But it is the recognition that a national approach has to be brought to bear on this matter that signals the greatest fall down on the part of this Government. This proposed Conference is a significant international undertaking on the part of the Government of Barbados to which it expects the full support of the Opposition and the people of this country. But sad to say the very people whose support the Government would want to elicit at this stage have in no way been brought into the know by Government as to the various aspects of the Conference, have not been involved in any either casual and for that matter, Sir, no detailed way in the planning of it.

It is very sad, Mr. Speaker, that when the reputation and the name of Barbados is to be put on the line, when this country is committed to the undertaking of international activities that require a national effort that a partisan approach has to be followed by Government in the conception and the implementation of the activities. It is very sad that this Government is being brought into the know about this particular Conference in what is still a piecemeal way.

If this Government is to be criticized as it should be criticized for its planning of this Conference, it should be criticized because there is a certain kind of haphazard-

ness that has attended the manner in which this Conference and the planning for it has been presented to this Parliament and to the people of this country.

We are now being told by the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Conference is going to take place in April. As I said earlier it is a Conference that puts the fair name of Barbados on the line. But this House has never been presented with anything even approaching a preliminary outline of a budget as to what the Conference would cost. We have never, as a Parliament, been presented with the courtesy of an outline of the various aspects of the Conference. But yet we are supposed, as an Opposition, to collaborate with the Government.

I am saying that the haphazardness in the manner in which the - planning for this Conference has been approached by Government as represented by the fact, if I may say so, that in this very set of estimates that we are being asked to approve today there are elements of financing required for the Conference. We are told as well, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that next week we are going to be asked to approve another set of money for the Conference as well. The haphazardness in which the Government has approached the planning of this Conference and the involvement of the public in understanding what the Conference is about has been the factor which has raised concerns to the extent that concerns exist about the capacity of the country to successfully carry out the Conference.

I am saying that if the Government truly is looking for the support of the Opposition, if the Government is truly looking for the support of the general public in matters of this scale and international and national significance, Sir a greater level of courtesy must be forthcoming from the Government to begin with. The Government just simply has to get its act together particularly in relation to its treatment of Parliament.

I really feel that this House should long ago have been put in a position where it could have approved a budget for the Conference to the extent that there is no controversy on either side pertaining to the desirability of the proposed activity. Having said that there will always be continuing confusion about Sherbourne.

Precisely because again there has been some form of haphazardness always exhibited by Government in the way in which Sherbourne has been conceptualized and planned. At the outset we were told that Sherbourne was supposed to have been an examination centre and then it was supposed to be a home for the Barbados Symphony Orchestra and now it is — from what I can gather — likely to be something else. But we have never yet, as a Parliament had a plan for Sherbourne presented at one time

and in one place saying that this is what Government is about and this is what it is likely to cost and we want the Members of this Parliament to approve it in concept. The Government stands, in this particular issue properly condemned for the haphazard way in which it has gone about dealing with a matter of very grave international and national significance to the people of Barbados.

We on our side understand our duty. There are Members of the Barbados Labour Party who are working in various areas of the planning and execution of activities pertaining to this Conference and will continue to lend their support. But I think that the time ^{has} come for the Government to be told that, in matters where there is no divide between Government and Opposition that a greater length of courtesy must obtain. Certainly; Mr. Speaker, Sir, and more to the point in a situation where the country is undertaking an activity of great international significance, it would always be the best approach for the activity and all its various dimensions to be presented as one so that we can know what we are getting involved with and the House take a clean and clear decision in relation to the planning of it and its financing. I am very sad that these simple precepts have not been followed in this particular instance.

I am not going to get into a major debate on the economy but there are two simple issues which I really want to raise arising out of the contribution by the Minister of Finance. We are being told that the amount that the House is now being called upon to support \$24 million is not going to add to Government expenditure that there are savings to be realized in other areas of the Estimates and all we would be doing is substituting one form of expenditure by another.

It is obvious therefore that when the House, early last year, approved the Estimates we were inadvertently approving items of expenditure that were unnecessary, and that to the extent that we are all in this House keen to cut out waste and inefficiency in Government and to the extent that there are \$24 million in unnecessary expenditures built into the original Estimates I think this House would need to be told of the areas in which the Government is finding the savings. When we come this year to look at the Estimates, we would be in a position to exercise a greater financial control over what we approve than we obviously were in March when we approved items of expenditure which the Government obviously on the record could have done without asking for.

The other point, Sir, is more serious as far as I am concerned. We are here being asked to approve a large number of increases in expenditure for National Insurance and I want to bring this to the attention of the House in

the hope that it may lead to better financial planning in the Ministry of Finance. This was anticipated immediately after the Estimates because you will recall Mr. Speaker, that immediately after the Estimates of Expenditure this year the Government brought down a supplementary to increase National Insurance and I made the point, Mr. Speaker, that if you were to add the amount for National Insurance for 1992 that has been approved in the recent estimates to what Government was asking for by way of supplementary it would be more than the National Insurance vote being sought by Government in the Estimates that we had approved for 1993/94 despite the fact that the wage bill for 1993/94 was going to be higher by reason of the restoration of the 8% pay cut. I said then that we are being put in a ridiculous financial position where we should have known at the very outset that what the House had been called upon to approve by way of a series of items of expenditure for National Insurance in all of its various Ministries was a proven exercise. Even then we could have gone back to the Estimates because it was before the end of the Financial Year, and approve a more sensible appropriation for National Insurance.

4.30 p.m.

When you go through this evidence, Mr. Speaker, apart from the extraordinary items having to do with the sponsorship of the Global Conference and one or two areas of activity in the Ministry of Health this Appropriation Bill is made outstanding by the fact that in almost every instance the appropriation for Ministries and Government Departments have now to be suspended largely by increasing the provision for National Insurance. The House just simply has to ask the Government to observe better budgetary practices.

Mr. Speaker, the National Insurance Department is under the control of Government. The rates of National Insurance are known. The number of people employed by Government or to be employed by Government are known and it just simply cannot be, Mr. Speaker, that we should have to come year after year to take up the time of the House in having to discuss supplementary provisions and Appropriation Bill having to do with increases for National Insurance. This is one of the areas in financial planning that should not be a problem to the Ministry of Finance at all because they know the rates, they know the number of people but yet one of the most significant parts of this \$24 million we are being called upon today to approve, Sir, is in the nature of National Insurance contributions. I am making this contribution in the hope that silly little kinds of financial practices like these which have crept into the Ministry of Finance would, in the future, Sir, not come to occupy the kind of prominent place in that Ministry where it obviously has come to occupy.

The Ministry of Finance was in a position before the end of March this year to know that what they were asking

the House for by way of the provision for National Insurance in the Government's estimates was a bogus number, understated, and it could have been corrected there and then, Mr. Speaker. I thought I would really bring that matter to the Government's attention but the burden of my presentation in this debate, Sir, really would be to urge the Government that it is still not too late if the Government wants the public of Barbados to lend what properly should be its whole-hearted support to the Global Conference for the Government to take the public into its confidence and to let the public know what is involved and to let us have, in the future, a better approach as a Parliament to deal with matters that are of a national significance.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a short intervention in this debate. I just wish to clarify one or two issues. Since the thrust of the Opposition's comments has related more to the question of the Conference on Sustainable Development for Small Countries I would just wish to clarify some issues here, Sir.

Let me say that the Government of Barbados, as is usual in matters relating to foreign policy, whichever Government is in office, expects and has generally received the full support and cooperation of the Opposition and the people generally in pursuit of decisions and initiatives taken in those areas which are really the eminent domain of the Government of the day. I would expect no different result in this particular instance. Indeed I will admit, Sir, that I have shown every courtesy to the Opposition, particularly this present leader. One of my first acts on hearing the surprising news that he had outwitted all the old foxes on that side and had become the Leader of the Opposition, much against my own predictions, Sir, and it caused a little problem, Sir, because I am not normally wrong on these matters: One of my first acts was to call him in, Sir, for a consultation and a briefing and discussion on matters of national interest. I do not know if he remembers but he did indicate then that he supported the Conference and that his party would be willing and ready, and they wanted to make a contribution towards the success of the Conference.

Sir, I give the assurance that now that the Minister responsible for the Environment and the other Minister heading the Planning Committees and so on have a Secretariat in place, and they are getting funds, and they now have a clear picture of exactly what would be involved, they will invite the Opposition to sit around the Table and assist in this particular regard. But I do not think, Sir, that it helps at the national level when we are searching for consensus to attribute bad faith or any other kind of bad management in these particular issues. For someone to get up and say that this was a kneejerk action on the part of the Prime Minister in seeking to host,

or have held in Barbados a Conference of this type which is for developing countries, is ridiculous. Barbados is one of the leading developing countries; in other countries this would be a matter of pride that such a Conference could be held in one's country, and that one could have that kind of image that the people would want to come.

4.40 p.m.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: We hear these comments about 'kneejerk' and 'haphazard', and all such kinds of terms. You are generally wrong in your beliefs anyhow so I will not pay any attention to that.

Sir, I just wanted to clarify that issue. Again, regarding the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I can sense these things. When he got up to speak, Sir, you did not hear because, as was said earlier, you have a wig and you do not supposed to hear certain things. But I did intimate to my colleague next to me, Sir, that I did not like the look on his face. If I can use the word, and I do not know if it is unparliamentary, but there seemed to have been something wicked on his face and I thought there was something amiss. Indeed, it was something that I never expected to hear from him which fell out of his mouth: that he would demonstrate during an international conference to bring disrepute on Barbados at a time of maximum exposure. Really, I believe that the Member for St. Thomas is capable of better and more constructive thought than that.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. Let no one misunderstand me. I repeat it, Sir. If the Government of Barbados does not rectify the problem with the Mangrove dump by the start of the Conference, I will be prepared to lead a delegation to demonstrate against the incompetence of the Government in running the dump which has caused injury to the health of the people of Arch Hall. Let it be understood clearly that I am not resigning from that position. They can curse me as much as they like.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, I do not think you should use the word "curse".

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Prime Minister must not misunderstand me on that one.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, this is not a question of misunderstanding. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas quite clearly on the first occasion, and I have heard his repetition on this matter. I am only making the point that it grieves me to hear that position being adopted because, Sir, I do not believe that it rises to the highest level that a representative should adopt. He has

his position and I have mine on that. I hope that upon reflection his colleagues would be able to persuade him that that approach is not the most constructive or the most beneficial in the circumstances. Even to give thought to it, I believe, that is really to misunderstand the role of a representative, and the parameters within which a representative should be acting in pursuit of his interests. That is how I see it. He is very misguided on this matter, Sir, and I hope he will not seek to frustrate the people.

Sir, I believe in terms of Supplementary Resolutions and Bills and so on that this is the time for the Opposition to make their points if they wish to make points. I do not wish to prolong the second reading on this Bill unduly. Those are the points that I wanted to make. Thank you.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please. Can I hear the Honourable Member for St. John?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I just have a few points to make in winding up before the House goes into Committee on this Bill. There was one of some significance, Mr. Speaker, made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East about the Transport Board which I think is something that reflects on the position the Government took in the Estimates and should in a few sentences be clarified. I believe at the time when the \$100 had been provided in the Estimates for the Transport Board that it was generally understood to be almost a token vote and that until a firm decision could be taken on the future of the Board's operations and the extent to which it would require subsidy that that was really to make provision for any further adjustment. Since then and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East knows we have made some changes. The Board is anticipated to be able to function on a \$1.4 million subsidy or direct transfer as I understand it for this year and one hopes that next year it will be able to function on a similar level of support from the Government. As to what that means for the operations of the Transport Board, that would be a matter to be determined by the Ministry of Transport and those who are charting the future course of the Board's operations. So that it was not contemplated that the subsidy to the Transport Board would only be \$100 and I assume that during the Estimates that that had adequately been explained to Members of the House.

