
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, December 20, 1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.15 a.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. **ROETT, B.A.**, Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. **MARSHALL**, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD, B.A.**, M.A., (Econ.),

J.P.,

Mr. H. **deB. FORDE, Q.C.**, M.A., **LL.B.**
Mr. B. M. **TAITT, B.A.** (Hons.), M.P.A., **LL.B.**

(Hons.)

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR, M.Sc.** (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Minister of the Civil Service)

Hon. D. A. C. **SIMMONS, Q.C.**, **LL.M.** (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Mr. D. J. H. **THOMPSON, LL.B.** (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

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

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

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER** (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport), (Leader of the House)

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

Hon. G. W. **PAYNE** (Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Hon. R. C. **EASTMOND, J.P.**, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., **LL.B.** (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Dr. R. C. **HAYNES, M.B.**, Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Mr. D. **CARTER**

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE** (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. **EDGHILL**

Mr. W. C. C. **CALLENDER, J.P.**, B.A., Dip. Ed., **B.Sc.** (Chairman of Committees)

Mr. H. F. **LASHLEY**

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**

Hon. Miss H. E. **THOMPSON, LL.B.** (Minister of Health and the Environment)

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY, LL.B.** (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture).

Prayers were led by Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood,

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, December 17, 1996, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: I beg to second that.

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

PAPERS

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: I beg to lay the Value Added Tax Regulations 1996.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Questions 45 to 49.

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to ask the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs:

1. What is the total value of the sums of money raised locally by the Minister through debentures, giving principal **and** interest separately, during the period September 6 to December 31, 1994, January 1 to December 31, 1995, January 1 to March 31, 1996 as well as during the period September 6, 1994 to March **31**, 1995 and April 1, 1995 to March **31**, 1996?
2. What is the total value of the sums of money raised locally by the said Minister by way of Treasury Bills during the same period?
3. What is the total value of the sums of money raised locally by the said Minister by way of savings bonds during the said period?
4. What is the total value of the sums of money borrowed from external sources during the same periods, giving details?
5. Will the Minister give details of payments into the relevant sinking funds for the extinction of such amounts as may have been borrowed?

Question No. 46. To ask the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs:

1. What in dollar terms were the levels of private foreign investment in the economy of Barbados at December 31, **during** the years 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1994 and 19951
2. Would the Minister give a breakdown of that investment into **the** categories of
 - (a) loan capital
 - (b) equity capital
 - (c) real estate.

Question No. 47. To ask the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs:

1. Will the Minister cause the disused public bath at the corner of Laynes Road and Cummins Road, Brittons Hill, St. Michael to be allocated for the

purpose of establishing a community police post in order to strengthen law, order and public safety in the **Brittons** Hill area?

Asides,

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members could we proceed orderly, please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: I do not have any question on regulations, Sir. I hear about regulations, I don't know what it is all about.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you getting the answer before we start then?

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: Question No. 48, Sir. To ask the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs:

1. Is **the** Minister aware that there is now no emergency hurricane shelter in the heavily built up area of **Brittons** Hill, St. Michael?
2. Will the Minister state what repairs and works would have to be carried out in order to reinstate the St. Paul's Primary School as an Emergency Hurricane Shelter?
3. Will the Minister state whether he intends to **carry** out such works and, if so, when, and, if such works are not contemplated, what plans, if any, does the Minister have for a hurricane shelter for the **Brittons** Hill area?

Question No. 49. To ask the Prime Minister and Minister for the Civil Service: Will the Minister state:

1. What categories of persons are eligible for the award of free scholarships, training courses and other courses of study under the Training Fund and Training Loan Fund arrangements?
2. Who is responsible for making the awards and loans, and for approving the courses of study?
3. How many persons in the categories listed at 1. have been granted awards and loans for local and for overseas courses of study for each year from 1979 to date?
4. What was the state of the Fund for the Financial Years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996?

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1996 be read a first time.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of this day's sitting.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 5 - SECOND READING OF THE EXCISE TAX BILL, 1996

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I wish to express on behalf of all the members of this House and myself my profound disgust at the way this Parliament is being used as a dumping ground following the inefficiencies of the various Ministries and those who are paid to carry out certain duties on behalf of the people of Barbados.

We are now faced with the most appalling situation where we cannot carry out our constitutional duty to examine properly measures before this House which will raise revenue and measures which will create a charge against the public purse which is a fundamental constitutional responsibility of this House of Assembly which it cannot and must not at any time cede to any aspect of any administration. We are faced with the alarming situation where we have an Excise Tax Bill involving millions of dollars, complex, complicated issues, all of which need to be examined in detail.

We are faced with 28 amendments to a Value Added Tax Bill and we are faced with amendments to the Income Tax Act and all these things. We knew 2 years ago that we were going to have a value added tax in Barbados. We knew since May that we were going to have amendments to the Income Tax Act and today...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. You have risen on a point of privilege. Could you state the point, please?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point I am making Sir, is that the constitutional right of this House to deal with matters relating to revenue raising and expenditure, that

that constitutional right is being eroded and abused by bringing all these matters before this Parliament at this time of the year, a few days before Christmas, at very short notice, with no one being able to examine these matters in detail.

I will not be casting any vote in this House today because I cannot cast a vote and say that I agree with any of these measures, that I oppose them or that I wish to abstain. I am not going to cast the vote of the people of St. Michael South Central in any kind of whimsical manner to accommodate people who have clearly failed in their duty to the public of Barbados. This is an abuse of Parliament and of the officers of this House. It is an abuse of the reporters from the Press to drag them down here today to do things that should have been done a long time ago.

Worst yet, there is not a single member of this House, either on the Front Bench, apart from the Minister of Finance, perhaps, or the Back Bench, who can get up and honestly say that they have had the opportunity to go through all these matters here and that they can make a sensible judgment in casting a vote on these matters today. No one can.

Mr. Speaker, I am not part of this. I will not be part of it in any way and I am asking the Honourable Minister of Finance to give due consideration, let us come back here on the 27th and 28th and do it and let it go to the Upper House on the 30th and 31st so that at least we would have a few days to examine these matters.

I have spoken in this House only 3 weeks ago over the abuse of this House in relation to a supplementary involving \$33 million. Today we have \$18 million again and hardly any notice. This is all wrong. It cannot be right. I am not going to be part of this. The National Democratic Party will not be part of any such abuse. That is my position. I am urging that this matter be deferred until the 27th so that we will have a few days to look at these matters and make some sensible contribution to it and cast our vote in a knowledgeable manner and in this way respect the Constitution of Barbados.

What is happening is that the Constitution of Barbados is being undermined by this kind of activity. The public servants, whether it be the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of the Attorney General, I do not know where the problem is but all of them have got their salaries and all of them are probably in Bridgetown shopping, all of them looking after their own personal affairs and they have dumped all of this on this place.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, you have made your point of privilege.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have **made** my point? I sincerely hope that that point of privilege is respected because I am telling **each and** every member of this House on both sides of the House that I am not going to be **part** of it in any way. I am not casting my vote for, against, nor am I abstaining. In other words I will not be around if you all persist with this foolishness.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker,...