Regarding the Sherbourne Centre, the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Peter in my view are somewhat misleading. We have had about 3 debates in this House on the Sherbourne Complex. Each Estimates debate that Item comes up for discussion. The Minister responsible explains what the project is about, what the anticipated cost is, what the expenditure to date has been and therefore it

is not true to suggest that the Government has never given this House a full picture of what the expenditure on the Sherbourne Complex would be.
4.50 p.m.

I recall myself as Minister of Culture indicating the full cost for the completion of the Sherbourne Complex, what the cost for each of the blocks would have been, what the phasing of the work would have been and what the use of the buildings would have been. Therefore the House has always been in the picture in every Estimates debate on the Sherbourne Centre. I do not think there has ever been any doubt, except in the minds of those who wish to create those doubts, what the virtue and utility of that Centre will be to the people of Barbados.

As to the cost of the Conference as a whole that may be a different matter and therefore to seek to mix up the cost of the Global Conference with the cost of the Sherbourne Centre really is nonsensical. The cost of the Conference. We have not functioned on the basis of previous experiences. The most recent being CARIFESTA.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we will try for more prudent management. The Honourable Member for St. George South raised the question that he wants to know in February what is actually involved in the hosting of the Conference. If he had asked in April 1981 what was involved in hosting CARIFESTA he would not have known. There are contingencies – in his case the contingencies came to about \$24 million which was about 5 times the original cost of the Conference – but in our case one seeks to have a budget for these events, but I believe that everybody understands how difficult it is to plan in a sanitised or sterile environment. The cost involved in the hosting of the Conference can change and therefore one has to make compensating adjustments in terms of other Government expenditure to accommodate that cost.

Utilities are included in the supplementary but the Government does not fix the cost of utilities in Barbados except for water rates and therefore it cannot fall to Government's account to say that it is the Government's fault that utilities costs have risen in Barbados in recent times.

The last point, Mr. Speaker, relates to the National Insurance Contributions. I have been in this House going on 7 years and there has not been a year in which a supplementary has not been brought to this House for more payments to the National Insurance Department. The Honourable Member for St. Peter knows that this is a re-occurring feature. It is not something that is new and it has nothing to do with the present levels of fiscal management.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: The Member is misleading the House. The only year in which a supplementary for National Insurance has ever been brought to this House after presentation of the Estimates for the year to come was this year, March to be precise, and during the course of that debate the bogus nature of the National Insurance expenditure set out in this year's Estimates was brought to Government's attention, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, there has never been a year in which any Government of Barbados has correctly calculated the National Insurance contributions. I can say that with authority and so can the Honourable Member for St. Peter. So it is a nonsense argument. It is a time-wasting argument and if people want to bring to Parliament this wellspring of truth and enlightenment which the citizens deserve, then those kinds of arguments can be pushed aside.

The National Insurance Contributions are inescapable and the fact that nobody can accurately calculate them is nothing to do, in my view, with fiscal management. But I want to make the final point about fiscal management because at the beginning of this debate the fiscal position was put and I want to make the point for this House as a whole that nobody on that side has joined issue with the Government on this about the fiscal position as put. Only 2 weeks ago we were hearing that there was total fiscal disarray in this country...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The real point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that there is a difference between going out there before the public and fabricating all kinds of stories about the financial management being the poorest ever in the history of Barbados, about the fiscal situation deteriorating, about the management expertise in the Ministry of Finance being whittled away over time and yet when the information is made available they cannot join issue on anything, not one single aspect, not even the issue of the reserves. Opportunities were given for the Honourable Member for St. Peter and I want to make that point, Mr. Speaker, that we have not had a single question raised and therefore I am going to sit down in my seat a very pleased person that the Honourable Member for St. Peter and those who advise him or others advised by him had nothing to say about the figures and statistics which have been put before the House.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. D. W. BOWEN, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

ORDER NO. 10 – SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1994
NO. 1 HEAD 10 – GOVERNOR-GENERAL –
PROGRAM 01 – GOVERNOR-GENERAL
ESTABLISHMENT – \$11 500

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of \$11 500 for Head 10, Governor-General stand part.

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

The question that Head 10 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 13 – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – \$33 386

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of \$33 386 for Head 13, Prime Minister's Office stand part.

I would only wish to indicate that most of this provision relates to the need for supplementary provision in relation to payments of National Insurance.

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

The question that Head 13 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 15 – CABINET OFFICE – \$23 800

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of \$23 800 for Cabinet Office stand part.

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

The question that Head 15 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 5.00 p.m.

HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL
SERVICE – \$1 848 468

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of \$1 848 468 for Head 16, Ministry of the Civil Service stand part.

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

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, in relation to Item 102 having to do with Other Personal Emoluments, this is obviously an omnibus vote that enables the Government to react to the need, ever so occasionally, to take on temporary staff for unforeseen circumstances. The \$1.7 million that is here being sought to supplement the vote for Other Personal Emoluments is substantial enough for the House to be given some more detail as to exactly what is going to be involved.

We are told in the Explanatory Notes, Mr. Speaker, that some of this staff will be to staff the Secretariat of the Global Conference but also that some of the staff will be attached to the VAT Implementation Unit and the Tax Administration and Expenditure Management Programmes of the Ministry of Finance. Of course, it is up to the Government to decide where it should put these expenditures but in relation to the Ministry of Finance activities, this is a clearly defined activity for which a loan has been agreed to. From the point of view of tidiness one would like this located in the Ministry of Finance where we can track the expenditure and activity rather than in the Ministry of the Civil Service where it is now lumped with a large number of other activities that have nothing to do with loan activity *per se*.

I really, Mr. Chairman, would like to hear a little bit more than has been said today about the need to spend \$21 million on tax administration and management. It seems to me, without knowing the details, to be a large number. I am not criticizing it but just that one wants to be better briefed and better informed about commitments undertaken by Government to loans that are as large as the one that has been committed to us, things like expenditure management and administration. It seems like a large figure. I would like on this occasion to hear the Government speak in a more forthcoming manner regarding the way in which it has to do with tax administration as distinct from the VAT.

I would have thought by now, Mr. Chairman, that training and retraining in the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service in General would have put us beyond the need to have to raise a loan of \$21 million. It is a lot of money for such a purpose and I would like to hear the Government speak on this. Without any bad faith being involved I would like to hear the Government speak more clearly on the basis for it. I would understand the need, of course to want to spend more money, but to what extent it will spend money on the implementation of the VAT. It is going to be an exercise that is going to involve registration and lot of ground work has to be done but before one can approve this amount one would want to hear the Government speaking in a more forthcoming manner.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Before the Minister speaks, just by way of expansion of the first point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I was under the impression, as a result of statements made in the budgetary exercise last year, that Government was not, in fact, creating any additional temporary posts and that where formerly there could have been substitutes offered temporary appointments that that was all abolished over the last fiscal year. I now see here that "additional funds are required to cover costs of temporary posts created for the following" and I have to ask the Prime Minister to give the House details on the number of temporary posts created in respect of the Global Conference and the number of posts created in respect of the VAT Implementation Unit. There is only one in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Counsellor/Attache so I do not have to worry with that, and for the Tax Administration and Expenditure Management Programme if there are persons presently assigned to that programme, how many? We really want to know the number of posts now created by this.

I would like also to ask whether the Advisor to the Minister of Finance on loan from the Central Bank is included.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The helper to the Director of Finance and Planning who is being seconded from the Central Bank to provide technical assistance to the Minister of Finance I want to know if he is included in this and what, indeed, are his duties and responsibilities.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Here is some information in response, Sir. Between April 1 and September 20, 1993, some 70 temporary posts were created, with the salary of 46 of those posts being payable by the Ministry of the Civil Service under Item 103. Of the 70 posts, 13 were created for the Conference Secretariat for the Global Conference on Sustainable Development, three were for the VAT Implementation Unit, and there were two posts of Counsellor/Attache at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Now, the salaries of 11 of these 18 posts are in the range of \$9 to \$4, at a cost of just over \$46 000 annually. There are 18 additional posts required for the Ministry of Finance to staff the Tax Administration and Expenditure Management Programme. This is what has been projected for the period January to March 1994. Those, Sir, would substantially account for the increases under the Item.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Sir, I am very grateful to the Prime Minister to answer the question but in his answer he omitted to inform the House as to the salaries of the Counsellor/Attache with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Now, Sir, he also informed us that there would be some 18 new posts which will comprise the Tax Administration and Expenditure Management Programme, as I understand it. Now, I am very glad that the Leader of the Opposition has raised this matter. I have been around long enough to be able to recount previous efforts in Barbados at tax reform.

In 1968 as a result of help from CIDA Barbados' Income Tax Law was amended in a radical way in which the tax law was changed from being based upon the English tax system, the traditional colonial Income Tax Act, and moved towards the provisions of the Tax Act in Canada. That law has stood us in good stead right up until today. Basically the reforms that have taken place since then have been reforms directed only at two areas. There have been reforms directed at changing the allowances and reforms directed at ensuring that we steer the use of capital -towards an export oriented economy. In addition to that we had the Customs Act which was reformed in a radical Act in 1962. They are the two basic pieces of legislation which together with one other piece of legislation the Land Tax Act which provides the base of our taxation laws. We have not been told in what way these three pieces of legislation are going to be the subject of this major reform.

5.10 p.m.

Our understanding of this position is that the Government has accepted the Reagan, Thatcher doctrine propounded by the IMF that the tax rates which are in existence in this country were wrong and that a radical reform should take place in the tax rates which were in existence in this country were wrong and that a radical reform should take place in the rates of income tax.

My understanding is that the IMF provided an expert and together with the Central Bank these reforms were carried out and there was the subsequent debate here in Barbados not so long ago, within the last 18 months. It leaves me now, Sir, to wonder what are the areas which are going to be the subject of this scrutiny and which is going to involve, as I understand it, according to public statements the expenditure of some \$21 million.

It seems to me that the Government is planning a very massive reform either of these three pieces of legislation or, alternatively, the Government is going to indulge in a massive witch-hunt and investigative exercise against taxpayers in Barbados with a view to dealing with a problem which they obviously know about, namely, massive invasion of taxes in Barbados. It is a very serious thing because if they are not going to change the law relating to your eligibility to tax you must then going

to change that area of the law dealing with your administration and collection of taxes.

I recall that for some period of time in the 1980s that considerable effort was devoted by the Ministry of Finance towards the improvement of the machinery for the monitoring of the tax systems. Computerisation was introduced in the Land Tax Department, computerisation was introduced in the Income Tax Department and computerisation was increased in the Customs.