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I **rise** also on a matter of privilege.

Mr. SPEAKER: A point of privilege.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If you would prefer a point of privilege. I have to endorse the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. I believe, Sir, guided by the wisdom of the Chair, that the Bill which is about to be debated today was circulated last Friday. Notice may have been given but it was circulated last Friday very late in the evening. The first time many of my members saw it was on Monday morning and you yourself, Mr. Speaker, took **the** position that matters flowing from that Bill, requests made arising out of that Bill that notice was short or late.

We are now being asked to debate a Bill today, Mr. Speaker, which is a **major** issue. It impacts fundamentally on the lives of Barbadians. It impacts on their lifestyle. It impacts on the economy of Barbados. The Opposition is saying that we cannot take part in this debate today and particularly against a background that on the threshold of debating this particular piece of legislation we also have on the Order Paper amendments to the **companion** legislation which was passed in the House some months ago, and was passed on the day before the House of Assembly took its summer recess. Today we are now coming to this Chamber to debate substantial pieces of financial legislation on the day on which the House is going into recess. This is a disgusting state of affairs for members of Parliament to have to endure.

I believe we have had a lot of fancy speeches in here about the parliamentary timetable being set out at the point of the adjournment and despite that, week after week, members of this House are being treated like second-class citizens. I think it is disgusting, Mr. Speaker.

I am calling on you, Sir, as the defender of our privileges, since there is no consultation, and since even in

the face of consultation it **is** a pointless exercise for you, to **exercise this substantial** power to rule in the matter. Rule and say, **Sir**, as you **did** on the last occasion when we met, whether you feel that this is a suitable occasion today for members of this Chamber to be **debating** matters as **weighty** as this just before **Christmas** at a **time** when there is a high level of **commercialism**, and I wish to quote from you, **Sir**, at a time of the year **when** people are concerned about commercial matters, at a time when there has been late notice.

I am asking you, Sir, in **defence** of my privileges, in defence of the privileges of the members of this House, in the interest of the public of Barbados, the taxpaying citizens of this country, not to allow this level of incompetence to continue and to put a stop to it. I am calling on you, Sir, to exercise that power which you exercised when last we met, to rule and to say that a halt should be put to this nonsense which is going on in here week after week where the impression is being given that there is some parliamentary timetable, and big announcements about when Bills are being brought down, and on the day that this Chamber is to go on Christmas recess we have new matters coming on the Order Paper which the Government would expect us to debate as well as matters which, in debating them today, the companion legislation is also going to be amended. I have never witnessed this level of incompetence before, Mr. Speaker, in the history of Parliament.

I have been in here nine years and I believe there have been accommodations at this time but there can be no accommodation today by the Opposition because there has been no attempt to discuss with members of the Opposition in a timely manner what the parliamentary timetable will be. We are not going to be going along with this charade today. I make it very clear and I call on you to exercise the power which you found vested in you last Tuesday to rule in the matter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I rise too on a matter of privilege. This is the season to be merry and I promise the House in that respect I will not lose my sense of good cheer during today's sitting.

I just want to say for the record though that on Tuesday before the real problems occurred I did speak to the Leader of the Opposition and said that we would wish to debate the Excise Bill on Friday, that we were not proposing to do the Excise Bill on Tuesday but that we proposed to do it on Friday, and he had no objections then, Sir. In fact, he spoke in a quiet voice and we agreed that the reason why the House would reconvene today was precisely because members would be given further time to study the Excise Bill. That is a fact, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not wish the Honourable Member to allow the spirit of cheer not to be mutual therefore I will be most accommodating on that point to the extent, however, that I was always of the belief that that debate was going to be broadcast and nobody had said anything to members on this side about the broadcast of the debate on the Excise Tax Bill. Therefore, the basis on which I agreed that this matter would have been debated on Friday was because the Leader of the House had told me, as well as the Right Honourable Member, that the Government had also requested that this debate be broadcast.

Let me make it very clear as Leader of the Opposition. If the ground rules are changed by any force which intervenes, necessarily so or unnecessarily so, rest assured that our concurrence comes to an end. I was agreeing to debate these matters on Friday on the understanding that arrangements would have been made to have this debate broadcast. The Honourable Member for the City told me that the Government had concurred in that. The Honourable Member for St. Peter told me the Government had concurred in that. I was faced with a unilateral ruling which is quite within Your Honour's province, without any discussion whatsoever with me in accordance with the procedure which we had put in place. This is the kind of treatment which is being meted out to members of Parliament in this Chamber and particularly where we have set in process procedures for the amicable resolution of matters of this sort.

I do not blame the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I do not know who to blame, but if that foolishness did not happen on Tuesday we would not be here today in this condition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, the Honourable Member.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Can I finish my point, Mr. Speaker? As I said, this is the season for good cheer, therefore, I am not going to raise my voice in here today. Just to say that I left the House on Tuesday with the understanding that all members understood that the purpose for the House being reconvened today was precisely to do the Excise Tax Bill since it was felt on Tuesday that sufficient time had not been given for members fully to study the contents of the Bill. That was my understanding, Sir. Therefore, to open the Government to the charge that we intend to act unconstitutionally, and a lot of other thoughts that have been expressed, Sir, is a bit wanton, I would just want to suggest to the House.

I just want to say to the Opposition, Sir, that if the Opposition felt itself competent to debate the Excise Tax Bill on television on Tuesday, I find it now passing strange

that they have a difficulty with debating it on Friday since more time has elapsed for further study. If the issue is an issue pertaining to a ruling concerning the broadcast by television, let us say that is the issue, but do not let us say that it has anything to do with a lack of consultation between the Government and the Opposition regarding when the Excise Tax Bill should properly be debated. I thought genuinely, Sir, that consultation had taken place, and myself and the Leader of the Opposition said we would reserve Friday not only for the Excise Tax Bill but for the Income Tax Bill and other matters. That was the understanding. The Government is not trying to railroad anything in. The reflection on the competence of officers as was expressed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is very unfortunate. All this is illustrating, Sir, is that we have to find a better way of dealing with the question of television broadcasting.

11.50 a.m.

I want to say as Minister responsible for Information that CBC also has to be brought into the act, Mr. Speaker, and I want to make that point. CBC has written the Ministry of Finance with myself as Minister of Information indicating that the loss of income arising from the broadcast of the debates from the House and asking that a system be put in place whereby the House as part of its accounts budget an amount to reimburse CBC for the broadcast of television debates.

Members of the House have a right to speak in the House but the House of itself cannot enjoin the CBC to broadcast debates from Parliament. This Parliament does not have a right or a privilege to command CBC to broadcast debates. We may have a moral right but there is nothing in law that really commands CBC to come down here and broadcast. That has to be understood.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. John in perfect silence. All I am saying is that we have come to the House today in good faith expecting to do the Excise Tax and the Income Tax because that was the understanding reached on Tuesday. If the Opposition wants more time to study the other matters that have been brought to the House then that could be a matter of consultation but I want to say as well that I tried this morning to speak with the Leader of the Opposition but he has made a presumption as to what Government's intentions are.