In addition to that coming from the 1960s right down, I remember there was a Touche Ross Study of the tax system in Barbados. Many of the civil servants working in these departments were sent abroad on courses to expose them to new methods of detection of evasion and things of that kind. We on this side, with the exception of the expenditure that is going to be devoted to the introduction of VAT, find it difficult to appreciate the rationale for the expenditure of this considerable sum of money. I doubt that the administration of VAT, I doubt that the introduction and the preparation for VAT would cost more than \$4 million or \$5 million. We have a vast gap here and we would like to know what are the areas that are going to be subjected to the scrutiny. How is this scrutiny going to be carried out? Are we going to have tenders for this work? Are we going to have competition in the tendering process from particular areas? Are we going to depart from our traditional existence source of our income tax law which is Canada? Are we going to go back to the United Kingdom's system of taxation? Are we investigating in truth and in fact a new basis of taxation in addition to the VAT? Are we investigating the possibility of the introduction of capital gains tax? All of these are matters that we wish to be able to evaluate. Because we still cannot fathom why it is necessary to expend an amount in the vicinity of some...

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am assuming that \$4 million or \$5 million goes to the VAT. There are some \$15 million in this area. Obviously there is a fundamental policy change that is taking place and we would like to know what is this policy change and how it is going to be implemented?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I think I should take the opportunity to say a few words on this having heard the Honourable Member lead the case on behalf of the Opposition with respect to this matter. This is a pretty straightforward matter and not one which I anticipated would have evoked as much discussion as it did. I am not really sure what is at the essence of it. On the one hand perhaps Members of the Opposition are saying that \$21 million is too much money to spend. But since they do not know what it is being spent on, it does not

make sense in saying it is too much to spend. I am going to have to try to unravel this conundrum which they have created for themselves. This is a straightforward matter.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us have some order, please.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: As I understand it a very small amount of about \$188 000 this year will be spent on this programme. I presume it is more convenient for that expenditure to come under the Ministry of the Civil Service until the Estimates are prepared. It is not any major departure from the Civil Service practice or certainly not the way in which Government operates and that should not be a big issue.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It is just an administrative arrangement and one assumes that the way in which the Minister carries out the functions that he has as Minister of the Civil Service that he can allocate the post for the time being in one Ministry over another.

As to the actual tax administration and expenditure management programme, you cannot have blinkers about what is needed in terms of tax reform in Barbados. If it were only legislative reform perhaps we could use some of the brightest brains, some of whom may be over on that side to sit down and do that. That would not be a big issue. But there are so many more issues about tax administration in Barbados, which when we did the initial direct tax reform, Honourable Members on that side pointed out were the critical issues. They said not this foolishness you are doing with allowances and so on. They said we need fundamental reform in tax administration and they struck at the issue of compliance. When I pointed out that in 1990 that there were only 26 000 Barbadians filing tax returns they said that it is horrendous, who could believe that in a country with 90 000 taxpayers that there were only 26 000 persons filing tax returns. Now you have a programme to look at these fundamental problems which they say exist suddenly we hear that is too much money, \$21 million should not be spent on this.

Let us face it this programme is a fundamental programme and tax administration. It touches on the Land Tax Department, the Customs Department, the Inland Revenue Department and I believe the Accountant-General and the Audit Department. It is not only institutional strengthening but it involves the provision of updated equipment and interfaces between the departments.
5.20 p.m.

Now it is all right to say that departments have equipment. I have heard that foolishness before

many times, Mr. Speaker. A lot of personal computers on people's desk which are status symbols in the public service because they do not link up to anything and if people do not put in information or cannot access information from other places they could only be described as status symbols. I do not blame the public officers because in my own office I have a computer that does not link up to anything and if you were to turn it on all it has are things that I personally enter into it on a daily basis. The point is that we need to have a system where we can interface from one department to another.

There has been a call on that side, Mr. Speaker, and on this, for us to be able to get better compliance and also to tap into the data base which the National Insurance Department has, which the Inland Revenue Department has, which the Customs Department has. Unless we can seek to do this we will not be making any headway in relation to tax administration in Barbados. So this programme includes the provision of those kinds of facilities and updated information network and an information policy.

We have heard a lot of talk about that kind of thing from the Honourable Member for St. Peter, that the country needs an information policy but we are heading for one in relation to tax administration so that we have a clear understanding about the way the tax system should function in an efficient and effective manner.

The Value Added Tax Administration will also be costly. We all know that. It is a costly tax to set up and to administer. It requires persons at the level of Auditor in numbers greater than those which would now exist in the public service for the kinds of taxes that we have, to carry out the compliance effort we need. Also to have better auditing systems in place and this is well known. But it is not just tax administration. Public Expenditure Management is something that needs a lot of attention. It is very difficult in Barbados and has been for a long time, not just in recent times, because I can see it reflected in the files from years ago, to get a handle on project execution in Barbados particularly of the Capital Works Programme and it involves looking at the whole budget section of the Ministry of Finance and coordinating it with the Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Economic Affairs to ensure that the execution of the capital works programme is commensurate with Government's fiscal programme. This is something that also needs some attention.

The Budget Section also needs to be upgraded and this programme will provide for the necessary infrastructure for that department.

As to the question of legislation, I don't think legislative change will be necessary but if it is, of course

we have to bring a new Bill for the VAT. Of course there are areas in the present Income Tax Act that need some attention and since we had talked about indexation and a few other things when we did the tax reform we are going to have to revisit those issues by way of legislation but I do not contemplate any major change in relation to the legislative framework that exists for taxation as a whole in Barbados. We do not have to talk about Thatcherite and Reaganite policies.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows that the basic tax policies, except for the rates, have remained somewhat consistent except in recent times when allowances, many of which benefit a privileged few, were removed so as to give benefits to the wider Barbadian working-class through the tax policy. Other than that there have been no major departures and I do not expect that, except for the introduction of the VAT, that there will be any further major adjustments in the legislation.

The Government is not about to carry out any massive witch-hunt against taxpayers but we expect those who are supposed to pay taxes to pay them. I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church South believes in that philosophy too, or if he does not he should say so or forever hold his peace. But we intend to make sure that those who owe taxes pay them and there is only one way to do that, by having an effective system of tax administration which would include audit.

The Ministry of Finance has also undergone some rationalisation and changes and the office of the Director of Finance which previously was not staffed by any separate advisers or separate research capability is now being somewhat upgraded to lend to the functions which the Director of Finance has to perform, both the statutory functions and the research functions. And also to give the Director of Finance more support in monitoring the structural adjustment programme which the Government has entered into. On that basis, additional staff has been required to assist the Director of Finance in carrying out his functions through a monitoring unit in the Ministry of Finance for that purpose. I believe one of the persons who is going to be paid from this vote has been absorbed into the public service on secondment to assist in that area.

The Honourable Members on that side always like to say the Ministry of Finance needs to resume its rightful place in relation to the management of this economy and the effort at administrative reform in the Ministry is in that direction. I hope that those few words have assisted Members in understanding what this programme is all about.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Member for St. John is, if not anything else very "touchous", Sir.

I think that is a Parliamentary concept, Sir. He can give but he cannot take and I really have to respond to his totally unsatisfactory response to this particular matter.

Sir, because we agreed on the need for increased compliance. Because, Sir, we agreed on the need for things like the interfaces between Government Departments does not mean that this House must, without any serious evaluation, accept the expenditure of \$21 million on a project which has at its core ...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I think this is what needs to be corrected. None of that \$21 million has yet been spent and none of it, to the best of my knowledge, except for this component, will be spent under the Project before April 1, 1994 at which point this project will form a major component of the Estimates. At that point I would be very happy to give the full details of the project and give Members an opportunity to comment in the way in which the Honourable Member wishes to do so.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is in this year's Estimates and I promise this House one thing, that whenever a new project involving a loan from an international institution, with the possibility of a lot of expertise for matters such as tax administration, expenditure control and so on comes to this House, I am going to be very careful about what this House is then asked to approve because Governments throughout the entire developing world have continually been sold a bill of goods by institutions that ask them to borrow money to do a lot of foolish things to provide employment for experts and consultants from all over the world in circumstances where a lot of the work could be done by the Third World Countries themselves at a cheaper rate. You end up very often getting pressed upon you consultancies you do not need – a lot of extra work. So that when we hear, Mr.. Speaker, that a Government of Barbados is committing itself to a \$21 million tax administration and expenditure management programme, the Member for St. John must forgive us.
5.30 p.m.

We must be absolutely sure that the project makes sense, that the project is well conceived, that we know what the components are, that they are not buying unnecessary high price expertise without getting the best expertise on the market, that the expertise is going to be secured on a competitive basis and things of this character. This is a large project. A \$21 million project is a large project and, more to the point, it is money that we are going to be borrowing and have to pay back. All I am asking the Minister of Finance to do is precisely what I hope the Minister of Finance will ask the other Ministries

to do that when you bring a new large project for which the public of this country has to borrow – justify it. Do not just get up and tell us that there is an increased need for interfaces between Departments. What does that mean in financial terms? Do not just tell us that there is a need for compliance. What does that mean in terms of cost? This is a serious project. We support many of the things on which he spoke. Nobody can condemn the Minister for citing the need for increased compliance, but we want to know the dimensions of the project at the very start. He has spoken to the Press about it but I am always very worried that when a whole register of consultants for whom they provide work thrust things upon developing countries at large costs to the foreign exchange of those developing countries, Sir. The history of the developing world is beseeched with these situations where you get- these \$21 million tax administration projects and experts after experts coming down to review and analyse what has been done before. Therefore, I am not going to rest. That is why I want this to be shown as a separate project under the Ministry of Finance. It is a big project and the Prime Minister said that my consideration that it should be shown as a separate project is not even a minor issue. I am attacking this, Mr. Chairman, because I do not know that we have ever before had to borrow \$21 million in this country to see after expenditure control.

Aside.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: We have had tax reform in this country before without it costing \$21 million. But the core of the point I am making is this. I will always be very careful when international institutions start lending us money to tie up activities like these. Because even though, of course, a lot of benefits ensue to developing countries, the record is now too clear that we pay for studies and studies and provide jobs for the boys. I am not casting aspersions, but I need to know and Members on this side need to know because a \$21 million new project in the Ministry of Finance is a project that will come at the expense of activities being undertaken in other Ministries that can affect the people of the country. Clearly, there would have had to be a decision by Government that a \$21 million tax administration and expenditure management programme is more important to the Government right now than \$21 million in helping the poor people of Barbados. It is too significant for us at the start of the project not to seek the fullest information and for the House to be put in a position where it can monitor and manage the expenditure on this particular matter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am concerned about this because having heard the Minister I had to cast my mind back to pre-1986 days. Prior to 1986, there was in place a Public Investment Unit and a Planning and Priorities Committee which used to function and monitor the execution and implementation of capital

projects. I understand now that part of these funds will be going to the development of a unit whose function will be similar to that of the Public Investment Unit and the Planning and Priorities Committee that existed pre-1986 and for which there was no additional cost. They are re-inventing the wheel in that regard at a tremendous cost now in terms of loan funds and repayment of interest.

Secondly, there used to be legislation on the book, Sir, which required all persons who were offering goods and services to register. I cannot remember the title of the legislation. It was something about professional registration apart from lawyers, doctors and people who traditionally have to register. It required masons, carpenters and, as I said, people selling goods and services to register. Now part of the rationale for that legislation was to create an information bank as to your manpower needs in relation to skills. The other part of the rationale was that when you built up the information you could move towards the linking of that information to the National Registration Number and the NIS number. Then you would be able to trace through a series of numbers — the person's Registration Number and National Insurance number, his address and all of that, and what type of work he or she does.