Those members on the other side who have spoken as yet have presumed that we have come today to force a debate on the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill. They have not given the Government the chance either to call

it **and this** has **arisen** because the Leader of the Opposition has **said** ha is not talking to anybody at all,

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, It is a pointless exercise talking to **anybody** because there **is** a third **scenario** which could impact on our consensus, Unless I have the **assurance** that the **House** is going to comply **with** what the members feel is the best way to conduct its business I am **not** consulting **with** anybody, I want to make that point very clew, **As** I always understood it, **the** House reflects the will of its members, **Unless** it goes outside of the bounds of propriety the House should reflect **the will** of its members. **If** not, it is a **pointless** exercise my engaging in any consultation with anybody on the Government benches,

It is not merely a **bi-partisan bipartite** discussion. The discussion has to be tripartite, It has to involve the extent to which the officers of **Parliament** are able to accommodate what the members want as I understand it.

I am still on a point of order, Sir. I want to make it very clear that whatever agreement I made on Tuesday was contingent on the broadcast of that debate and I genuinely thought that if we had both agreed it would be broadcast today. Secondly, I did not know that other legislation including a very **important** supplementary which I assumed **Government** would **want** to get **through** today as well would **have** been on today's Order Paper. What we are talking about is 12 items on this Order Paper coming against a background that people were scrambling in here weeks ago to conclude 3 or 4 land acquisitions.

That is the problem, Mr. Speaker, Sir, which you cannot **intervene** in and I understand this. The **House** has to plan its affairs better,

R. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am about to conclude my matter of privilege, Sir. I just want to say that we may have to seek **guidance** as well on **the** doctrine that is being **promulgated** by the Leader of the Opposition. While members of the House may meet and reach concurrence on a point of view at the end of the day it is still the Speaker's House and the Speaker's right to rule. I do not know that there is anything that says that the Speaker has necessarily to reflect a consensus. I do not know that there is any doctrine that says that the Speaker does not have an overmding discretion in matters and I don't know where that comes from.

There are times, Mr. Speaker, when I do not agree with your rulings. Some of your rulings have been very harsh on me but I have had to accept **them**. There are times when other members on the other side have not agreed

with **your rulings** Sir, but they have had to accept them and **it** is only by the acceptance of the rulings of the Speaker that the House will be able to be governed by some authority. I **would** really like to hear members on this matter of privilege. Unless we get it right there will be, **continuous** confusion in this Parliament,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I wiah to join in this **debate** an the question of the privileges because failure to speak might indicate to all those who can observe **especially** on the other side that one is not in concurrence with what has been said, Even as I speak, a **Minister** is **seeking** to **interfere** with my privileges of hearing haw you **would** respond ta me, Sir, by making unnecessary noise, Vile abuse has never turned me back, Sir,

Quite seriously, this morning, this very morning of Friday I found in my mail **box** a yellow envelope like this one, 2 **envelopes** in my mail box. I found 3 pieces of legislation,

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: **They** were from Parliament and I went back in and opened them and looked at them, I thought they might have been reports far 1992 or 1991 because you usually get that sort of thing delivered from time to time. To my horror, it contained important legislation presumably to be discussed today.

My colleagues had indicated earlier that we should prepare for a broadcast debate of the Excise **Tax** Bill, that the broadcast could possibly have come on Tuesday when we indicated there was no possible way we could prepare for Tuesday. We are not discussing **an** acquisition. We are not discussing a Resolution to congratulate a member. We are discussing a serious piece of legislation.

The Excise **Tax** is unique. It is different because it is related in a fundamental way to the introduction of VAT in Barbados. It is not a matter of somebody is going to get up and make a 30 minute speech and say that he is making a contribution. Mr. Speaker, I participated in here recently just before we went on vacation to the passing of a VAT Act which embarrassed me with my constituents because when **they** asked me what it is we passed I was not in a position to give them in the way I am accustomed giving them, indications of what it meant.

Mr. Speaker, the 28 of us in here do not constitute Barbados. There is a public out **there** which we represent and they have a right to be aware that we are going to be discussing important legislation that will affect their lives. They have a right to have analysis of that legislation

before we come in here and vote on it. If they cannot do that they have a right to hear how the argument develops from in here.

12.00 noon

Now, Sir, without casting any aspersions and Your Honour knows that I would not on your ruling and I am not referring to the ruling because Your Honour may be in the same pressure pot as anybody else and when in the pressure pot Your Honour should not **carry** any baggage for incompetence in this House. I am not going to be party to that so your ruling is your ruling but I hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter saying some foolishness, and I say **foolishness** deliberately, Sir, about we do not have any command over CBC. That is unmitigated rubbish. We have a Minister here responsible for CBC. I do not know whom it is over there because nobody ever knows who is in **chargé** of CBC except on mornings when what is to come on CBC is to be edited, then everybody knows whom the Minister is. But when it comes to responsibility in here, nobody knows who the Minister is. But CBC belongs to the people. CBC belongs to you and me and everybody else in Barbados. It does not belong to any individual Minister. A Minister speaks for and on behalf of the people. He cannot command VOB to do a single thing but from this House...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I just want to make the point very clear, Sir, that the determination as to whether a debate in this House can be televised or not is not **CBC's** determination. It is the Speaker's determination and in this particular matter, Sir...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is a fact. That is how it has always been. It is not the determination either of the Minister responsible for Information. It is the Speaker's determination and I just want to say for the record as well, Sir, that in the matter arising on Tuesday, CBC had not even been informed of the desire because the notice was very late, so CBC was not informed in the matter at all on Tuesday. It is not CBC's right to determine whether debates of Parliament are to be broadcast or not that is the Speaker's right to rule.

Mr. B. M. TAITT Mr. Speaker, Sir, one of the problems of listening to debate from outside of the Chamber is that you sometimes can miss the point. The point I was making had nothing to do with...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please! Proceed please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter missed completely the point I am **making**. I was addressing the words by the Honourable Member for St. Peter who in the course of speaking to the privilege of this House said that we cannot command CBC. I am speaking to the fact that from this House, according to the system we have, this House can in fact command CBC. This House has to pass verdict on whether CBC pays back the money to the Canadian Imperial Bank or whoever they borrowed the money from to improve the studios up there. I was the Minister, Sir, and I came to this House and I got the agreement that this country would help pay for the CBC. So VOB is free to do what it likes, but CBC, within reason, can be commanded from this House. That is the only point I am making. I am not making any point that CBC participated in or did not participate in the decision to broadcast. The Honourable Member...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of elucidation. Sir, when the Minister commands CBC, the Member quarrels and when he does not command CBC the Member quarrels. What is the Minister supposed to do?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Stop interfering with the editorial role. That is what the Minister is to do. Stop calling up and telling them what they must broadcast on a particular basis, which story is to come first. Who is to be seen and not seen. Who is to get footage and who is not to get footage. That is what the Minister is not to do. The Honourable Member himself said that CBC had written to him. He must forget. He said that he is not going to lose his sense of humour that he is fortified. He must be fortified by something. Whatever it is it is helping him to forget quickly because he said, minutes ago, that CBC had asked him if he is prepared to meet the cost, not personally, of any revenue loss. He said so, Sir. Now, isn't that a matter that I am to address?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I rise on a point of order, Sir. My understanding is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central rose on a point of privilege from which this discussion emanated. My understanding of the Rules of the House....