I did not think that having regard to the development of computerization that it would be beyond the realm of possibility to extend that system and punch in that information in such a way that the Income Tax Department could have the benefit of that information and follow it by computer. But the Government after 1986 abolished that legislation without even amending it. That was prior to this Minister of Finance, Sir. That was the original Minister of Finance of the Democratic Labour Party post-1978. But what I am saying is that we had a base from which I believe data processors and computer experts could have extended that data base in such a way that could have been linked to the Income Tax Department. You could have got the information that you needed to tidy up the Income Tax Department without having to go to the extent of \$21 million. It is, therefore, regrettable that we have to do it but at the same time I am still happy to know that I was a member of a party that had the foresight and the vision about ten years ago to introduce legislation which could have been relevant today were it not for the folly of somebody playing to the gallery which caused the abolition of that. Now we have to start all over again with \$21 million. I am not criticising this Minister of Finance about this. I just regret that this country is now being asked to pay \$21 million for the folly of somebody else. But then, of course, the country has paid an even greater price for his follies.

The question that Head 16 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 5.40 p.m.

HEAD 17 — OMBUDSMAN — \$2 995

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 17 stand part.

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

The question that Head 17 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 18 — AUDIT — \$28 500

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 18 stand part.

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

The question that Head 18 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 19 — MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS — \$607 591

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

The question that Head 19 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 25 — MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FISHERIES — \$117 025

Hon. D. W. BOWEN: I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

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

The question that Head 25 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 28 — MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY — \$213 279

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 29 — ATTORNEY GENERAL — \$165 411

Hon. M. A. KING: I beg to move that Head 29 stand part.

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

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, there has been a problem in having litigation which has been settled between the private bar and the Crown paid. There are a lot of outstanding fees and damages due and I am inquiring whether the provision under Head 29 includes a reckoning of all the sums that are due and in anticipation to March 31 of fees and damages that will become due between now and March 31.

There are litigants and clients out there who have been waiting to my certain knowledge in excess of 5 months where settlements have taken place for small amounts — \$14 000 to \$15 000.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Chairman, I believe the vote for the Items mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is not covered under Head 29. I believe those funds are usually paid out of the contingency vote of the Ministry of Finance. I have always heard representations in here made that a sum should be provided in the Ministry of Legal Affairs before, now Ministry of Justice, for payment of those funds and I believe that the source ^{from} which they are traditionally paid is the contingency vote in the Ministry of Finance.

The question that Head 29 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 36 — MINISTRY OF HEALTH — \$10 895 627

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 36 stand part.

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

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the supplementary being sought by the Ministry of Health is fairly large — \$10 million. I do not think the Minister could expect that this matter would pass the House without some explanation of the main issues or the main Items.

Sir, the House is being called upon to approve \$1.27 million in supplementary expenditures for the new polyclinic. Sir, when the House earlier this year voted money for the Polyclinic programme we voted \$122 157 for this particular Item and the Explanatory Note is now telling us that the provision is required to meet the additional costs of the polyclinics caused by delays and increased cost of labour and materials.

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that if the Ministry asks Parliament for \$122 000 to spend on polyclinics it could not possibly have incurred, unless it was acting in breach of Parliament, additional costs caused

by delays and increased cost of labour and materials in the extent of \$1.27 million. That clearly cannot be so. The delays and increased cost of labour and *materials could* not lead to an escalation of \$1.27 million in a building programme which at the start of the year only intended to cost \$122 000.

I really have to ask the Minister to speak some more on this particular Item before I give support. The Explanatory Note does not justify the approval of the House of this particular expenditure. If the Government is to be paying backlogs of money, say so. If you are intending to start activity on the Polyclinic that has stopped, say so. But do not come to the House and ask us to vote \$1.27 million in support of increased costs on a project that was at the start of the financial year only to cost \$122 000. That simply does not make sense.

I would want to use this opportunity now we are on this particular matter of the polyclinics and in the process of pressing the Government for a statement on the state of affairs on the polyclinics. What really is the position in relation to the Polyclinic at Black Rock? That polyclinic as far as I am aware has been finished. The structure has been finished for some considerable time. There seems to me to be no activity at the Polyclinic. Perhaps I am misleading the House and if I am I apologise, but I would particularly want the Government to say what this money, \$1.27 million, is being spent for because it cannot at all be related to any increased costs arising from delays, supplying of materials or in any increased cost of labour on a \$122 000 budget.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Chairman, to speak directly to the question asked by the Member for St. Peter, the direct loss and expenses as a result of the delay — the project was delayed for some 2 years after the original contract was agreed to in the amount of \$4 277 434 — involved action delayed within the Ministry as well was \$600 000. There was a cost of \$600 000 out of the \$1.2 million. The interest on late payments turned out to be \$385 000. The subcontractors' claims for delay were \$207 000 and increased cost for labour and materials over that period was \$80 000 giving the \$1.272 million.
5.50 p.m.

The second question about what is happening to the Polyclinic — they have moved into the Polyclinic now two months and it is functioning. It is only short because of the late shipment of 2 dental chairs.

Aside.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: It is as wide as the plot will hold.

Thank you, Sir.

The question that Head 36 stand part of the Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 37 — MINISTRY OF HOUSING, LANDS,
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE —
\$3 836 237

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 37 stand part.

Hon. B. M. TA1TT: I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 39 — MINISTRY OF LABOUR, CONSUMER
AFFAIRS AND THE ENVIRONMENT —
\$1 841 464

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 39 stand part.

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

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

READ. 42 — MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS,
COMMUNICATIONS & TRANSPORTATION —
\$3 125 000

Hon. W. W. HALL: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 42 stand part.

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

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, I want. to raise one or two matters under this particular Head, first of all one relating to the maintenance of roads. I believe that a lot of money is wasted in this particular area of maintenance. I think the time has come when the Government should deal with this problem.

My understanding is that some roads are repaired with the aggregate and in a very short space of time, no sooner than the rain falls, the road is in a bad state of disrepair once again. That is causing the Government and the tax-payers unnecessary money. I am going to ask the Government to look closely at this particular area because if the roads are done properly and surfaced with barbergreen...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have a problem. There are no funds sought here under these for road repairs or anything like that.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, I am looking at Subprogramme 1 and that is General Maintenance.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What Object Number?

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: It is the Explanatory Note, Mr. Chairman. That is under the programme.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All I am saying is that I am not permitting you to have a broad discussion on an Item that money is not sought for.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, I respectfully submit that under Head 42, Programme 2, money is sought under this Head and that is the Head under which I speak.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Continue.

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: It also says Public Transportation Service. That is what I am seeing here and I am saying that since money is provided in this Item for maintenance, I want to say that I am not satisfied with the manner in which the maintenance is carried out. It is costing the taxpayers too much money. I believe when the road is being prepared and the aggregate is put down, and those who are involved in construction work in the preparation of road building, would agreed that if you put the aggregate down and -do not put the barbergreen, that road tends to run into disrepair quicker than the road that has a barbergreen surface. That is the point.

As I go through Parkinson Field Road which is being done at the moment, it is prepared with the aggregate but there is no preparation for barbergreen. I am saying that if the Government completes this road with the aggregate and does not put the barbergreen surface on, that it is going to be in disrepair in a very short space of time and we will be coming back here for another sum of money.

All I am saying is that if you are going to prepare the road then it is best to do it properly so that the road could last for some 5, 6 or even 10 years. That would be an investment that would be well worth it. There is no sense just going and fixing potholes from time to time.

I am going to say this that the Ministry and the Government know full well that unless you provide slipper drains and curbs that this will create a problem and we will have this maintenance problem time and time again. That is the point. I am asking that when you are carrying out maintenance that it be done properly so that we would not have this recurring problem. I know of what I speak so I do not want other Honourable Members on that side trying to distract from the situation here. I am saying that I have seen it and people are complaining.

I have a duty to complain that in Parkinson Field, in particular, where this work is being carried out that it is time that the Government recognizes that every 6 months they have to return there and dig up the road causing a lot of inconvenience to the people in that area, and in some other areas for that matter. We do not need to go through this exercise. It is annoying. It is harassing. It causes great inconvenience. I am suggesting that the Ministry recognizes this and they provide proper curbs and slipper drains and that would suffice. The slipper drains tend to hold the road better and it is more lasting in the long run. If the Government is looking at ways and means of correcting these things I have a duty when I found out to bring it to the attention of Parliament.

While I am at it, Mr. Chairman, I do not like to hear the things I have been hearing and I am drawing this to the Honourable Chamber's attention. I hope the Minister would listen. All is not well within the Ministry of Public Works. There is disgruntlement arising out of an incident where it is alleged that material is reported missing and an investigation is currently being conducted in that Ministry. While I do not expect the Minister at this point in time to disclose all the findings, I want the Minister to be aware that I have been reliably informed that a lot of material was missing. Some was returned and there is some investigation being carried out.

This affects the maintenance programme. Let me make it quite clear. Some material was missing and some has been returned. The Prime Minister is listening. I am saying that all is not well and it is affecting the conduct of the workers in that particular department. I would like the Minister to follow this up because it is abroad. It is no secret I said this is wastage of funds and if they are stealing, or whatever have you going on there, it is time that we face up to it and put an end to it. I am only telling you these are complaints that have come. I am not saying they are true but I have every good reason to feel that there is some element of truth in the allegation and I would like the Ministry to follow this up with a view to resolving this situation so that the co-workers would not be that uneasy and at the same time we would have funds, we must have funds so that we can complete this work. Some jobs have suffered as a result of this, missing material. I know for sure, Mr. Chairman, that all is not well. All I am saying is I hope the Minister will take note of what I say. I am not trying to be mischievous but I think I would be failing my duty if I did not bring this to the Minister's or to the Government's attention.

6.00 p.m.

The question that Head 42 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 43 — MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND SPORTS — \$1500 000

Hon. W. W. HALL: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 43 stand part.

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

The question that Head 43 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. C. V. WALKER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of the Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

BARBADOS NATIONAL BANK (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1993

Order No. 1 was called — To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Barbados National Bank Act, Cap. 322A.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill to amend the Barbados National Bank Act particularly Section 4A(6) of that Act with a view to removing any ambiguity that currently exists with respect to the legal interpretation of that section in relation to the transferability and enforceability of a certificate of loan constituted under the BNB Act.

Section 4A(6) of the Act states, *inter alia*, that:

"a loan made pursuant to this Section is, notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, in priority to all other liens and charges, a first lien against"

and then it sets out a number of items.

(a) "In the case of a sugar plantation,

(i) the lands comprising the plantation in respect of which the loan was made,

(ii) the crops to be reaped or being reaped at the plantation in the agricultural year in respect of which the loan was made, and

the livestock, vehicles, equipment, machinery and plant belonging to the plantation, and

(b) in the case of a sugar factory,

- (i) the lands comprising the factory in respect of which the loan was made,
- (ii) the sugar and molasses to be manufactured or being manufactured by the factory in the agricultural year in respect of which the loan was made, and
- (iii) the vehicles, equipment, machinery and plant belonging to the factory."

A difference of opinion exists in respect of the transferability and enforceability of loans made in accordance with this section of the Act since the Act does not spell out the rights which the rights which attached to the liens constituted under the section.

In light of the restructuring of the sugar industry and the creation of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust which will take over the debts of the various sugar plantations which are heavily indebted and the operations, equipment and factories, of Barbados Sugar Industries Limited from the Barbados National Bank it has become necessary to amend Section 4A(6) of the Act to facilitate the smooth transfer of these debts. It has therefore been the advice to the Government that the Amendment of this section will eliminate this ambiguity.

With those few words, Sir, and that legal background to this particular amendment Bill I beg to move that his Bill be read a second time.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is... The Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: I am advised, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that this Amendment raises a number of profound legal implications which other Members on my side are far more expert than myself to deal with. I will not in my contribution to the debate deal with any of the legal aspects of the proposed Amendment. But I really do feel that I have to raise 3 matters pertaining to the role of the Barbados National Bank and its administration and management.

Section 25 of the Barbados National Bank Act requires that — and I want to be accurate — the Bank must every month submit statements of its conditions to the Minister. But moreso, Sir, that Section 25 of the Act also requires that:

"Within 4 months after the close of each Financial Year or such longer period as the Minister allows, the Board shall

- (a) transmit to the Minister a copy of its annual accounts certified by the auditors; and
- (b) submit to the Minister a report on its operations during the year."

Sir, the Financial Intermediaries Act also casts an obligation on the -part of other financial institutions operating in Barbados to publish annual accounts and annual reports.
6.10 p.m.

It is a very necessary thing, Sir, and a very important thing that financial institutions should publish annual reports and more so, Sir, a financial institution which is obliged by law to provide to the Minister of Finance on a month by month basis, a statement of its financial condition.

To the best of my information and I have checked, Sir, no Annual Reports nor Certified Statement of Accounts of the Barbados National Bank have been laid in Parliament nor published since the year 1990. I would like to repeat that, Sir, that as far as I am aware no certified, audited accounts have been published by the Barbados National Bank since 1990 and as far as I am aware, Sir, and in contravention of the law, no Annual Report of the Bank has been published since 1990. This is a very outrageous situation because as far as I am aware all other financial institutions have been complying with the provision of the Financial Intermediaries Act regarding the requirement that they should publish their annual audited accounts but the institution owned by Government is in breach of section 25 of its Act.

Now, Sir, the legislation provides that the accounts need not be published within 4 months if the Minister in his discretion has a reason for the accounts not to be so published. I think this House is deserving of an explanation by the Minister of Finance as to why the certified audited accounts of the Barbados National Bank for the last 2 financial years have not been and cannot be published.

I am not going to cast any aspersions, Sir. I am not going to say anything that would undermine the financial integrity of the institution but I want to bring it to the attention of the House because surely the situation cannot be allowed for a principal financial institution to operate year by year without certified audited accounts. I want to bring it to the attention of the House because it is a serious breach. We have a responsibility to make sure that institutions in which millions of taxpayers moneys are deposited is kept in such a state that its integrity cannot be questioned.

I am raising this matter, Mr. Speaker, if only because the lack of audited accounts on the part of the Barbados

National Bank is already arising as a major concern in the financial circles and is beginning to cast doubt on the financial integrity of the institution. I believe the time has come for the Government, Sir, to put this matter behind the Barbados National Bank and to give the House a full explanation as to why the accounts have not been published and also, Sir, to give the House the assurance that audited certified accounts of the Bank will be published as soon as possible.

I also, Mr. Speaker, think that I should use the opportunity now that we are discussing the whole question of the financing of the sugar industry to raise concerns that I have regarding what now seems to be a radical departure from past and proven experience in this country. In the past, Mr. Speaker, the financing of the crop was never a serious financial issue in Barbados and this was so when the crop was 200 000 tonnes, 150 000 tonnes and 100 000 tonnes. We had a situation obtaining in this country where the Central Bank of Barbados simply provided an advance against the crop and the funds so advanced were recovered from the proceeds of the crop and rightly so because if there is one pool of foreign exchange earned by this country that goes into the Central Bank itself it is the proceeds from the sale of our sugar to international markets.

Sir, we have a situation obtaining in Barbados whereby year by year with no difficulty the Central Bank of Barbados provided an advance against the crop. When the moneys were paid in, Sir, they had first call on the receipts. We are now hearing that this country has to go to Holland to raise a foreign loan at two points above LIBOR in order to finance the reaping of the sugar harvest in Barbados. I find it incredible and I do not for the life of me begin to understand why we have to be put to these kinds of experience.

I am aware, Sir, that there are people in the International Monetary Fund who have a very doctrinaire approach to the creation of credit by any Central Bank. Surely it cannot be beyond the grasp of Government that the temporary creation of credit for the purpose of carrying out a foreign exchange earning activity in our country is an activity that is desirable and should be treated in an entirely different capacity than the Central Bank creating credit or printing money to support activities that have nothing whatsoever to do with the earning of foreign exchange and the protection of the balance of payments. I really for the life of me cannot understand how the capacity of the Central Bank to provide an advance to support an activity that earns foreign exchange could be caught up in the same wash as the Central Bank's provision of credit to support activities that do not do the same thing.

I am saying all of this, Mr. Speaker, to come to my main point that I do not believe that we should come to

accept things which are now becoming part and parcel of our economic landscape. I do not believe that year by year this country should find itself having to raise foreign loans in order to finance the sugar crop. We have been able year by year from the time there was a sugar industry in this country to get the industry financed without having to incur a foreign exchange interest cost from the proceeds of the sugar industry just to make sure that money goes to pay labour and things of this character. One has to cry out about these things at an early stage, Sir, because once they become part and parcel of the economic landscape people can come to accept them as what should be the norm. I sense that the Minister of Finance is in a mood of congratulating himself for having raised the loan for this purpose. It obviously is not going to affect the net foreign exchange position of the Central Bank because it comes in as a short-term liability anyhow and while it will boost the gross receipts of foreign exchange temporarily it has to be levelled off in calculating the country's net foreign exchange reserves.

I want to say this evening, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if it is at all feasible and it should be feasible, that we ought in the interest of maximising our foreign exchange return from the sugar industry not to have to cast the industry indefinitely in a position where year by year it has to borrow abroad for the purposes of financing the crop so that at the end of the day there is a foreign exchange leakage in the form of the interest attached to that loan and this loan is two points above LIBOR could in the circumstances of....be an expensive loan. Put the Central Bank of Barbados back in the position where it can provide advances to any productive sector in Barbados if the purpose of the creation of such credit is the earning of foreign exchange or the carrying out of a foreign exchange earning activity. I do not see, Sir, how anybody in Barbados of right mind could want to criticise that and I therefore do not understand how the Government could now find itself in a position where we have to be looking for sources other than the Central Bank to provide financing for the reaping of the crop.
6.20 p.m.

The final point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the Barbados National Bank has handled in a very horrible way the withholding tax on the interest on its savings accounts as required by the 1993 Amendment to the Income Tax Act. Many people who hold deposits with the Barbados National Bank were surprised to find withholding tax being deducted from their interest. I know as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, that many people also approached the National Bank and they believed that some mistake had been made. The first point I wish to make on this particular matter is that the Barbados National Bank has a responsibility to treat its customers in a far better way than has been the case in this particular instance. There are many people who have been so upset with the way in

which it has been sprung on them. Many of them are even in the process of reviewing their relationship with the Bank. The Bank must not presume that merely because a piece of legislation passed Parliament that would fundamentally affect the relationship between itself and its customers to let them know. I think it had a responsibility to handle the matter in such a way that the people would be aware of the change and what it would have done to them.

But the larger point, Mr. Speaker, based on experience is that I believe that it would have been better had that withholding tax on interest on BNB deposits been on- new deposits after a particular date rather than all deposits that have been there from the inception of the Bank. A large number of people place deposits with the Barbados National Bank with the reasonable expectation provided to them by law that the interest earned on the deposit will not be subject to any tax at all. The deposit base of the Barbados National Bank was built up in large respects because it had that particular advantage. I feel that if you are going to make a radical change in policy, Sir, let it therefore apply to new deposits. But where people have acted in reasonable expectation and the Government was serious, about a policy it had in place, I think that it is a tremendous infringement to pursue a course of action contrary to what people would expect. I am not going to speculate as to whether there has been a run on the deposits, nor am I going to say that it ought to be. But I think that we ought to avoid these kinds of situations where you create an institution, tell people to invest in the institution and if you do so you can get your interest tax free and then come afterwards and change the whole situation. Make it applicable to the new deposits or something of the character, Sir. But what has happened in this particular instance, Mr. Speaker, has not gone down well with the public and I want to bring it to the attention of the Minister that the Bank in the interest of its own financial activity has a major public relations job to undertake in order to repair and to safeguard its name and good standing with its depositors.

Sir, my contribution to this debate is to bring to the House's attention the need for the Bank to comply with the law in relation to the publication of its accounts, to urge that the Central Bank of Barbados can be again put in a position where it can provide advances to its foreign exchange earning sectors of the economy as is not presently the case and also to state that there really needs to be a drastic change in the customer relations with the Barbados National Bank. My colleagues will deal with the legal aspects of this particular matter.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Sir, as is well known, I am one on a team who advises the lessors of the indebted estates in their dealings with the Barbados Agricultural Management Corporation.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I have said so on at least three occasions in this House. I am, therefore, familiar with some of the problems that have arisen in the implementation of the change in the units of production and structure, of temporary ownership of the 12 to 14 thousand acres of land which hitherto prior to the leases were farmed as individual units but are now being farmed as a single unit under the management of the Barbados Agricultural Management Corporation. I am also familiar with the fact that the Barbados Agricultural Management Corporation has undertaken the management by way of lease of the assets of Barbados Sugar Industries Limited who hitherto operated at the factories or processing end of the sugar industry in Barbados.

Now it is claimed and there is all expectation that as a result of these two measures there will be savings in the production of sugar in Barbados to the extent of that part of production which hitherto was attributable to the 12 000 acres of land and also as a result of the integration of that production with the processing arm of the factories that there will also be some savings.

I think it is important, Sir, that we recognise that the Barbados National Bank as the holder of the debt in these two areas of agricultural activity unfortunately will no longer be now because of the purchase by the Government of the \$208 million debt the banker to the industry. I think that is unfortunate because, while it is claimed that this portfolio with some justification had had the effect of interfering seriously with the profitability of the Bank, the fact remains that arrangements could have been made for the removal of this contaminated end of the portfolio and the important role that was played by the National Bank in ensuring that domestic savings went to the sugar industry as opposed to savings of other people's savings we are going to lose some element of what I would regard as an important part of the finance to the industry. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has pointed out already that there is going to be a cost to this. I would like to endorse every word that he said. It is a matter of national tragedy that in this country in 1994 Barbados cannot find a bank that is willing to lend to the sugar industry sufficient domestic finance to permit the sugar industry to pay for labour and other start-up costs for a sugar crop which has a guaranteed market which can only be shipped by one entity to a single entity and the price is guaranteed. This is something we should say. What has happened to us? I feel very strongly about this because I was one of those who in the 1960's and 1970's strongly believed that black people in Barbados would never make progress unless we had some control over financial institutions, banks and insurance companies.

6.30 p.m.