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I am speaking on a point of order. My understanding of the Rules of the House, Sir, are first of all that if a Member is moving a motion under this Standing Order, and I am talking about 76(6) he should speak for no more than 15 minutes.

Secondly, Sir, I am expecting that according to Standing Order 76(6) that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would have made a motion which should have a seconder and then from which discussion could emanate.

The third point I am making, Sir, is that the discussion so far seems to have gone away from the original point of privilege made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and therefore the issue of relevancy is breached. I am therefore suggesting, Sir, that we get a motion of privilege and we have a seconder and that this matter be dispatched accordingly.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, you would be well advised not to even respond to that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It upsets me that I am trying to participate in a point of privilege and that an Honourable Member, who ought to know the rules by virtue of his position in this House, would get up and raise a question that is so obviously flawed. It disappoints me.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: On a point of order, Sir, there are standing orders.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. The Member is on a point of order. Could you proceed please!

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, we are following the Standing Orders of this House and if we follow no standing orders we will be here for the whole day and we will be getting no where. I am objecting, Sir, to the comment made about my being flawed in my thinking or whatever. To be specific, Sir, I am referring to Standing Order 76(5) which says, "If during a sitting of the House, a matter suddenly arises, which appears to involve the privileges of the House and which calls for the immediate intervention of the House, the proceedings may be interrupted, save during the progress of a division, by a motion based on such matter."

(6) says: "No Member moving a motion under this Standing Order may speak for more than 15 minutes."

These are the Standing Orders of the House, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT The Honourable Member has a duty to understand the Standing Orders, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West I see you are on your feet on a point of privilege. Please let the Chair decide. Could you proceed on your point of privilege, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was making the point that the Prime Minister whom I believe is responsible for the CBC, in the process of making his point of privilege, made two comments which allow me to speak to the issue of where CBC stands in relation to this House. He made the comment that CBC was not party to the decision not to broadcast the debates. He made the further comment that CBC had sought or were in the process of seeking to discover whether any revenue loss arising out of a discussion in this House that is broadcast live could be met from the public purse by way of an intervention by the Minister of Finance. That allows me to say, without fear of contradiction, that the Prime Minister in his capacity as Minister responsible for broadcasting is utterly wrong to suggest that this House cannot command CBC, because this House commands the CBC by virtue of the fact that this House commands what will or will not be paid from the public purse, so the Prime Minister needs to review and re-examine his own concept of what ministerial responsibility is in relation to broadcasting.

12.10 p.m.

Secondly, Sir, on the question raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Honourable Member did not merely raise a point to make a point, he raised a fundamental question as to the treatment of Honourable Members of this House in relation to the debate of serious matters. The question he raised, and the reason why he used references to the Constitution, has to do with his perception and mind on where we as Members of this House stand in the context of our constitutional arrangements in this country. Those constitutional arrangements assume that this Parliament is the supreme decision maker,...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: And you do not have the right to walk through here and talk either. You cannot walk in here...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was not addressing you on that one, Sir. The point of privilege, therefore, has to be taken in its broadest sense.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Am I a clown? Are you calling me a clown in truth?

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe you are not referring to the Chair. I did not call you a clown. I did not hear anything either. Please proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I find it remarkable that of all the people in this House the Honourable Member should choose me. I know that at Christmas time the Honourable Member is not fully responsible...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Your time is running out.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I just wish to say that I am in the same position as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. I find myself unable to participate in this debate. If in fact Your Honour allows the order that is called to be debated, I cannot participate and will not participate. That is my point.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would wish to speak to this matter. On today's Order Paper we have 10 items...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On the Order Paper itself there are 10 items and then there are two supplementaries. Mr. Speaker, it is not the Government's intention that it would...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There are 12 items on the Order Paper, we have just been served with Item No. 12 which is an \$18 million supplementary. There are 12 items and I expect the Leader of the House not to mislead this Chamber...

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. You have made your point of order.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:... or the public.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as is the case on every sitting day in this Chamber, it is not the Government's intention to clear the Order Paper today, but there are a number of matters the Government would wish to proceed with today.

Last week, on December 13, notice was given of the Excise Tax Bill. As Leader of the House I received a letter from the Leader of the Opposition, dated December 16, last Monday, advising me that the Opposition would wish to have the Speaker's permission for live broadcast and so on and so forth of the Excise Tax Bill whenever that debate occurs. This letter was dated the 16th, last Monday. Last Tuesday evening, very late in the evening here, after half past ten, the Leader of the Opposition at length went on and on about his readiness to debate the Excise Tax Bill

today, Friday, because we were speaking on the Adjournment. I had already moved the adjournment of the House for today, Friday, at 11 o'clock in the morning and there was extensive debate on that.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I was not present in this Chamber when the House was adjourned. The Opposition benches would have been empty at that point.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Oh, the motion for the adjournment. I thought she had said after the adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order, then.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: These things are sent to try us, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to acknowledge the spirit of the season, so I will make no comment on that. But. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition went on at length about his readiness to debate the Excise Tax Bill today.

Now, I have among my papers, Sir, a letter from Your Honour the Speaker, dated February 27, 1995, and this letter is addressed to the Leader of Government Business, myself, and copied to the Leader of the Opposition. In this letter, Sir, you say, if I may quote:

"Dear Madam,

I am writing to you to outline the policy that will govern the broadcasting of parliamentary debates as an interim measure, pending the establishment of a new and permanent broadcasting system.

1. As the Presiding Officer of the House of Assembly, my permission to broadcast debates must at all times be sought in writing.
2. Either the Government or the Opposition, through the Leader of the House or the Leader of the Opposition, may apply for my permission.
3. If both sides agree that a particular debate should be broadcast, my permission, subject to 5 hereof, will almost certainly be automatic, respecting the wishes of the House.
4. However, if the Government and the Opposition cannot agree that a particular debate should be broadcast, I shall make the final decision.

5. (to which 3 is subject) in exercising my discretion, I shall be guided by precedent, by my own judgment, considerations of public convenience, the national interest, the interests of the broadcasting stations and, of course, the Standing Orders of the Honourable the House of Assembly."

And it goes on.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the circumstances Your Honour ruled and I have no intention of reflecting on Your Honour's ruling, except that in my understanding I understood that Your Honour was exercising your discretion, Sir, and that you were being guided on that occasion by your own judgment, by considerations of public convenience, by the national interest and the interests of the broadcasting stations.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is passing strange that the Leader of the Opposition was in a state of readiness, according to his letter, since Monday, December 16, to debate the Excise Tax Bill and has difficulty with it today. I concede, Sir, that...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON rose.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I rise on a point of order, Sir, because the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber, Any agreement in relation to readiness to debate the Excise Tax Bill on any day, or whenever it came up, was subject to a decision that the public of Barbados would have the opportunity of hearing that debate. When a ruling was made which did not exactly shoot off the table, we started back from square one. The Honourable Member cannot say whether I was ready or not ready and I am not going to be debating it in circumstances like this, so there is nothing more to continue to challenge me over. My position is final.
12.20 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not challenging you. You are not the presiding officer in here. Mr. Speaker, Sir, on Tuesday last, I spoke formally to the Leader of the Opposition in the presence and in the hearing of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and several other members of the Opposition about what business we might try to bring to resolution on Tuesday evening and what we might want to do today.

Reference was made to the Excise Tax Bill. Reference was made to the Income Tax Amendment and Property Transfer Tax.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member says that she said all that in my presence. I do not recall any such thing.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is not my fault if you don't listen. They can all deny that they heard. All of this was said downstairs in the dining room but you didn't hear it. Well, you had something in your ears. I came and stood up next to you all and asked.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point I am making is...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member must not mislead the House. My understanding last Tuesday was based on my discussion with the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter. I discussed it with him and therefore what I said at dinner time related to what we were likely to conclude when we came back into the Chamber. We were dealing at that point with the possibility of doing the Transport Board guarantee, the Insurance Bill and the BADMC, and the Opposition was quite willing to cooperate.

In relation to the Excise Tax Bill, I was always of the view that the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter and the Honourable Member for the City were also of the view that the debate was going to be broadcast. If somebody told them it wasn't, they never told me. I learnt that subsequently and that is why I am saying I am not entering any bad faith discussions with members of the Government who have knowledge that a particular position is going to be taken but will not tell me.

It caused Your Honour great embarrassment that I did not know what your position was. The Honourable Leader of the House should have told me that you were likely to rule that the matter would not be broadcast and I consider it to be unfair to enter into good faith discussions with the Leader of the House when she full well knows that what I want and what she said she wants will not be happening. The Chair should not be brought into disrepute in that way.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point of order. Honourable Member for St. John, I don't know if you are inferring that any decision that the Speaker makes that the Honourable Member for the City would be privy to the decision, but the decision that was made last week and in our last sitting was made by the Speaker and it was not made with the knowledge of the Honourable Member for the City.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, if that was my inference, then it was the wrong inference. The inference that must be drawn is that the Honourable Member for the City and the Honourable Member for St. Peter knew what Your Honour's ruling was going to be. I say that emphatically and Your Honour, I am certain that you are not going to tell me that that is not so.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government would wish today to proceed with the debate on the Excise Tax Bill. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill is another one that we would want to proceed with today and the Transport Board matter as well. There is a supplementary coming before the House which, if the Opposition was agreeable we would be willing to proceed with.

The fact of the matter is this, Sir. This Parliament, as Your Honour knows, is one of the busiest if not the busiest in this region. Several times during this year we have sat not only on Tuesdays but on Fridays as well. If members are claiming that they want more time for consideration of these matters that we would like to proceed with today the House can meet next Tuesday which is its usual meeting day and it can meet next Friday as well. So members can intimate which, if not both days, they may be interested to come.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not talking about broadcasts. I have no power over broadcasts.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, may I move that this sitting be suspended until next Friday at 11.00 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are out of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I am asking that certain matters which are on the Order Paper and for which notice has been given the Government intends to proceed with today. Matters which are coming more recently to the Order Paper, I am prepared to adjourn the House until next Tuesday. We usually meet on Tuesday.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please. Could we have some order, please. It is the Rule of this House that Government Notices must follow the rules as laid out in Standing Order 22. I believe that adequate notice was given according to the Rules relating to the Bill and I know that some members have attempted to bring the point about the television broadcast to relate it to this matter as to whether this Bill should be discussed or not.

I would just want to inform all Honourable Members that this House according to our Standing Orders does not have any rules governing the broadcast from the House and through consultation and agreement between all sides we had established some interim rules by which we would be governed and any decision made by the Chair would be in keeping with those rules.

There is no debate in this House that can in anyway be governed by anything relating to whether permission is granted for broadcast or not. I would not want to say that we are governed by the rules relating to broadcast only. In the past, we have had good consultation between both sides and there has never been a problem.

The Leader of the Opposition has stated that he had agreed to debate this Bill based on his understanding that permission would have been granted. I would like to say that adequate notice was given of this Bill. The Bill was on the Order Paper and the Order Paper was circulated long before Tuesday.

Tuesday, at 10.30, was the time when I received the letter from the Leader of the Opposition asking for permission for the Bill to be televised, therefore, it really does not follow that the Leader of the Opposition... In fact, I would like to say that debate on a Bill in this House of Assembly is not in anyway governed by the permission whether given or not of the Speaker for televised broadcasts. What I am suggesting to this House now – we have spent a lot of time listening to the points made by the Members. I have given a lot of leeway – that Order No. 5 on the Order Paper has been called and according to the Rules of this House that we proceed with the debate of the Bill unless the Government otherwise decides.

Can we proceed, please.

Asides,

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South before you speak, Sir, I hope that what you have to say will not relate to my ruling. I am following the Orders of the House and I am saying that adequate notice was given about the Bill. I am saying that it is unfortunate at this point that there was a misunderstanding between the Leader of the Opposition and myself and, of course, the Government, relating to the consultation that should have gone on.

I believe the Leader of the Opposition is correct when he says that there was no consultation in terms of what had happened previously. However, my point is that no debate on any Bill in this House is governed in anyway by any permission for televised broadcasts as long as the rules are followed and adequate notice is given. Let us proceed, please.

The Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael South wanted to make a point. Please!

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to start by making the point that there are not first class or second class members of this Chamber. An issue has been raised in this House and I have not been given the privilege of speaking on the matter. It appears that by your ruling you wish to deprive me. I do not wish to come to that conclusion, Sir, but it appears that by your ruling you would wish to prevent me or it may result that I will not be allowed to speak on the issues which have been taking up the time of this House up to this time and that there would be two other members on this side – I don't know about any on that side – who would be precluded and debarred from participating in a matter of grave importance to our parliamentary democracy in Barbados.

You have already said that I should not make any reflection or my address should have nothing to do at all with the ruling that you have given. I would like to know what my position is in here, Sir. I would really like also to add that it appears to me that...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Let us hear the Rt. Honourable Member!

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I have not got on to the substance of what I wish to say yet, but it appears to me that the Speaker of this Chamber seems to have allowed himself to be pinned by the Government side.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, may I remind you of the Standing Orders. The Honourable Member is free to raise any substantive motion relating to any decision of the Speaker but according to the Standing Orders of which I believe you are quite aware, based on your experience, that you are not supposed to reflect on any decision of the Speaker. You are free, of course to move your substantive motion. Proceed, please!

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I will seek to respect your ruling and I don't wish to reflect on anything that you have said. I am most accommodating in these issues but it is clear that there is gross incompetence and ineptitude on the part of the Government that we are here at this eleventh hour to debate issues which were within their purview for over two years. Issues of which the major outlines, the structure and decisions had been taken and there were just some decisions. In that two years it has taken this Government and this Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and all the others over there, together

with the incompetence of the Leader of the House, to bring us to this sorry impasse.

12.35 p.m.