One of the principal instruments that the Barbados Labour Party created to effectuate this objective was the Barbados National Bank and I am ashamed that the Democratic Labour Party has run it into the position today where the former Member for St. John has obviously achieved his objective in descending it to a piggy bank. He always said on the Floor of this House that black people should not have it. The Honourable Member used to say on the Floor of this House and the Honourable Member who was not in here...

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I regard it as a national scandal that in Barbados today in the banking system we cannot persuade any of the banks in Barbados to finance the sugar crop. That is a matter of shame. That is a big issue with us on this side. If you look at this matter in that light you must want to know what has happened. There cannot be any doubt about it, something is wrong there. This is another institution.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter mentioned a very valid point about the non-reporting in accordance with the Act. But there is another point. Everybody knows that there is not a Chief Executive of the Barbados National Bank. The Board is responsible for that. As a public institution we are entitled to raise these matters in Parliament and no attempt at heckling will stop us from raising these matters in Parliament and the Minister who is responsible for it is accountable to Parliament as to why it is that today after nearly a year that the Barbados National Bank does not have a Head that is permanent. It is obviously reflected upon its standard of operation. These are important matters. This is a national institution devised and created with the objectives of ensuring that the instrument of economic enfranchisement become available to the broad mass of people.

There is one mistake we made. We appointed a Dem as the Head once. That is one mistake we made. I freely confess to the fact that the Barbados Labour Party made a mistake in appointing a Dem as the Head because we should have known the inherent characteristic that he would be in there from the beginning trying to sabotage it or pervert it. That is the position. We really want to have the Minister accountable. The Minister must tell Parliament *why is it* that the Barbados National Bank cannot attract a candidate for the "post of Head. It is a very serious matter.

Now, Sir, as to the legal points arising on this, I do not want anybody to get any false impressions. All of the tying of the legal formalities with respect to the leases have not been completed and I think it should be well known that it is partially the good will of the lessors that the sugar industry is operating today under the integrated system

which the Government wishes to see implemented. There is no question about that. Today none of the provisions in relation to the payment for rent have been adhered to. None of the provisions in relation to the reimbursement of the expenses which took place in relation to the planting of cane in October and November year before last and last year, nor the reimbursement in respect of the expenditures that were incurred after the last financial year between June and September when the take over was, has been paid. That is a fact. You do not hear about these things but that is a reality.

The basic position is that while bragging and boasting has gone along about the implementation of these major reforms the naked truth is that all of the formalities have not been completed. The second instance is...

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The Honourable Member is behaving like a little boy that when he does not get his own way...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member knows...

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: ...tries to break up the conversation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think you should respond to that.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: When he is told that he is not to talk and he must keep quiet he tries to break up the conversation.

Mr. SPEAKER: If that is what the Honourable Member requires. I *will* do that but I don't think I need to.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I do not understand why he is making all of that noise, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member obviously knows very well what the Standing Orders say in respect of Members speaking.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: He knows, Sir. But he seems to be very agitated today. I do not understand why today he is so agitated. This baby that he has been pronouncing about how well it has been fostered and how well it is going, all of a sudden reality has come home. Nobody has any confidence in the Honourable Member. If not, they would have lent the sugar industry money. They would not have had to go to Holland. As the Honourable Member for St. Peter said, to have to pay out foreign exchange in order to reduce the amount of foreign exchange that you were getting. Therefore, Sir, I now understand why the Honourable Member is "touchous".

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: If they had confidence in the Honourable Member they would have put up the money. That shows there is no confidence here in Barbados in the Honourable Member.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am saying to the Honourable Member, don't listen to that.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am not worried about the Honourable Member and his asides, Sir. I understand why the former Minister of Health would heckle me.

Asides.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Now, Sir, we come to the technical points in relation to this.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am asking Honourable Members not to disturb the Honourable Member in his presentation.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The position is that grave disputes have arisen with respect to priorities between creditors of the sugar industry, non-national bank creditors and the National Bank.
6.40 p.m.

Since the Government has taken over the \$208 million and, as I understand it, the National Bank is under an obligation in return for the Government bonds, the money that is taken over for this debt, they have to assign the securities that they have holding on these properties to the new institution, the Agricultural Credit Trust. Disputes have arisen as to the value of these securities and this is an attempt to cure the problems.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am not going to say whether it has been a successful or unsuccessful attempt because, Sir, I have no doubt that if those who think that they have prior claims as to whether those claims consist of debentures or other instruments, that there are institutions in Barbados who settle those difficulties and there are people who are there skilled in that area to settle those difficulties so I am not going to pre-empt or give any gratuitous opinion about that. I am not going to do that.

The basic position is, what I want to emphasize is that there are disputes with respect to the value of that

\$208 million. That is one dispute. That is in the sense that the securities which are backing the \$208 million there are disputes as to priorities with some of it. The non-Barbados National Bank lenders form a relatively small proportion of the creditors.

The other point is another very important one and that is that there is dispute and I think everybody should know that there is a raging dispute as to how that \$208 million is made up. There is a dispute as to interest, as to what component of that is interest. There are one or two substantial areas of differences of opinion in respect of the finalization of these matters. I want to make it clear that my reason for saying these things is very clear because the impression is being consistently put abroad by the propagandists in the Ministry of Finance and otherwise that this great re-organisation is *a fait accompli*, all is well, and that this is one of the great areas of structural reform which will be so productive in the very near future that it will be one of the engines of growth in the Barbadian economy in the year 1994. I just want to disabuse anyone who is of the opinion that there are not difficulties ahead in this area.

Now, Sir, there is only one other thing about the National Bank that I would like to emphasize and I really hope that now that this area of the portfolio has been removed that it be clearly understood that this Barbados Labour Party clearly believes that there is a fundamental role still to be performed by the Barbados National Bank in achieving the objective of a fair use of the resources of Barbados by Barbadians.

I still believe, Sir, that the Barbados National Bank, had it not been taken off course, could have been the catalyst for the movement of a Caribbean indigenous bank stretching from Trinidad and running right through to Jamaica. All the groundwork was laid for it. There were meetings. There was exchange of executives. All of the groundwork was there. We will never progress in this area unless we understand that when the politicians create these institutions, those who are honoured to run these institutions, must understand that when they run them they must run them to fulfil the objectives of their creators and that they are accountable.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Nobody is blaming the Honourable Member. He is a "Johnny-come-lately". Do not mind him, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Why is the Honourable Member paying attention to that? I am asking the Honourable Member not to...

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The Honourable Member just come and he is talking as though he has been here a

long time. He has just come so he wants noticing. That is the position.

The basic position is, Sir, that these are important institutions. I hope that the Honourable Member will understand that he has a responsibility to ensure that during his tenure, however short it is as Minister of Finance, must see to it that the Barbados National Bank is properly staffed with people who can fulfil that very important mandate.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I anticipated that this debate would not have gone into all of the issues which arose. I want to lend the assurance to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that the certified audited accounts of the Bank would shortly be available. A dispute has been raging between the auditors and the Bank. I do not really want to call it a dispute. It is an accounting exercise which related to the question of the loan loss provision and the Honourable Member for St. Peter knows this.

The Government had to make some decision about that contaminated portfolio and therefore the audited financial statements could not be completed until that decision was made. Now that that decision is made, the Barbados National Bank's accounts will reflect that it is in a much stronger position than people probably even anticipated.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter also knows that despite attempts by a certain newspaper in this country, which was the subject of court action some time ago which is now completed, to show that the BNB was insolvent, as they said, that it had very little impact in terms of the deposits in the Barbados National Bank. There is confidence in the Barbados National Bank by those small depositors, and the large ones, and that newspaper probably had to pay out more for that front page story...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No. A local Barbadian newspaper that carried a story about the Barbados National Bank and as a result of that paid out substantial sums of money to the Barbados National Bank in recent times. Notwithstanding that story, splashing it across the headlines that it was insolvent, it had very little impact in relation to the deposits in that institution. That says something about the BNB. So that instead of what we are hearing today from the Honourable Member for Christ Church South about people making it into a penny bank and running it into the ground, the Barbadian people and the investors in the Barbados National Bank do not share his vision of the BNB or of themselves. I am grateful for that. I credit that more to the Democratic Labour Party's enlightened policies

in the sixties, when you are quite right, I was a rohnie come lately and the more recent policies which it has pursued. 6.50 p.m.

The point however is that once the audited financial statements are ready they will be published. But the Honourable Member for St. Peter does not have to fear. Nobody else has to fear. We will seek to comply with the law so long as those kinds of disputes do not create problems.

It is quite correct that the Minister of Finance has given the Bank the extension which is required under the legislation in respect of the completion of the certified audited accounts.

But let us talk about the financing of the sugar industry because this is a remarkable debate we have just heard, Mr. Speaker. To think that those two minds over there, great as they are, could converge in such a simple-minded perspective on investment in Barbados is amazing. I do not know, Mr. Speaker. I am shocked.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South was a Minister. When he was Minister of Finance perhaps there were a few loans in one or two of the other private banks but 95% of the loans in the sugar sector were made by the BNB, one Bank over which he, as Minister of Finance, had control. Now that other people are interested in investing in the sugar sector he said that was a lack of confidence in us. The institution through which we direct the finance. In other words as between my decision to let the BNB lend or advise the Board that the BNB could lend and a decision to encourage others to invest in our sugar sector he feels that I should let the Barbados National Bank, whose resources are guaranteed by the taxpayers of Barbados and are just as much at risk as anybody else, to lend that money before anybody else should lend it. What kind of financial nonsense, what kind of investment concept does he have, that a non-Barbadian Bank is willing to put up foreign exchange to finance a sugar crop in this country, a country in which they have never ever had an operation before, at short notice at a rate of slightly 2% above LIBOR which is cheaper – You go and check what the Central Bank's sugar discount line interest rate was – You know so much about it, go and check.

And then we are hearing a lot of foolishness in this debate about, "we never had foreign financing for the sugar crop." Even in the past two years we have had foreign financing, I think it was a Barclays Bank advance for the sugar crop. This is nothing new. What has happened in this case...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am going to get to that too. That is the problem with economists, Mr. Speaker. They are so intent on showing you what the mystery of their art is, like lawyers, that they feel that everybody else has no understanding. Here you have a Bank, as I have said, based in London financing commodity operations throughout the world, investing in a country which they say is not credit-worthy has precarious foreign reserves, fiscal disarray, a Government that is corrupt, all of those things they get and say in here every week.

People can come from outside of this country, spend four days in Barbados, see the same reforms which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said are a joke. I do not even know how he described them but they are supposed to be my baby. Look at all of that and invest in this country and the Honourable Member for St. Peter dismisses that as something that is not to be welcomed and something that is to be discouraged.

In January last year the Honourable Member for St. Peter was walking around telling people that we are out and about cap in hand scraping up a little \$5 million here and a little \$5 million there from the major banks on Broad Street and we could not even raise a foreign loan. That is what they were saying in January that we were scraping up a few little ends from Royal Bank, Barclays and so on and we are not credit-worthy and that the reserves were declining. We heard all of that. Today £12 million sterling for the sugar sector, a sector which they felt was going to collapse.

Do you believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is the sector which they have constantly been saying we ran into the ground? Somebody can come from outside of Barbados, a company that deals with the sugar sector in all parts of the world and can say "Yes we will finance Your sugar crop." But it just means that there is something about people living outside of Barbados, something that they believe about us that people over there do not understand. It is a credit to the persons who have undertaken that reform in the sugar sector.