It is not an emergency, Sir. This is not an emergency, something that has suddenly arisen. These are public affairs that have been in their domain for over the past two years and they have been misdirecting the public officials and preventing them from doing what they should be doing. The Minister of Finance must carry full responsibility for this.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. Just to say, Mr. Speaker, that since the member is reflecting on the time it has taken for this matter concerning the VAT and other things to have been brought to the House, just for the sake of full public exposure, had the person engaged as a policy advisor to the then Minister of Finance to prepare a study of the impact of VAT on tourism and other matters, had done the work, submitted the study for which he was paid rather than draw money under false pretenses, since we are going into it in this kind of way, had that person who was then advisor to the present Member for St. Michael South prepared and submitted the report on the tourism industry, the matters pertaining to the preparation of the VAT could have fast been accelerated. The major issue was how to deal with the tourism industry...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am on a point of order. You cannot have a point of order on a point of order.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: We are going down that wicket.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not now. You will not be allowed to go down that wicket.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The major reason why...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Let us go.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please, Could you make your point of order, please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I just want to say for the record, Sir, the member has reflected on the competence of the Government in carrying out the preparations to bring VAT business to the House and I am trying to set the record straight, Sir.

A study was intended to evaluate the impact of the VAT on the major sectors, particularly tourism. The study was never completed although an advisor was engaged to undertake it. This administration has had to do a comprehensive study of the VAT. That study only came to hand in May of this year. Those are the facts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, you have made your point of order, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. This matter is in relation to legislation. The previous Government never brought any economist on board to draft legislation. A VAT Bill was passed in the summer and already it is being amended.

The Excise Tax legislation is not something that any economist was retained to study. The Honourable Member is an economist...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you have made your point. The Honourable Member would you take your seat, please.

Could you proceed, please?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Honourable Members, please. Order, please. Could you proceed, please?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I cannot speak in disorder, Mr. Speaker. You are calling for order so there must be disorder. You are presiding so I hope you bring the House to order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Tell the Prime Minister to keep quiet. Already I saw him walk out and walk back in and he is listing on one side, Sir. He seems to be taking in water...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: It is the mood of Christmas. It is clear that this House needs leadership, Sir, and I believe the Member for St. Thomas would do a better **job** in leading the House.

Aside.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I am just asking your guidance as a member of this House to tell us very simply, on what order of business is this House now proceeding?

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I have never understood that unmannerliness and bad behaviour on the part of members is any substitute for debate. It is a rule of this House that when another member is speaking members must not *sotto voce* from their seats behave in the way some Honourable Members in this House are behaving. If the House is to proceed properly and be a standard, I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to protect my rights in this respect.

I have got up very properly in this House to ask on what order are we now because I wish to be guided on it. As I understand it, if the Honourable Member...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. I had made a ruling. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South stated that he wanted an opportunity to speak. I had concluded that all members had made their points relating to the point that was raised earlier by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South so I have given permission to the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South to make his point.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of privilege, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, on a point of privilege.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you proceed, please?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I will conclude shortly, Sir. I wish for purposes of the record to indicate that the position which we are taking on this side has been set out by the two leaders of the two parties represented on this side of the Chamber, by the Leader of the official Opposition and of the minority Opposition. We are agreed on these issues.

I hope the Government is not so stubborn as to ignore the wishes and the views of the Opposition. They should take these matters into account because it is not only a question of numbers. This is a matter that impacts on

the public at large and we must take all of that into account. My view has been expressed by those members on this side who have spoken. I merely wish to get on the record to indicate that. We would make an appeal to the Government to reflect on and to respect those issues, because it is clear Sir, that when this Bill is debated that there might be things in here that might be changed. I do not want anybody to make an assumption that everything in here will be correct today.

12.45 p.m.

ORDER NO. 5 – EXCISE TAX BILL, 1996

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 5.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, this is another matter of privilege of this House which has arisen all of a sudden. We have had regulations made in this House in anticipation of a major matter of law and another breach of privilege of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The laws are being broken, Sir. We have here regulations made under an amended bill ~~when the~~ amended bill has not been debated. This is not a law of the land. This is unlawful. It is a matter of privilege. They have broken the law in here already. We have regulations laid in the House and therefore those regulations...

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you sit please. The point that you are raising as a procedural point are you asking this House to make a ruling related to this matter?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: When I make my point I will do SQ

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you make your point, Sir?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The privilege of this House has been breached this morning...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The member in speaking referred to the regulations under the Value Added Tax which specifically say in the body of the Regulations that they come into effect on January 1. The Value Added Tax Bill itself under section 72 requires there to be a comptroller and his staff which was put in place on October 1. The regulations therefore specify in the body of the Regulations themselves that the Regulations come into effect on January 1. They do not come into effect on the point of their being laid in

the House and they can only come into effect when the VAT Bill itself comes into effect and that Bill comes into effect on January 1st because the regulations are the regulations to the Act.

It is a lot of nonsense being put to this House that we are dealing with something that is a breach of the law. The Excise Tax that is before this Parliament is a separate piece of legislation from the VAT Bill and it is as separate as dawn is from dusk although they constitute part of the same economic policy. You can debate the Excise Tax without reference to whether or not the VAT will be amended today or sometime in the future. That is completely immaterial. What we are having here is a move by the Opposition to confuse this issue completely. The Excise Tax Bill can be discussed as legislation unto itself even though it may happen to be part of a policy involving the VAT.

What is being put to the House is nonsense that is intended to mislead this Parliament.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I did not get the opportunity to develop the point I was making. I am saying that anticipation of a decision of the House by an Act of the Government by laying these regulations is a breach of the privilege of the House. The Standing Orders...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, please, I don't know if you were listening to the explanation given by the Honourable Member but...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: He is giving the wrong explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: ... Please! I am just getting into this so as to expedite matters. The Rt. Honourable Member seemed to be suggesting that the Regulations related to what has gone before.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is erroneous because these Regulations involve the amendments that will be coming to the House.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: On a point of order, please. Take your seat, please!

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am on a point of order and he is on a point of disorder.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is this a point of order relating to yourself? Take your seat please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Regulations to the Value Added Tax are Regulations to

the Act and the Act itself comes into force on January 1st. In order for the Regulations to come into force on January 1, as stated in the Regulations themselves they will have to be laid in this Parliament before January 1. That is all that we are doing today, laying the regulations today and stating in the regulations that they are intended by law to come into effect on January 1st. In what sense is that a breach of the law?

I might ask, Sir, if the Regulations to the Act are intended to come into effect on January 1, is it not natural that they must be laid in this Parliament before the first of January? What nonsense is the House being misled with, Sir?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am saying, Sir, that looking at these Regulations they are Regulations in here that relate to an amended VAT Bill which has not been amended by this **Parliament** and therefore you are guilty of anticipation and this particular matter should never have been laid in the House before the amendments were passed.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, he does not even know what it contains. He is asking which amendment, Sir. Look through the amendments and you will see them in there. Even the numbering relates to amendments to various sections that we have to debate in the future.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no amended VAT Bill or VAT tax. If these amendments are laid and the VAT Act is amended at some time in the future and it results in a consequential need for a change in any reference in the regulations themselves the regulations themselves also have to be changed.

The point that is being made here, Sir, is that it is not anticipatory because the only place in which the Regulations refer to anything to be done before October 1st is in relation to the fact that the officers of the VAT Unit have to take the oath on becoming officers. That is a matter of fact.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Take your seat, please! Could we proceed to Order No. 5, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, history will show that the Honourable Member for St. John managed to avoid being here when the VAT Bill was being discussed by reason of being out of the country to represent corporate interests and he has now made it necessary and possible to avoid being here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please! Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, you are out of order. Take your seat, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am going to stay until the Speaker sends me out.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know that is what you want. Honourable Member, are you on a point of order?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I was on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order? You are not going to get what you want so just continue your point of order, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: My point of order is this. We all find ourselves in this situation because of gross incompetence in the Ministry of Finance and those other Ministries responsible for bringing these matters before this Honourable House. Parliament itself now is caught up in this mess, caught in illegality, caught up in breaches...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I must rise to ask exactly on what the member has risen because I have not started my speech and yet the member is supposed to be on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, have you finished your point of order?
12.55 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, Sir, I have not finished yet and I am urging the Government to respect the constitutional role which all of us as Members have to play as a Parliament. Fundamental to that is supervision of all taxation, supervision of all expenditure. Give the people's representatives the opportunity to look at all the implications of this massive taxation being inflicted on them by these various measures today, by these major changes in an Income Tax Act that are going to put more money in the pockets of the rich...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, could you please take your seat?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. I take my leave.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this all has to do with the fact that a certain gentleman won a

seat in this Parliament, said he wanted to come to this Parliament and as soon as he came to Parliament he took vacation and the whole business of a Government is to be postponed for the first 3 meetings of a House, a man who has won a seat in here refuses to come here but has gone on vacation so we must suspend Government Business for 3 meetings of Parliament to accommodate the foolishness of one man. That, Sir, has to be said to the record and I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the suspension of this House until 2.00 o'clock this afternoon.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on this Bill. Before I do that, Sir, I draw to the attention of the House the absence of the Chairman of Committees and I beg to move that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central be the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. SPEAKER: If this be the will of the House, so be it.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER enters the Chamber.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 22 inclusive were called and passed.
2.15 p.m.

The First Schedule as amended was called.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the First Schedule as amended be the First Schedule to the Bill.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

The Second Schedule as amended was called.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Second Schedule as amended be the Second Schedule to the Bill.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendments, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 12 – COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1996-97, NO. 8 – \$18 209314 HEAD 19 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move, Sir, that Head 19 stand part.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 35 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS, TOURISM AND INTER-
NATIONAL TRANSPORT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 35 stand part, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 36 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to move, Sir, that Head 36 stand part.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 42 (as amended) MINISTRY
OF PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT
AND HOUSING

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 42 as amended stand part.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one money Resolution in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 4 – THE INCOME TAX
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 1996

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the measures contained in this Income Tax (Amendment) Bill all pertain to measures to provide incentives for increased savings as set out in the budgetary proposals of this year. They are intended not to increase taxes but to reduce the tax of the Barbadian citizen. They represent a comprehensive set of tax proposals, and I have great pleasure in moving that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Chamber is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 7 as amended was called.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 7 as amended stand part.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I just wish to make the point and draw it to the Minister's attention that although the term "innovation fund" is mentioned in what will become the new clause 37D(1) and (2), there is no definition of the innovation fund as there is of a venture capital fund and it may be necessary for the Government to give consideration to bringing in an amendment either to this or some definition section in order to make it clear as to what the innovation fund is.

The question that Clause 7 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
2.25 p.m.

Clauses 8 and 9 were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 3 – TO MOVE THE SECOND
READING OF THE PROPERTY TRANSFER
TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1996

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: This legislation is again intended to give effect to Government fiscal policy and, in particular, to its manifesto pledge to relieve persons involved in divorces of the onerous burden of having to pay transfer tax in circumstances where the transfer of matrimonial property is transferred from one to the

other without any change in beneficial interest. It is a matter that has been handled administratively hitherto by way of waivers granted under the hand of the Minister of Finance but the legislation is intended to put it now within the 4 corners of the law and is not intended to make divorce in this country more pleasing or more abundant.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chamber is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 10 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE OF THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST IN RES- PECT OF THE BOND ISSUE OF \$12 MILLION TO THE BARBADOS INVESTMENT AND DEVELOP- MENT CORPORATION

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, by way of introduction, I should just say that the Industrial Development Corporation now faces the very happy problem of having a greater demand for space for new ventures and to accommodate expansion of existing enterprises than it can possibly meet and Government has already supported an expanded building programme for the BIDC but even that expansion supported by way of a BNB loan has not been enough and the BIDC needs substantially to expand its space to accommodate a large number of applications for new enterprises. The anticipation is that

over 2 000 new jobs will be created and I could not possibly imagine a better use to which a government guarantee could be put than this guarantee to support the creation of 2 000 new jobs. It is in that spirit that I do wish to plead that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to delay the House, but I just wish to say that the bond issue will certainly attract the interest of the National Insurance Fund. At the moment, we have some difficulty in finding medium and long term security of this nature to satisfy the low funds coming into both the Unemployment Fund and the National Insurance Fund. We would certainly be interested in taking up a part of this bond, particularly where it will contribute to the development of the country and jobs in particular.

I wish to make 2 suggestions to the Minister. One relates to the fact that after companies that have had fiscal incentives have graduated from that period there is no medium term programme for them and countries such as Mauritius and Singapore have adopted an amended form of taxation and I believe that the Ministry of Trade and the IDC should be giving consideration to this type of programme which I believe would not offend our CARICOM treaty. Rather than a forced graduation as has happened we will probably find that we will retain as well people who would normally not want to stay any further and we may create long-term jobs.

The second suggestion which I would like to make to the Minister of Finance is that the time has come for us to have a bond that will mature in the 50th year of our Independence. I believe that the market is ready for it and I think it will provide needed development finance in this area and in other areas and it could be a very attractive long term 20-year bond. Perhaps the IDC in its planning would want to make use of that facility as well.
2.35 p.m.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE OF THE PAY- MENT OF LOAN OF FIFTEEN MILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS FROM THE CITIBANK OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED FOR THE TRANSPORT BOARD

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the passing of a Resolution to approve the guarantee of U.S. \$15 million loan from the Citibank of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd. for the Transport Board. This is in pursuance of certain recommendations coming out of a study of the Transport Board which was done by David Shorey & Co.

The terms of reference of that study included a review and recommendations on a strategy for the replacement and ascertaining the cost of providing the passenger service for the required routes under efficient management.

The proposal is for the borrowing of the U.S. \$15 million to be apportioned in the following manner: \$10 million for fleet replacement and \$5 million to repay a short-term loan to the Barbados National Bank and to finance other working capital requirements,

The Transport Board proposes to purchase 128 buses over a 5-year period. The Board also proposes to purchase 30 large and 20 small omnibuses by August 1997. The tendering process has already begun. The Special Tenders' Committee is presently assessing the bids which have been received.