What is the net loss? He says the interest payments. I have already indicated that there has been foreign borrowing particularly I think from Barclays Bank two years ago to help finance the sugar crop. He said never before has this been done. That is what the Honourable Member for St. Peter said. He traced it back. Never before in the history of sugar production have we had to borrow money to finance the operations of the sugar crop externally.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What last few years? He does not know what he is talking about. That is the

problem. In the last two years we have done it. The sugar discount line provided by the Central Bank is not directly lent by the Central Bank to the sugar sector. It is lent to the Barbados National Bank and they charge an interest rate on it. It is not any gift or any simple financing arrangement. If we can find cheaper funds from another source whether it is other people's borrowing or not, I think it is a good idea.

In terms of the credit patterns in the private sector, particularly those patterns which have caused a decline in the reserves – the shift in credit to the private sector – it makes more sense if Government can access some foreign financing for additional credit to the private sector. There is no economist in the world other than the Honourable Member for St. Peter who would question that. The problem is he has not addressed his mind to it. People who know less than him have followed him in that folly in this particular debate. That is precisely what has happened. Nobody has to jump up and down in glee when foreign financing is available for the sugar crop in Barbados. One wishes that we did not have to look for foreign financing. But taken 'against the background that you have a sugar industry which as I have said, given all the circumstances that they pointed out, was supposed to be a total disarray that all we are saying as a Government is that availability of finance is an indication of confidence, the kind of confidence which Honourable Members over there are trying so hard to destroy. That is the problem. That the Honourable Member for Christ Church South could not get up and find it in his mind on any occasion that he has debated the sugar industry to acknowledge that at least something was happening with reforms. He has not found a moment to say that any idea was a good idea. All he has said is that that arrangement cannot work. All he has done, whether behind the scenes or in here, is to try to pour cold water on nearly every single reform and I say so. If he does not like it he can get up and deny it, both in this Chamber and out.

I do not own a sugar plantation, not even a share in one. He knows where his bread is buttered. At the end of the day I do not benefit from any restructuring of the sugar industry except that when this country earns foreign exchange, its citizens can buy the goods and services that they need to carry out their daily living. I want to make that point because when people put energy and time — not just in Government — in trying to reform a sector and those reforms can be pooh-poohed as if nothing has happened then it must strike at the very core of the efforts which are being made in this country to restructure this economy.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South said that we boast so much about these reforms. We have a lot to boast about in reforming the sugar sector.

A lot. Not just the access to that financing. The fact that the same goodwill which he says is available, the fact that it is even available is a statement of confidence because, for that matter, the mere fact that these same lessors which he speaks of who, even though they have not been paid their rent, according to him, even though they have not been reimbursed for their expenses for cane growing are still interested in working with the Government of Barbados in restructuring the sugar sector. If that is not a statement...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. George South has put his finger on it. That is what you have to understand about the Barbadian private sector that they do not have any choice but to function, if they wish their investments to grow and develop, than to work with the Government which is executing the policies. I am not afraid to say that. I am going to say it in here because you like to walk about and tell people about 'who are buying shares in the Port and who is doing this and the great white hopes of this world. But we are not on any bended knee Mr. Speaker. I am saying that the private sector in Barbados, whether in the sugar sector, in the financial sector, in any sector, has no choice, none whatsoever, but to buckle down now and seek to work with the Government if they want their investments to be successful and to grow. They can choose the adversarial approach if they wish, but I am saying right now that they have no choice.
7.00 p.m.

I heard a couple of months ago that the financing of the sugar crop would be a major problem, that there were no banks in Barbados willing to provide that finance. But I heard statements in here from Honourable Members over there that they did not say approaches were made to commercial banks in Barbados, they dropped short of that. They said that no domestic financing is available for the sugar sector. That is what they said. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South said *it* is a crying shame that domestic finance is not available to finance ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two Honourable Members are on their feet.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. Precisely, the Honourable Member has corrected himself because what I said is that I regard it as a crying shame that there is such a lack of confidence in Barbados in the sugar industry that no bank would provide domestic finance. That is what I said.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, only one bank was providing it before and it is that bank that

was about to collapse under the weight of that indebtedness. But the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is still saying to this Chamber that that bank should continue to lend to the sugar sector. I am finding it so difficult to fathom and understand how the Honourable Members on that side feel the restructuring of the sugar industry should take place and why when they had the chance the former Chairman of the Agricultural Development Corporation ...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Peter. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South who said his only error is that the Government appointed a Dem as the Chief Executive of the Barbados National Bank had all those ... What effort did they make, Mr. Speaker, either to secure financing from other sources or to restructure the sugar industry in this country? None whatsoever.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is the point but if you were such a great economist and so well advised you would realise that the size of the sugar crop is no indication or there may be no direct relation between that and the levels of profitability. So to say that you have 110 000 tonne crop does not mean anything because there is a point at which ...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We are going to the optimum level, that is what we are going to do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us have some order. Please. Please. Please. I think we can quiet down a little bit.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, they have not even worked out what the optimum level for the sugar crop is. They do not know. And you know why they do not know? They have never undertaken any serious reform in the sugar sector, they have never looked at the sector properly and they were not courageous enough to undertake the reforms to save this industry. Only about 18 months, Mr. Speaker, this process of reform. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South wants to tell the public that the reform is not complete. But nobody has ever said, not in this debate or anywhere else, that the reform of the sugar sector is complete.

There are a lot of things that have to be done and I wish he would get ^{with} his colleagues and do them because the issue as to who is paying rent and when is not an issue for a policy maker. That is an issue for the people

on Pinfold Street, Spry Street, and elsewhere who are being paid fees to do the work for their clients, whether it be Government or the Plantations owners. That is not my business. That is what they should be doing. How could you bring a debate to the level where what you are in fact doing is saying that the things you should be doing the Government should be doing. The instructions have gone out already. The Government knows what it wants done and it is therefore for those who are charged with that job who are supposed to do it. But the problem is that sometimes they do not even know who is retaining who because every time they have a meeting 6 of them come in with 6 different views and it is so difficult that in the end what has to happen is that with all the goodwill and so on the Government still has to muscle in on the situation and indicate what will happen. That is essentially what has happened. And I do not care what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has said. If there were 14 options in the sugar sector we looked at all 14, both legally and otherwise to give everybody a fair chance. We tried all.

I want to go on Mr. Speaker, to deal with the issue of the appointment of a Chief Executive at the Barbados National Bank.

When the new mandate and the restructuring for the Barbados National Bank is fully worked out with the Inter-American Development Bank, based on our analysis of the reports of the consultants who have already reported, when that mandate is put in place a decision will be made as to who will carry out that mandate. It does not make sense to appoint a Chief Executive at this point until we have determined what is the future of the Barbados National Bank, whether it will continue to lend in the agricultural sector, whether it will be a penny bank, whether it will be privatised, whether it will be chartered under the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act and what kind of future it has as a financial institution. We have to look at all of those issues but it does not make sense to appoint a Chief Executive unless he knows what his mandate is. And it is as simple as that. That cannot be that difficult for Honourable Members on that side to understand.

The last point I want to make, Mr. Speaker ...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The appointment will come in due course. Shortly. I will put it that way.

The last point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, relates to the value of the bonds. A lot of people do not seem to understand what the position is with that. The Government bought out \$208 million of the BNB's debt. That debt has not been assigned to anything. Right now that debt cannot

be categorised as agricultural debt, commercial debt, or any other kind of debt. It is simply a sum that has been purchased from the Barbados National Bank and as a result of that purchase, Mr. Speaker, once we agree with the owners of, the indebted estates on the level of their indebtedness and once we agree on the rate of interest, at that point, Mr. Speaker, the debt will be assigned to the various securities.

There cannot be any doubt that the security is in place so there is no dispute about the securities. The dispute is about the level of the indebtedness of the individual plantations and whether the Barbados National Bank has the right to charge a certain amount of interest or not, in respect of that debt. That is all it is. Therefore it appears to me that the best way to deal with issues like that, Mr. Speaker, is to sit down with the owners of the plantations and seek to resolve them. Regrettably, Mr. Speaker, that has not yet taken place. I hope that the same goodwill that we are hearing so much about from Honourable Members on that side is going to apply in the discussions as they take place and now that they have heard all of the answers to their argument you will notice, Mr. Speaker that they have switched the attack to other things.

7.10 p.m.

But on each occasion that we have had to debate the sugar industry the same bogus arguments, Mr. Speaker, are being presented by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who is intimately involved in that restructuring. Of course, one can safely ignore the Honourable Member for St. Peter because, even when he was at the ADC as Chairman, he did not understand what he was doing and I do not anticipate that he could restructure anything whether given the opportunity or not given it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

COMMrri L E

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 5 – TO MOVE THE THIRD READING OF THE EVIDENCE BILL, 1992

Hon. M. A. KING: Sir, I move that this Bill be now read a third time subject to a technical amendment in the year to read 1994 rather than 1992.

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

On the motion of Hon. M. A. KING, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, the Bill was passed and cited as the Evidence Act, 1994.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of the House wants to resort to Item: Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches. If there is no objection, then leave can be granted.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, very early this year I was very shocked indeed to learn of the death of Iona Violet Hall the mother of the Minister of Labour and also, Sir, I would have to add a former constituent of mine. Indeed, Sir, for all the time that I have representing or have been a candidate in the constituency that I now represent Iona Violet Hall had been living in the community known as Grazettes and more specifically in Brecon Road. At the time of her death I think she was about 76 years of age and I would venture to say, Sir, that it was an age ripe in experience and ripe in richness because I verily believe that she was a very good woman. She mothered two children naturally in the person of the Minister to whom I made reference and another child by the name of Lewellyn. I said naturally because she was indeed the mother almost to all of Grazettes. I happen to know this. Anyone frequenting Grazettes generally could find nourishment at her home there in Brecon Road and not only people from Grazettes but anyone who happened to go to her home would know in fact that they would not go away empty.

We talk nowadays about role models. In my opinion, Sir, she perhaps was more a role model par excellence. I have never known or heard of her to speak anything in anger or to say anything loudly. She was a very God-fearing woman attending for many years a little church in Grazettes that she loved. She was at home among

her people in Grazettes without doubt, Sir. She was uncomfortable living anywhere else because Grazettes had been her home for many years. The quality of the woman was so well known not only to the people of Grazettes but to much of Barbados that the church where the funeral service was held was filled and overflowing and it was not the little church to which I made reference earlier. It shows the type of person that Barbados can ill-afford to lose and certainly Grazettes could ill-afford to lose, but I believe that those who knew her as I did know her will feel that indeed here was a good woman who was one worthy of emulation.
7.20 p.m.

She was interred at the Christ Church Parish Church on the 11th day of January. I can only say that I do personally, and speaking for the Government — and maybe others may want to speak — regret her passing. Now, Sir, with those few words which are usually added when one is ending a tribute of this nature: "May she rest in peace."

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of Members of the Opposition I would wish to join the Leader of the House in endorsing the sentiments expressed about the life, times and character of the late Mrs. Hall. I do not think many of us on this side knew her very well. We certainly knew of her by repute and all that the Leader of the House has said we have heard and readily accept.