The terms and conditions of the loan as accepted are that the \$15 million financing will be separated in 5 individual bonds. The 5 bonds will be issued annually commencing in the financial year 1996/97. The last bond of the series will be issued in the year 2000. Each bond will carry a tenure of 7 years. For the first bond there will be a two-year moratorium of principal and, as I indicated, the security for the loan is the Government of Barbados guarantee.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass,

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir,

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

ORDER NO. 2 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE TO HADRIAN WENT OF A PARCEL OF LAM) TOGETHER WITH THE BUILDING THEREON AT SOUTH DISTRICT, ST. GEORGE

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is a Resolution to approve the sale of a public bath and the land on which the bath stands to Mr. Hadrian Went. This is in pursuance of the policy of Government to sell public baths either to the adjoining owners or in other cases where the tender process has been followed.

In this particular instance Mr. Hadrian Went did put in the highest bid. In the circumstances I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 7 - THE ROAD TRAFFIC (LICENSING AUTHORITY) (VALIDATION) BILL, 1996

Hon. Q. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time,

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that,

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

On the motion of Hon. G. W. PAYNE seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair,

COMMITTEE

Mr CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clause 1 was called,

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, in moving that Clause 1 stand part of the Bill, I would just like to say that this Bill has become necessary because of the fact that the Road Traffic Act did make provision for the setting up of a Licensing Authority. Even though it did make the relevant provision for the setting up of the Licensing Authority the Regulations were not put in place for the relevant appointment. The previous amendments in 1984 did give the Minister the power to nominate a person to be the Licensing Authority. In the past the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Licensing Officer and the Chief Technical Officer have, on occasions, in the previous legislation performed this duty. The amendment that was done to the Act in 1984 omitted to confer this authority. What has been happening is that since 1984 the Chief Technical Officer has been acting as the licensing authority even though the legislation has not been formalised in order to give him this authority and in the circumstances these provisions will now validate any action which he took as a result of the failure of the legislation to have the requisite clauses and will also enable him to perform his duties in a proper manner for the future.
2.45 p.m.

I now beg to move that Clause 1 stand part.

Clause 1 was passed.

Clause 2 was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. G. W. PAYNE seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

*On the separate motions of Hon. G. W. PAYNE seconded by Hon D. A. C. SIMMONS the **Bill** was read a third time and passed.*

ORDER NO. 8 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
SALE OF LAND **AND** BUILDING AT
CRAB **HILL**, ST. LUCY

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the passing of this Resolution pertaining to the sale of 93.2 square metres of land at Crab Hill, St. Lucy to Mr. Nathaniel Griffith. This is again another of those public baths that are being offered for sale by public tender or to the adjoining owners in appropriate cases. The Tenders Committee received certain bids in pursuance thereof and Mr. Griffith's bid in the sum of \$3000 was the highest.

In the circumstances, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that.

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

ORDER NO. 9 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
SALE OF LAND AT MAJOR WALK,
ST. PETER

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the passing of this Resolution pertaining to the sale of 3 parcels of land at Major Walk, Speightstown, St. Peter to **Harriet Scantlebury-Russell**, **Angela** Scantlebury and Austin Husbands. The building of the bus terminal in Speightstown had necessitated the removal of a number of properties in the path of the location of the bus terminal. It is a matter which goes back to 1984 and the **resiting** of the various parties who were relocated on these parcels of land owned by government, also in addition to allowing them to rent the spots, gave them an option to purchase at some time in the future.

We have only recently formalised all the formalities with respect to the sale. There was a fourth tenant who had indicated an interest in purchasing but due to financial constraints she has indicated that she is not ready at this time but the other three parties who are mentioned here have indicated that they are willing to purchase and this Resolution seeks parliamentary approval to sell the lands to these particular individuals.

In those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that brings us to the end of Govenunent's Business for this day. I would like to move that this House be adjourned to Tuesday, January 14, 1997.

Speaking on the adjournment, Sir, I **would** wish on behalf of us all to take this opportunity to wish to you and your family every good wish for a Happy Christmas season and a healthy, bright and prosperous 1997. I would also **like**, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to offer the Season's Greetings to the Clerks at the Table and their families and the staff of this Parliament and their families.

There are also those who look after us in other ways during the course of the year as the House meets from week to week, the security personnel including members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, those who cater to us, **those** who clean and generally keep this House in a way which allows us to get on with the business of the State with despatch, with efficiency and in an effective manner. This is a fine opportunity to say thank you for all of the hard work and the commitment and the attention offered up to us in 1996 and to say Happy Christmas and every good wish for the year 1997.

I would also like to offer to Honourable Members on this side and to those on the other side despite the fact that they are not in their seats but to us all, Sir, a Happy Christmas. We must observe the principles of this season. Happy Christmas and a healthy, bright and prosperous 1997! I thank you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the motion and to associate with the remarks of the Leader of the House and the Deputy Prime Minister and to say that you will take note of the fact that the House did not today deal with the amendment to the Value Added Tax Act since it is not the Government's intention to trample on the rules of the House but we will give Members of the House adequate time to read the legislation and to contribute to the debate.

We did the Excise Tax Act for which adequate notice was served and I would just want to say that I have already informed the Leader of the House that it is my intention to plead that the amendment to the Value Added Tax Act be televised when the House reconvenes on January 14, 1997. 2.55 p.m.

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Mr. SPEAKER: Before I move the **adjournment** I would **like** to convey the season's wishes to all Members, I hope, of course, that as we resume on 14th January all Members would recognise that this is the Honourable House of Assembly and it is not a **farm** and we therefore, of course, would **abide** by the Standing Orders of this Honourable House,

I believe the behaviour today in this House sank to the lowest level and I believe that all Honourable Members should be ashamed when they attempt at all times to disregard the rules of this Honourable House, Today was a very good example of it. The rules clearly state here the method of giving...

Rt. Hon. **O. S. ARTHUR:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was in this House the whole day and I abided by the rules and I abided by **your** ruling, Sir, and I would not want to be associated with the very rough stricture which you have applied to those Members who have been in breach of the rules of the House today or who have been associated with disorderly conduct, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Members who disregarded the rules would know who they are. I say, those Members who disregarded the rules.

I say here, **before** we **adjourn** that the rules of the House **are** clear for everyone to **read** and I would not want it to be seen or to be believed that this Chair was in anyway contravening any rules today, The rules clearly state in Rule 22 what is the procedure in giving **notice**, even of Oovernment Orders. "Not **less** than 3 clear days' notice of a **motion** shall be given unless it is **Government Business** introduced in the name of a Minister, in which case one day's notice shall be sufficient,"

The contention about the Bill today, the notice was given since December 13. The rule is here. This House at no time, as long as I am in the Chair, will in anyway be controlled by who is seeking permission to have a debate televised, I follow the rules that **are** laid down in these Standing Orders and I expect that all Members in this House will observe the rules.

I would therefore **like** to wish all Members from both sides the best for the season, a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and I sincerely hope that we all come back here next session to observe the rules of this House.

*The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, January 14, 1997 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. **SPEAKER** adjourned the House accordingly. 3.00 p.m.*

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MILLER, Hon. Miss B. A. (City of Bridgetown)
PAYNE, Hon. G. W. (St. Andrew)
SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South)
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas)
TAITT, Mr. B. M. (St. Michael West)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)