She would surely have passed on secure in the knowledge that she gave to Barbados 2 sons who have been outstanding in their respective spheres: one more famous internationally than the other but both persons who have made contributions to the countries in which they have spent the majority of their adult lives. In particular, most of us will be familiar with the Honourable Minister of Labour and Transport but I had the good fortune to have known Llewellyn when I was in London in the 60's and he lived in England.

I understand also, having attended the funeral, that Mrs. Hall was happy that before her death her son, the Minister, had been touched by the hand of the Lord and had become even closer to her spiritually than before and he himself confessed at the funeral that he was able to make what I have heard several people say has been the best eulogy that they have heard in years and without the kind of sadness that perhaps would have been part of his nature 2 years before. Rather, now that he has been born again as a Christian he was able to do the eulogy with a certain aplomb which is not normally the wont of persons affected by death. His whole character and personality has changed and I am sure she was happy that he became as fervent a Christian as she had been when he was born again a few years ago.

Sir, death is an occasion of sadness and regret for all of us when it comes and those who remain behind as relatives are filled with sorrow. We on this side were deeply saddened by the passing of Mrs. Hall, but we wish her son to know that we were with him in his hour of grief and at the same time we are happy to have shared his acquaintance for some many years now. He should know that we feel with him the passing of his mother as much as he has felt.

I think, Mr. Speaker, you know that the Minister of Labour and Transport has a special place in the consciousness and the hearts of us on this side because of his personality, his attitude. These gifts we believe have been imparted to him through the experience of his mother who almost singlehandedly was responsible for raising and rearing.

On behalf of the Members of the Opposition, I wish to tender sincerest condolences at this the first opportunity we have had to pay tribute to the Minister's mother and to join with the Leader of the House in saying, "May she rest in peace."

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to join the Leader of the House and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in according tribute to a colleague and his mother. I had the privilege over 40 years of being a beneficiary of her hand, her tongue, her love and a whole lot of other things which allow me to speak in a personal capacity and say that although we are sorry that she has gone we are glad that we had the experience of her.

As the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central was able to speak easily and comfortably -about the tremendous bond between his mother, his grandmother and his brother. Anyone who experienced that over time could note with pleasure that the Honourable Member had recorded accurately a number of incidents and episodes in a very classic statement which he made on January 11th.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member's mother gave to the world a unique pair of children. In particular, the Honourable Member who sits in this House with us has had a unique talent which most of us have taken for granted but which his mother never took for granted. Anyone who was even remotely familiar with her and anyone whom she regarded sufficiently to talk about it would have been aware very early that she always regarded his great talent on the cricket field as a gift straight from God. She always felt and said that she would be forever grateful to God for his talent.

7.30 p.m.

She, always felt and said that she would be forever grateful to God for his talent and that he would have to

answer to God himself for that talent. So I know she was very happy when as she came towards the end of her life she was able to say to all who would listen that her glory had been fulfilled. I think those were the actual words she used.

The Honourable Member, as a very young man, demonstrated his fear of his mother in many ways but that was passed on to all of the other youngsters who had much occasion to visit with her. Even so any of his friends in the early years could withstand that fear because it is still true that she was one of the best cooks the world has ever seen and she always had a lot of food for all who could even manage to get to the house. I spent a lot of time, Sir, going long distances to accompany the Honourable Member to school primarily to be a beneficiary of his mother's cooking.

She also had, as I am sure Your Honour would recall, other things to give and she was never short of wisdom to pass on. She was never stingy with love and, indeed, when she did not have to give she somehow knew where to find sufficient to share. There are many, many constituents in St. Michael West and St. Michael West Central and indeed, all around Barbados, who would wish me to put on record their sincere appreciation of the life of this very dear woman. I would wish to end by hoping that somehow her memory will be commemorated in that little church or somewhere near that little church which has become a hallmark with people from that place and of that time. It is difficult sometimes, Sir, when paying tributes of this kind, for someone who has been close to you not to become carried away. But suffice it to say that there is hardly anything that can be said about this good woman that would be too much. On that note I hope that Wes who is going to be devastated over a fairly long time by the loss of his mother because of the closeness, will take comfort in the knowledge that there were so many thousands of people who loved and respected her.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central would feel that even though we do not all stand in our places and express words of strong sentiments such as you heard so far, that we actually feel it. I feel, however, that I have a duty to add a few words to all that has been said principally because of our very long association, the association between the Honourable Member and myself which goes back to just 50 years when we went to school at St. Giles, but more particularly because Llewelyn who is not here to hear the sentiments expressed, would be disappointed if he picked up that I did not say something.

Llewelyn and I were in the same class in primary school for 5 years and sat together. I had a responsibility that was delegated to me by Llewelyn to go to the

assistance of his younger brother Wesley. When Wesley was under pressure in the classroom and we could look across from our class and see him crying, I had the responsibility to go across on occasion to find out what was going wrong and report back to Llewelyn and in many cases to try and solve the problem. You see in those days I had the licence of the school and therefore I moved around as I pleased. One of the things that stood out all through those years is the fact that both sons, Llewelyn and Wesley, had hearts as big as the great outdoors and that is something that has not changed throughout the period of time. They were both extremely generous people.

Now, I know that at times of expressing these feelings of sympathy for the loss of someone, one must maintain a certain level of seriousness but Wes at the funeral of his mother spoke in his own inimitable style that made us feel that, as he said and as we often hear at these funeral ceremonies, that it was partly an Occasion of rejoicing. The way that he spoke demonstrated that.

I would like in reflecting on much of what I have known of Wesley and Llewelyn to say one or two things that always have remained very much there in my mind. When we were in primary school there used to be races at the Garrison on Thursdays and Saturdays and there used to be half days in Barbados for people that work to go to the Garrison. I know that it was often difficult to prevail on Wesley that Thursdays were for school rather than for the Garrison. Even though in those days he was very afraid of corporal punishment, which was very much the norm in the school at St. Giles, as I believe it was in many other primary schools in Barbados, yet the pull to go to the Garrison was such that there was a constant conflict over whether there should be school or the Garrison. Over and above this, there was the inhibiting factor of his mother's discipline which I would always hear from Llewelyn who would say "he may take his chances but he has to answer to his mother when he gets home."

I do not know of Mrs. Hall in the way in which others have spoken because I did not know of her in recent times but I believe I have also a recollection of having seen her when she spoke to me at a Speech Day and Prize-giving at St. Giles School either in 1947 or 1948. We were little fellows then. She came to the school and spoke to me because I was Llewelyn's friend. From what she said to me it was clear that my name had been mentioned for good or evil in her home, either by Llewelyn or Wes. I believe if it was for good it would have been from Llewelyn, and if it was for ill it would have been from Wes. I do not want to dwell on it but it would not be too pleasing to my friend of very many years, Llewelyn in this case, because I deal with Wes all the time, if Llewelyn thought that an opportunity like this was presented to me to say something on this very important occasion and I had not done so.

I saw Llewelyn on January 11 this year at the funeral of his mother and it was the first time I had seen him for over 37 years. The way in which we greeted each other, even at the funeral, reflected the strength of the relationship that we have enjoyed from our childhood.

I too personally express my sentiments for the passing of the mother of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, my friend of longstanding, and do also share the hope that he will bounce back from what has, to my certain knowledge, been a very traumatic experience because of the very strong links between him and his mother. I hope he will bounce back in the way that I know he is capable of.

Mr. SPEAKER: Had I know Wes' mother as well as I knew his grandmother, I suppose I would be able to speak volumes. But one thing is certain, as the old people say, "the berry does not fall far from the tree." From what I gather from Members who have had a closer relationship with her than I did, it is almost true to say that that legacy from grandmother to mother, and to son, is a real good example of true Barbadian life.

7.40 p.m.

I think one of the things in our lives we should always try to reflect on about those who have passed on is the good things, the positive things they have left for us to follow. In the end we are able to produce what we always know, "by their fruits ye shall know them".

I think Wes could be happy that he came from a family that has allowed him to bring out the best. I may even say that I thought I knew Wes longer than anyone else in here but I am surprised that the Honourable Member knew him from 5 years old. Certainly I knew Wes with this grandmother visiting my grandmother's home as a little fellow. Little did I know that I would have met him at Combermere School again.

Another interesting thing was that we all used to play games and Wes was a wicketkeeper and everything except a bowler. It surprised me how such inborn gifts could be hidden for such a long time and then explode at a point in life when you least expect it. But furthermore that kind of example and upbringing has been exemplified in his own behavioural pattern in this Parliament. I have never had to say anything that could be considered harsh about his remarks or any contribution. These are the kinds of characteristics and features that I hope that children should be able to reflect on when they grow up and pay this kind of respect and homage to their parents who have produced such good fine examples for our country.

I think all has been said that I would want to say in terms of Wes' bereavement but I want to assure him that

even though I was not around for the funeral I got word of it and I was hoping that someone from my family would have been able to represent me there. I am not so sure that it did happen but if it did not, take it not as one who is not interested at the time of your own grief.

However on behalf of my family and myself I want to extend our sincerest condolences to you and hope that even in the loss you may be strengthened to carry further on the work you need to do both politically and as a Christian. At the end of the Honourable Member's statement we should therefore rise as customary for one minute silence and in so doing pass the Resolution expressing our own condolences from this House to the family of the bereaved.

Hon. W. W. HALL: Mr. Speaker, for once in my life I do not have the inclination to be loquacious but I would wish to let all the Members of this Honourable House know, through you, how much my brother and I and our families appreciate the sentiments expressed not only here this evening but certainly in the last two or three weeks when all Members were very supportive, not only going to the funeral and things like that, but we were very touched at the wonderful way in which we were treated.

I think Sir, that you know, as indeed some other Members of this Honourable Chamber, know how I feel because my grandmother was an employee of your grandmother for well over 50 years and our families have been very close. I was a product of a single family but my mother tackled that problem with such fortitude and aplomb that it never really bothered me having sprung from the proletariat. She was a great woman. In all of my undertakings she was the one that gave me hope. My mother never went to a cricket match but for one day, yet she played every cricket match I played. My mother has never been to the Garrison yet she rode every winner that my son rode whether it was at the Garrison, in Australia, England or in Hong Kong.

I just should like to say to the Members how deeply touched I am for the great support that they have given me in my hour of distress. It seems to me that even though

death comes as they say like a thief in the night we never seem to get accustomed to it although you know it is a reality. Even three weeks after the demise of my mother I must confess to you, Sir, that I am still feeling the pangs of not only frustration at times but certainly; I have been rather distressed.

But to be honest with you my mother was very well prepared for death. She was a Christian lady and I believe that death to her had no sting. I should like to think that all the prayers that she had sent up to Heaven for all Members of this Honourable Chamber, not only on the Democratic Labour Party's side but certainly on the Opposition benches... She believed that she should pray for all the Honourable Members in this society. I think that that is a good thing.

The only other thing I should like to say is that I would remember her always because she taught me that I should never try to devalue anyone just to value myself. To her bitterness was a wasted emotion. Those are some of the qualities that she has inculcated in me. In my better days I am sure that I have exhibited them.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all Members of the House and their families who have been very good to us. I say so because I know that the sorrow will pass but the memory of my mom will last forever.

Thank you very much.

The House stood in silence for one minute.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I think that we should bring these proceedings to an end and I am therefore moving, Sir, that the House do now stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 8, 1994.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly at 7.50 p.m.

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